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Subject: HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO DONATE 1 MILLION CONDOMS TO PUERTO RICO FOR ZIKA PREVENTION EFFORTS



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND MENTAL HYGIENE**
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Commissioner

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HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO DONATE 1 MILLION CONDOMS TO PUERTO RICO FOR ZIKA PREVENTION EFFORTS

Puerto Rico has more locally transmitted cases than any U.S. state or territory

Condoms to be distributed throughout Puerto Rico

May 2, 2016 – The Health Department today announced it will be donating 1 million condoms to assist with Zika prevention efforts in Puerto Rico. The condoms will be distributed by the Puerto Rico Department at Health throughout the island. To date, Puerto Rico has 474 cases of locally transmitted Zika virus – more than any other state or territory in the United States. The condoms will allow residents to reduce the spread of Zika through sexual transmission. The Department will be providing a variety of condoms that have been successfully distributed through the NYC Condom program. More than 340 million male condoms have been distributed since the condom program began in 2007 – nearly 70 condoms for every adult New York City resident. NYC gives out more than 105,000 free male condoms every day, which includes branded NYC Condoms and non-branded condoms.

“New York City has acted aggressively to reduce the overall mosquito population – while increasing Zika detection methods – in our ongoing effort to protect residents as well as visitors to our city,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “In light of Puerto Rico’s healthcare crisis, we are proud to announce we’ve donated 1 million condoms to our neighbors, and we will continue our campaign focusing on Zika prevention for pregnant women and international travelers. We stand with the Puerto Rican people.”

“New York City has had a strong partnership with Puerto Rico and this donation will strengthen the bond between us,” said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Dr. Herminia Palacio**. “Controlling the Zika virus will need a collective effort between all affected communities. Donating one million condoms will help prevent unintended pregnancies and reduce the risk of transmitting the Zika virus and other diseases.”

“We are grateful for this opportunity to donate 1 million male condoms to complement the island’s Zika prevention efforts,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett**. “New York City is home to the largest population of Puerto Ricans in the continental U.S., and many New Yorkers travel back and forth to the island. We share the fight against mosquito borne viruses. Educating our citizens on practicing safe sex, using mosquito repellent, and removing standing water is part of this effort. We look forward to

continuing our collaboration to reduce the risk of Zika infection both here in New York City and Puerto Rico.”

“We appreciate the New York City Health Department’s donation of one million male condoms to assist with our island’s intensive Zika prevention efforts. Since we know Zika can spread through sexual intercourse, the use of condoms is an important strategy when aiming to put a stop to this virus. New York City’s donation will bolster our efforts to make condoms widely available in our fight to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections, including Zika, and reduce unplanned pregnancies,” said **Ana Ríos Armendáriz, M.D., Secretary of Health for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico**.

“We are enthusiastic to help Puerto Rico interrupt sexual Zika transmission with the help of NYC Condoms! Our partnership is deep and long standing. Sharing our high quality latex with our amazing colleagues in Puerto Rico deepens our connection even further,” said **Dr. Demetre Daskalakis, Assistant Commissioner for the Bureau of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control**.

"For too long American citizens in Puerto Rico have received second class treatment," said **Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. "The Zika virus poses a serious threat across the globe and the high infection rates in Puerto Rico are a somber reminder that Congress must grant Puerto Rico as much health care funding as it provides to all other U.S. Citizens. I thank the de Blasio Administration for generously donating 1 million condoms to assist with Zika prevention efforts and will continue to work with my colleagues in government to stand up for Puerto Rico."

“Thwarting the spread of Zika in Puerto Rico needs to be a priority at all levels of government. I commend the NYC Health Department for taking this innovative step, which will bolster efforts in Puerto Rico to address this public health challenge,” said **Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez (D-NY)**.

“The world tends to become a smaller place when viruses reach an epidemic scale. But in the case of Puerto Rico, now with the highest concentration of confirmed Zika cases on American soil and with the first confirmed death, Zika is thriving here at home. New York and Puerto Rico have a long and lasting bond. In recognition of that, we have an obligation to Puerto Rico and its people to do what we can to combat the spread of Zika,” said **Senator Martin Malavé Dilan**.

"New York City has been a leader in public health initiatives," said **Assembly Health Committee Chair Richard N. Gottfried**. "This donation is a crucial step in the fight against Zika and reflects the strong connections between the people of the City and Puerto Rico."

“While Puerto Ricans face the deadly public health crisis brought on by the Zika virus, we must make every effort possible to protect its citizens. New York City's generous contribution will help assist to reduce the transmission of this infectious disease. Our prayers go out to the families that have lost loved ones and to those who are fighting for their lives now,” said **Assistant Assembly Speaker Felix W. Ortiz**.

“I salute the administration — Mayor de Blasio, Health Commissioner Bassett, and her team — for this all-important and very significant response to bolster Puerto Rico’s Zika prevention efforts,” said **Assemblyman Luis Sepúlveda (D, Bronx)**. “The special bond between our city and Puerto Rico, as well as the recognition that travel between New York and the island is always very high, make this a win-win in the effort to prevent infections, for residents of Puerto Rico as well as for New Yorkers. And for pregnant women especially, this assistance is smart, compassionate, and laudable.”

"Beyond the challenging financial issues, Puerto Rico is suffering from an expanding humanitarian crisis. As New Yorkers, we always step up to protect those in need, and I commend the NYC Department of

Health for their timely donation and support for our extended Puerto Rican family,” said **Assembly Member Robert Rodriguez**.

“With the Zika virus now a global health epidemic, it is only right that our City does its part in helping to prevent further transmission of the disease,” said **Council Member Rafael Salamanca**. “There are so many Puerto Ricans in the Bronx with family and friends in Puerto Rico prone to this disease, including myself. That is why I am so grateful for this effort to donate condoms to help prevent further hardship for Puerto Ricans caused by Zika.”

“I am delighted that the NYC Department of Health will be donating one million condoms to Puerto Rico, in a concentrated effort to mitigate the spread of the dreaded Zika virus. This act both illustrates the need for safer sex, as well as the DoHMH supporting a mandate to contain such a debilitating disease that can cause catastrophic birth defects,” **Council Member Anabel Palma**.

“This donation will further complement the Zika prevention efforts that are underway in Puerto Rico and surely protect countless individuals. It is a necessary action and the City is doing right by being proactive in helping the island and its residents,” said **Council Member Ritchie Torres of the Bronx**.

NYC Zika Preparedness

On April 18, Mayor de Blasio announced a comprehensive three year, five borough plan to protect New Yorkers from the Zika virus. Building on the Health Department’s robust West Nile virus mosquito control program, the Mayor’s plan expands mosquito surveillance and control to identify and target mosquitoes that could potentially transmit the Zika virus; creates capacity to meet a growing need for testing pregnant New Yorkers and local mosquitoes for the virus; and launched a comprehensive campaign to disseminate prevention and testing information throughout the city. The plan will add 51 new positions to address all these needs – including inspectors, exterminators, disease detectives and lab analysts – and it will double the number of mosquito traps placed across the city. Zika investment totals \$21 million over a three-year period, including a New York State match.

NYC Condom

In 2015, the Health Department and its partners distributed more than 38 million male and female condoms at 3,500 diverse locations in New York City, including bars, clubs, restaurants, nail salons, barber shops, hospitals, clinics and community based organizations. When used correctly and consistently, condoms are highly effective in preventing unintended pregnancies and offer effective protection against most sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV. The City’s effort to increase the availability of condoms has contributed to citywide declines in teen pregnancy rates, STI rates, and HIV rates.

Since its initial launch in 2007, the NYC Condom has continuously been in high demand. In the summer of 2013, the Health Department conducted more than 500 surveys with New York City residents to explore access, use and acceptability of the NYC Condom. Nearly 90 percent of all respondents indicated that they had picked up a NYC Condom at least once in their lifetime, either for themselves, for friends or for family members. The NYC Condom Finder app, the Health Department’s app to find free condoms across the city, has been downloaded more than 45,000 times since it was launched in 2011.

To find free NYC Condoms, call 311 or visit nyc.gov/condoms. To learn more about condom use and sexual health or to download the free NYC Condom Finder app, please visit [facebook.com/NYCcondom](https://www.facebook.com/NYCcondom).

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