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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** October 18, 2018  
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## **MAYOR DE BLASIO APPOINTS SENIOR ADVISOR FOR CITYWIDE LEAD PREVENTION**

***DSNY Commissioner Garcia will take on additional role coordinating agencies' lead prevention efforts, creating citywide roadmap to zero***

**NEW YORK**—Mayor de Blasio today announced that Kathryn Garcia will be named Senior Advisor for Citywide Lead Prevention to coordinate citywide efforts to reduce childhood lead exposure to zero. Since 2005, there has been a nearly 90 percent decrease in the number of New York City children under 6 years old with blood lead levels of 5 mcg/dL or greater. To deepen this progress and get lead exposure down to zero, Garcia will lead prevention and mitigation programs across agencies, develop a citywide plan for prevention and response, and serve as an essential point of operational control for the City government on the matter of lead exposure. Commissioner Garcia will take on this new role in addition to continuing to lead Sanitation, and DSNY First Deputy Commissioner Steven Costas will take on some additional day-to-day responsibilities at the agency.

"Childhood lead exposure has gone down by 90 percent since 2005, but we need to redouble our efforts to reduce this rate to zero. It's critical we coordinate across agencies and unify their efforts into a single, citywide strategy," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "There is no better person to accomplish this than Commissioner Garcia. She has the tenacity and experience to tackle this challenge, and bring this city the last mile towards eradicating childhood exposure."

"Every child in New York City deserves to grow up healthy, safe and lead-free," said **Commissioner Kathryn Garcia**. "Several city agencies have already put in place aggressive programs to reduce lead exposure. By putting new performance management tools in place and improving interagency coordination, we can turn these programs into a unified strategy to achieve our goal of driving down the number of children with high lead levels to zero. I am excited to take on this new role and to work with my colleagues across city government to keep our kids safe."

Achieving the Mayor's goal of bringing the number of children with lead exposure down to zero will require greater coordination and planning between the relevant agencies. Commissioner Garcia will oversee efforts at these agencies – including DOHMH, NYCHA, HPD, DEP, Parks, DOE, and DSS – to coordinate to the Mayor's plan to eliminate childhood lead exposure, evaluate and strengthen agency prevention and response strategies, and deepen the network of

tracking and support for every child with elevated blood lead levels. Metrics related to inspections and findings will be unified and tracked across the agencies to ensure accountability. Coordination and planning efforts will focus on:

- **Reduction:** Remediating and abating sources of lead exposure
- **Prevention:** Testing and identifying sources of lead exposure
- **Education:** Informing families of potential sources of lead; increasing child testing rates

In her first 90 days, Commissioner Garcia will develop a citywide lead reduction roadmap, which will serve as a basis for agency planning. The Senior Advisor for Citywide Lead Prevention reports directly to the Mayor and will be supported by staff and resources from the Mayor's Office of Operations. Commissioner Garcia will return full-time to Sanitation and maintain complete operational control of the agency for the duration of any snowstorm or sanitation-related emergency.

In her current role at the Department of Sanitation, Commissioner Garcia is a key leader on developing and implementing strategies to reach the City's Zero Waste goal, and has operationalized several brand-new programs, including Organics collection and curbside electronic waste. She was responsible for overhauling the City's snow-clearing operations by changing the prioritization of plow routes, which has greatly increased DSNY's efficiency and productivity during storms. Before her appointment in 2014 to DSNY Commissioner, Garcia was Chief Operating Officer at the Department of Environmental Protection, where she oversaw agency operations – including the delivery of one billion gallons of safe, clean drinking water to 9 million New Yorkers in the city and upstate New York every day. She helped the agency overcome challenges with the Lead and Copper Rule, and oversaw watershed and in-city water quality labs that conduct more than 630,000 analyses of the city's drinking water every year to ensure the water was safe and of the highest quality.

First Deputy Commissioner Steven Costas began his career as a sanitation worker over 30 years ago, and has served as a key support for Commissioner Garcia as First Deputy Commissioner, where he is largely responsible for all aspects of DSNY's cleaning, collection, and snow response operations. He has previously been the Director of Cleaning and Collection, and his experience within the Department is unmatched.

### **About Sanitation Commissioner Kathryn Garcia**

Appointed in March 2014 by Mayor Bill de Blasio, Commissioner Kathryn Garcia leads the world's largest municipal sanitation department and its 9,700 uniformed and civilian employees. Under her direction, the department keeps New York City healthy, safe and clean by collecting, recycling and disposing waste, cleaning streets and vacant lots, and clearing snow and ice. After her appointment as the Department's 43rd commissioner, Kathryn set an ambitious long-term goal for New York City: contribute zero waste to landfills. To achieve this goal, DSNY has developed the nation's largest curbside organic waste collection program, collected and properly recycled more than 10 million pounds of electronic waste, and launched DonateNYC to help New York City residents and businesses give goods, find goods, and do good. A lifelong New Yorker, Kathryn launched her career as an intern at the Department of Sanitation. Before returning to the Department as Commissioner, she served as Chief Operating Officer at the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, where she was responsible for the operation

of the City's water supply, water and sewer system, and wastewater treatment plants. Kathryn earned her Bachelor of Arts in Economics and History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

"Commissioner Garcia has proven to herself to be an effective and visionary leader during her tenure at the Department of Sanitation and I am incredibly pleased that she has been named the Senior Advisor for Citywide Lead Prevention" said **Council Member Antonio Reynoso**. "No child should ever have to suffer from the effects of lead exposure. While there has been significant progress in reducing cases of lead exposure in children, we cannot be satisfied until we eliminate this problem from our City completely. I have full confidence in Commissioner Garcia's ability to achieve this important goal and I look forward to our continued collaboration on this issue."

"I can think of no one better equipped to take on this critically important task than Kathryn Garcia. She epitomizes what it means to be a "public servant:" hard-working, talented, extremely competent and results oriented. In my 14 years of experience in city government, she is one of the very few people I would say has my full confidence to handle two difficult and equally important roles. I look forward to assisting her in this effort in any way I can," said **Council Minority Leader Steven Matteo**.

"New York has come a long way in removing toxic lead from our communities, but there is still much more work to be done to ensure every family in New York City is able to live in a lead-free community," said **Council Member Stephen Levin**. "I look forward to working with Kathryn Garcia in her new role as Senior Advisor for Citywide Lead Prevention."

"I applaud Mayor de Blasio's continued commitment to decreasing the number of children with lead exposure down to zero, and I am delighted that he will have an experienced senior Advisor for Citywide Lead Prevention in his administration. Congratulations to Kathryn Garcia on her new position, she has done a terrific job in her current role as Commissioner of the Department of Sanitation. I am certain that the City will be a healthier and safer place because of her hard work," said **Council Member Andrew Cohen**.

"Commissioner Garcia is the ideal public servant to tackle lead prevention across New York City," said **Council Member Donovan Richards**. "Her work as Commissioner of Sanitation has shown that she knows how to roll her sleeves up and get the job done by any means necessary. I'd like to thank Commissioner Garcia for taking on this additional responsibility for the sake of ensuring no child in New York gets exposed to lead ever again."

"Investing in the future of our children, the position of Senior Advisor for Citywide Lead Prevention expands the city's reach in the efforts to reduce childhood lead exposure to zero. I commend the mayor in his choice of naming Kathryn Garcia the senior advisor so that there will be a further decrease in the number of children with blood lead levels of 5 mcg/dL or greater. Commissioner Garcia has been very effective in her position as the head of DSNY, her experience and expertise will be an asset in this new role," said **Council Member Andy King**.

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