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**A RECOVERY FOR ALL OF US: MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES NEW
PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT NEW YORKERS EXPERIENCING SERIOUS MENTAL
ILLNESS**

New investments will increase Intensive Mobile Treatment teams, Clubhouse capacity and launch a new, flexible model of mental health care for New Yorkers

NEW YORK—Mayor de Blasio today announced a new, comprehensive effort to support New Yorkers experiencing serious mental illness. Through a range of new investments, the City will build on its existing resources to create a new, flexible model for mental health care to reach more New Yorkers and help them stay connected to care.

“As we rebuild from the pandemic and drive a recovery for all of us, our mission to bring mental health care to every New Yorker has never been more urgent,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “For those who are dealing with the profound challenge of serious mental illness – you’re not alone. Your city sees you, and we are here to help.”

“Nearly one in every 25 New Yorkers lives with a serious mental illness, making it more difficult for them to maintain relationships with family and friends, continue education, secure employment, housing, and other basic needs. These expanded services and new programs will build on existing efforts, that are in keeping with our goal to provide mental health support for all New Yorkers,” said **First Lady Chirlane McCray**. “Despite the fact that one half of all chronic mental illness begins by the age of 14 and three-quarters by the age of 24, there has never been a comprehensive system of care in our country. Too many people fall repeatedly in crisis and are disconnected from compassionate support.”

Around 280,000 adult New Yorkers have serious mental illness, such as diagnoses of schizophrenia or major depressive disorder accompanied by substantial functional impairment. Too many are not connected to the care they need, and the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated needs and access challenges – with particular need among people who are experiencing homelessness or have been involved in the criminal justice system.

To help New Yorkers with the most serious mental health needs stay connected to care, New York City is significantly expanding community-based treatment options, including:

- **25 new Intensive Mobile Treatment teams:** Created in 2016 by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene with support from ThriveNYC, Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) has reached directly into communities to bring mental health care to New Yorkers

who have been poorly served by traditional care systems — such as New Yorkers experiencing homelessness, substance use disorders and those involved with the criminal justice system. IMT's peers, nurses, social workers, and psychiatrists work to ensure that clients stay connected to care over time. From launch, 90% of clients have stayed in services for a year or more and 39% of clients who were unhoused, many experiencing street homelessness, have moved into housing. The 25 new IMT teams will serve 675 more people, eliminating IMT's current waiting list. New teams will begin accepting referrals in August 2021.

- **Adding more Clubhouse Capacity:** Clubhouses are spaces where people experiencing serious mental illness can build social connections, get resources and find a supportive community. The City will expand clubhouse membership by 25%, from the current 3,000 to 3,750 by December 31, 2021. The City will also invest in engagement strategies to help spread the word about Clubhouses and reach those experiencing homelessness and other populations needing a higher level of support. Clubhouse members and staff will conduct outreach and enrollment activities citywide at sites which serve these populations such as soup kitchens, pantries, shelters, justice related settings and hospitals and geographic areas and settings where they may reside such as Times Square, parks, train and subway stations.

Launching CONNECT: The Continuous Engagement between Community and Clinic Treatment (CONNECT) will be a new, innovative program that will serve up to 850 clients with serious mental illness with integrated mobile and brick-and-mortar treatment. Through this innovative and flexible model of care, clients will be able to engage in intense mental health and substance use treatment and services that aim to address social determinants of health, such as housing insecurity or employment. The program model is expected to begin serving clients by January 2022.

These three strategies will be managed by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, with programmatic oversight from the Mayor's Office of ThriveNYC.

The programs announced today contribute to a significant citywide commitment to serve New Yorkers with serious mental illness. They add to considerable work already underway, including programs for New Yorkers with serious mental illness at the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, street outreach teams and Safe Havens supported by the Department of Homeless Services, and extensive behavioral healthcare services provided by NYC Health + Hospitals. During the last seven years, the City has made a concerted effort to expand services for those who are experiencing serious mental illness or moments of crisis, including:

- **75 mobile treatment teams, 16 of which are new during the de Blasio administration, with a capacity to serve 4,629 clients at any given time.** During the COVID-19 pandemic, these mobile treatment teams provided critical services to keep those with serious needs connected to care and achieved a high level of client retention. The most recent data on client retention shows that mobile treatment teams were able to keep clients engaged in care at nearly the same levels before and during the pandemic. Across mobile teams, the percentage of clients who continued to receive treatment from a team for three months or longer was 82 percent during the first three months of the

pandemic (April–June 2020), as compared to 85 percent in the three months before the pandemic (January–March 2020).

- **Co-Response Teams**, which include two police officers and one behavioral health professional, are a pre- and post-crisis intervention for people with mental illness and substance use disorders who may be at an elevated risk of harm to themselves or others. Co-Response Teams connect or re-connect people to care or another stabilizing support, including medical, mental health, legal, housing and other social and clinical services. In the last four years, these teams have assisted more than 2,000 people across the city.
- **Expanded Mobile Crisis Team capacity**. Teams, which can include psychiatrists, social workers, peers and nurses, and which are deployed 20,000 per year by NYC Well and hospitals to provide treatment intervention and follow-up support to adults and children, often in their homes
- **Support and Connection Centers** that offer an alternative to avoidable emergency room visits or criminal justice interventions for people with mental health or substance use needs.
- **Expanded capacity in the City’s Assisted Outpatient Treatment program**, which provides mental health services to a small number of individuals for whom treatment has been mandated in civil court.
- **Support Housing**, which provides supportive social services to tenants

“We are dramatically expanding upon what we know works — bringing mental health care directly to communities to meet New Yorkers where they are,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Dave A. Chokshi**. “With these new investments, we’ll be able to better serve those who need it most.”

"New York City prioritizes care for people with the most serious needs", said **Susan Herman, Director of the Mayor's Office of ThriveNYC**. "Building on a strong foundation, these new programs will deliver critical, life-changing - and maybe even life-saving - help for people with profound mental health challenges, many of whom are experiencing homelessness, criminal justice involvement, and other challenges that make it difficult to stay connected to more traditional forms of care."

“For too long, people living with serious mental illness have been relegated to the margins of society - primarily dealt with through the criminal-legal system or emergency and hospital services. With this funding, NYC is making an historic investment at a critical time that recognizes serious mental illness as a social justice issue deserving of comprehensive community-based services, supports and resources such as what Fountain House provides. For decades, Fountain House and the model it inspired across the city and country, called clubhouses, have used an innovative, strength-based approach, proving that people with serious mental illness can chart their own trajectories and achieve their goals, including going

back to work and school. During the pandemic, our community has made these resources available virtually, and continued to expand our membership of people living with serious mental illness. But the need is great. This investment by the city is going to enable Fountain House and the coalition of clubhouses it leads across the city to meet the historic levels of need we are seeing as we grapple with the enormous mental health challenges that are the long tail of the pandemic. As importantly, this investment is a clarion call for how we as a society need to think about and support people living with serious mental illness, that positions New York City as a leader in the nation." **Ashwin Vasan, MD, PhD, President and CEO, Fountain House.**

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