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HEALINGNYC: MAYOR AND FIRST LADY ANNOUNCE \$22 MILLION EXPANSION OF CITY'S PLAN TO COMBAT OPIOID EPIDEMIC

New investment will create peer intervention programs at more hospitals, increase naloxone distribution and connect more New Yorkers to treatment

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio and First Lady Chirlane McCray today announced a \$22 million annual investment to expand HealingNYC, the citywide plan to combat the opioid epidemic. This new investment will create peer intervention programs at more hospitals across the City, increase naloxone distribution and training on how to use this lifesaving drug, and connect more New Yorkers struggling with substance misuse to treatment. With this new investment, the City will spend a total of \$60 million annually to reduce opioid overdose deaths.

More New Yorkers died from drug overdose in 2016 than suicides, homicides and motor vehicle crashes combined. The City launched HealingNYC in March 2017 to reverse this surge in overdose deaths. While the 2017 opioid overdose data is still provisional, the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is seeing a flattening in the overdose death rate compared to 2016. The City predicts that this expanded HealingNYC could help save as many as 400 lives by 2022.

“The opioid epidemic has destroyed lives and hurt families across the country. In New York City, we are harnessing every tool to stop this deadly surge in its track,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “This new investment will help to save more lives and connect those struggling with addiction to treatment.”

“Addiction is a chronic disease, and people suffering from any disease need our help and support, not our judgment or punishment,” said **First Lady Chirlane McCray**, who leads the City’s mental health and substance misuse efforts. “Through ThriveNYC, we’re working hard to change the way people think about addiction and mental illness, establish prevention protocols, and create a culture of healing and wellness. With this expanded investment, we will open more doors to support for those who need it.”

“We are beginning to see some encouraging signs in the data regarding overdose deaths,” said **Dr. Herminia Palacio, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services**. “From 2016 to 2017, the number of opioid overdose deaths is flattening, rather than continuing to shoot

upward. But we have much more work to do – and that’s why we’re announcing new investments to expand HealingNYC, so that we can serve more people in the emergency department and inpatient settings, equip more front-line City staff and community members with naloxone, and expand our crisis response tools – including deploying peers with lived experience - to serve people at risk of overdose.”

This new funding will start in Fiscal Year 2019 and be at full ramp up in Fiscal 2020. With this additional \$22 million annual investment, the City will implement the following strategies:

- **Expand Emergency Department Peer-Based Interventions:** New York City Health + Hospitals will expand its peer advocate program from three to all 11 of its emergency departments by the end of 2018. DOHMH will complete expansion of the Relay peer intervention program to 15 private hospitals by June 2020, up from the 10 sites currently slated for funding. With the expansion of these two programs, New Yorkers with an opioid use disorder will have access to peer support at the 26 hospitals that provide nearly 75% of all emergency services for overdose.
- **Expand Inpatient Hospital Interventions at Health + Hospitals:** NYC Health + Hospitals will expand plans for its Consult for Addiction Treatment and Care in Hospitals (CATCH) program from four to six sites, with four to be launched in Fall 2018 and the other two by the end of 2019. CATCH teams will connect inpatients admitted with substance abuse disorder to medically assisted treatment and outpatient care. The six sites will be NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue, /Lincoln, /Metropolitan, /Coney Island, /Elmhurst, and /Woodhull. These sites were chosen because their neighborhoods are some of the hardest hit by the opioid epidemic.
- **Launch “Leave Behind” Naloxone Program:** FDNY EMS will distribute 5,000 naloxone kits annually at homes they visit in response to an overdose call. The leave behind program will launch by the end of summer 2018.
- **Establish End Overdose Training Institute:** DOHMH will launch the End Overdose Training Institute by spring 2018 to teach 25,000 New Yorkers annually, including front line city workers, how to administer and distribute naloxone.
- **Expand HOPE Program:** The City will expand the HOPE program which diverts people arrested on low-level drug offenses into treatment rather than the criminal justice system. The City will fund peer workers in Staten Island, and launch a new HOPE program in the Bronx. This new investment will divert 1,400 people annually from the criminal justice system and connect them to medication-assisted treatment and other resources.
- **Expand Crisis Response Services:** The City will hire 29 additional staff to expand the capacity of the Health and Engagement Assessment Team, and Rapid Assessment Response Team which help to respond to overdose calls and connect New Yorkers to

care. This additional staff will help to enhance the DOHMH and NYPD 24/7 Triage Desk to coordinate the City's response to opioid overdoses.

"Healing NYC has been critical in addressing the opioid crisis and this expansion will go a long way in providing the medical and mental health supports necessary to help New Yorkers who use drugs and are at risk of overdosing," said **Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T.**

Bassett. "These new and expanded initiatives will provide New Yorkers in communities across the City with the support to prevent overdose and to engage them in the care and treatment that can prevent untimely death and promote recovery."

"Thousands of times a year FDNY Paramedics, EMTs and Firefighters have utilized quick intervention with Naloxone to save patients suffering from drug overdoses," said **Fire Commissioner Daniel A. Nigro.** "With this funding to expand HealingNYC, we know in the years to come that many more New Yorkers lives will be saved."

"The opioid epidemic is one of the most significant challenges facing health care today, especially for public health systems dedicated to caring for those most in need," said **Mitchell Katz, MD, President and Chief Executive Officer of NYC Health + Hospitals.** "Our work to improve access to evidence-based treatments—in primary care, emergency department, and inpatient settings—focuses on linking thousands of additional New Yorkers to life-saving care."

"With the help of the Mayor's HealingNYC initiative, NYC Health + Hospitals is not only building capacity to save lives at risk of opioid overdose, but also fostering a culture of compassion that will make us national leaders in caring for people with all substance use disorders," said **Luke Bergmann, PhD, Assistant Vice President of the NYC Health + Hospitals Office of Behavioral Health.**

Elizabeth Glazer, Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, said, "Programs like HOPE have the potential to be life-saving. They also represent a critical turning point in how New York City works with people who have drug dependencies, by calibrating our justice system so that it can be a pathway to treatment and recovery."

The opioid crisis has had serious effects on families throughout New York City. Rates of drug overdose deaths in New York City more than doubled between 2010 and 2016, increasing from 8.2 per 100,000 residents in 2010 to 19.9 per 100,000 residents in 2016. DOHMH reports that while drug overdose deaths affect every neighborhood and demographic in New York City, residents of impoverished neighborhoods are the hardest hit.

Since HealingNYC was launched in March 2017, the City has distributed nearly 100,000 naloxone kits to opioid overdose prevention programs; expanded access to medications for addiction treatment; launched *Relay*, a new peer-based program in hospital emergency departments for people who experienced an overdose; trained more than 700 clinicians to prescribe buprenorphine; offered 1:1 education on judicious opioid prescribing to 1,000 doctors; and significantly increased community outreach and public education efforts.

“As I continue to reiterate, we won't declare victory until there is not a single overdose death. I commend the Mayor and First Lady for aggressively revising the Healing NYC initiative to save more lives than they initially targeted by investing in what we know is working—such as District Attorney McMahon's HOPE program. The great work being done every day by law enforcement, hospitals, government entities, and treatment providers to combat this epidemic will be bolstered by this much-needed infusion of resources,” said **Borough President James Oddo**.

Staten Island District Attorney Michael E. McMahon said, “Since January of 2017, the HOPE program has diverted hundreds of Staten Islanders battling substance abuse out of the criminal justice system and into meaningful engagement with recovery services. The lynchpin of this groundbreaking effort are our peer mentors, who literally bring HOPE participants out of jail and onto their first step in recovery. I would like to thank Mayor De Blasio and First Lady McCray for their commitment to this life-saving program, for expanding it beyond our shores, and for recognizing that we must not waver in our commitment to helping those who find themselves trapped in the depths of addiction.”

“No American city has been untouched by the opioid epidemic and New York City is similarly suffering,” said **U.S. Representative Joe Crowley, Chairman of the House Democratic Caucus**. “Healing NYC has saved lives by pursuing a rehabilitative, rather than punitive approach, in addressing this crisis. By expanding this program, Mayor de Blasio and First Lady McCray will draw New Yorkers struggling with addiction out from the shadows and help them find the path to recovery.”

“We are in the midst of a nationwide opioid crisis. What has been largely perceived as a rural white problem has now become widespread among black Americans in urban communities. Studies show that black Americans are dying at alarming rates of fentanyl overdoses. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported in 2017 that drug deaths for black Americans increased by 41% compared – outpacing any other racial or ethnic group,” said **U.S. Representative Yvette D. Clarke**. “This Spring, I will introduce legislation to help combat the opioid crisis in both urban and rural communities. I applaud the Mayor de Blasio and First Lady McCray for their leadership and look forward to working with them to combat this very serious and very real issue.”

U.S. Representative Eliot Engel said, “The opioid crisis has touched every corner of our city—really every corner of our nation. So many families are struggling with this epidemic, and the more resources we can put towards treatment and life-saving care, the better. I thank Mayor de Blasio, First Lady McCray, and City officials for making this commitment to expand the HealingNYC program.”

“The opioid epidemic is a national crisis that is not letting up,” said **U.S. Representative Adriano Espaillat**. “Like so many communities across the country, New York City and New York State have seen increases in overdoses involving prescription painkillers and heroin in all socioeconomic circles. I applaud today's effort to invest critical funding in programs that will help save lives.”

“Healing NYC is a comprehensive strategy that has proven effective at addressing the opioid epidemic in NYC. With this additional funding, the City will be able to help more people and address this crisis at a faster rate. By 2022 hundreds of lives will be saved and our neighborhoods will be safer. I applaud Mayor de Blasio and First Lady Chirlane McCray continue giving this issue the attention it deserves,” said **U.S. Representative Jose Serrano**.

State Senator Andrew Lanza said, "The drug epidemic afflicting our community continues to call for an all hands response. Today we renew and expand our commitment to help family members, friends, and neighbors make healthier choices and enhance access to the support they need. I will continue to work with Mayor de Blasio to build upon the successes of HealingNYC as we band together to save lives."

Assembly Member Matthew Titone said, “How we spend tax payers’ money should reflect our priorities and values. Increasing resources to combat the opioid epidemic on Staten Island demonstrates the commitment of the city and the mayor to ensure we have the necessary tools to do just that. I heartened by this critical step we are taking to invest in prevention and treatment.”

“The expansion of Healing NYC exemplifies New York City’s commitment to defeating the opioid epidemic,” said **Council Member Diana Ayala, Chair of the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities, and Addiction**. “Programs such as CATCH and HOPE can save lives and reduce the addiction-to-prison pipeline, which has disproportionately impacted our communities for decades. Reducing overdose deaths requires a holistic approach and this expansion signifies a step in the right direction.”

Council Member Steven Matteo said: “Opioid addiction is not just a Staten Island problem, it is a New York City problem and a national problem, but there is no doubt our borough has been hit extremely hard by this epidemic. I have always believed that stemming the tide of fatal overdoses would require a determined, multi-pronged and intensive effort from all levels government and all facets of our community. There is now some evidence this approach is starting to work. I applaud the mayor for continuing to invest in these strategies, and I applaud law enforcement as well for continuing to break up the networks of illegal drug activity and cutting off some of these lethal substances at the source.”

“With overdose numbers at alarming rates, it remains clear that we must be relentless in our efforts to combat addiction. These additional investments in interventions and treatment build upon previous commitments to mental health care, drug treatment and enforcement. This multi-pronged approach is what is needed to combat this epidemic effectively and save the lives of countless New Yorkers,” said **Council Member Debi Rose**.

“Happy to hear that this expansion will include funding for peer workers to enhance the effectiveness of the HOPE program here on Staten Island. I’m also looking forward to the opening of the End Overdose Training Institute this spring, which will allow for much greater access to the Naloxone trainings that are in such high demand on Staten Island and throughout our city,” said **Council Member Joseph Borelli**.

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