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NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 21, 2018
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**MAYOR DE BLASIO AND FIRST LADY MCCRAY ANNOUNCE ALEXIS CONFER
AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THRIVENYC**

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio and First Lady Chirlane McCray announced today that Alexis Confer will serve as the first-ever Executive Director of ThriveNYC, the City’s \$850 million comprehensive plan to address mental illness and substance misuse. Confer has served in the de Blasio Administration since 2014, first as the head of the Pre-K for All Outreach Team and then as Chief of Staff to former Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives Richard Buery. Before joining the Administration, Confer held multiple leadership roles in progressive electoral politics and advocacy, most notably as the Pennsylvania Deputy Field Director for Obama for America 2012, and then as the first National Field Director for Everytown for Gun Safety.

Having built and led a number of outcome-driven teams to work on interagency initiatives, Confer has a deep understanding of how to bring critical City services to New Yorkers who need them most. This experience makes Confer well poised to oversee the day-day implementation of ThriveNYC as the Administration looks to expand its access to care.

“ThriveNYC has fundamentally changed how the City addresses mental health, and helped New Yorkers across the five boroughs access the services they need,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “With her experience in coalition building and overseeing major interagency efforts, I know that Alexis will help further the progress ThriveNYC has already made and ensure that the City keeps on connecting New Yorkers to care every single day.”

First Lady Chirlane McCray said, “Alexis Confer brings a wealth of experience leading and organizing national and City-wide projects, as well as a deep passion for the social issues that matter most to New Yorkers. I am excited and proud to have Alexis Confer at my side as the new Executive Director of ThriveNYC. Under her leadership, we will build on the early successes of ThriveNYC as we work to change the culture of mental health and substance misuse in our City.”

“I am honored and humbled by this opportunity to serve as the first-ever Executive Director of ThriveNYC,” said **Alexis Confer**. “Having worked so closely on this initiative the past few years, I understand and take seriously the responsibility that comes with leading what has become a shining national model for mental health service delivery. I want to thank Mayor de Blasio and

First Lady McCray for this incredible opportunity. It is because the First Lady's leadership that New York City is leading from the front on mental health reform, and I am inspired by their mutual commitment to this noble cause. I'm excited to get to work!"

ThriveNYC is one of the de Blasio Administration's signature policy initiatives. Launched in 2015, ThriveNYC has changed way the City approaches mental health and substance misuse. New Yorkers now have access to mental health services and trainings in all five boroughs. In 2016, the First Lady launched NYC Well, the City's first-ever one-call, one-click connection to behavioral health care available 24/7, completely free and confidential to all New Yorkers. NYC Well has received over 250,000 calls, texts and chats since its launch. More than 40,000 New Yorkers have been trained in Mental Health First Aid, a key tool in helping people recognize and address the signs of mental and emotional distress. Furthermore, ThriveNYC has also equipped over 17,600 young students with the tools to cope with stress through the Social Emotional Learning Initiative, and provided mental health consultants to more than 900 public schools.

Cities across the country are also looking to ThriveNYC as a model. Through the Cities Thrive Coalition, nearly 200 cities from all 50 states, Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico have joined together to share best practices and advocate for a better funded and more integrated behavioral health system. ThriveNYC has also been recognized as an innovative model for cities across the globe by the International City and Urban Regional Collaborative (I-CIRCLE).

"Alexis Confer is one of the most thoughtful, dedicated, and intelligent public servants with whom I've ever had the pleasure of working," said **Richard Buery, Chief of Policy and Public Affairs at KIPP and former Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives**. "She has a profound ability to develop and run massive interagency programs, and is the perfect choice to lead ThriveNYC as it expands to reach all New Yorkers."

"Mental illness truly touches every neighborhood in our City. Thanks to the First Lady's leadership, New Yorkers now know that they don't have to suffer alone," said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives J. Philip Thompson**. "I look forward to working with Alexis to help more New Yorkers access the mental health services they need."

"Having served as Chief of Staff to Deputy Mayor Buery, Alexis Confer has a deep understanding of the ThriveNYC Initiative," said **Dr. Herminia Palacio, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services**. "She is a skilled and passionate public servant, and I look forward to working with her in her new role as Executive Director of ThriveNYC."

"The most ambitious mental health program in the country requires ambitious leadership," said **Dr. Mary Bassett, Commissioner of DOHMH**. "I commend Mayor de Blasio and First Lady McCray on the appointment of Alexis Confer, an experienced public servant who has proven her ability to lead major mayoral initiatives like Pre-K for All. Alexis is smart, passionate, strategic, and hardworking, and an excellent choice to lead ThriveNYC as it continues to reach more and more New Yorkers all over the city."

"When serving as Chief of Staff for Deputy Mayor Buery, Alexis Confer was a reliable, effective, go-to problem solver in bringing to fruition the initial strategy and launch of

ThriveNYC,” said **Dr. Gary Belkin, Executive Deputy Commissioner of DOHMH**. “She has been indispensable to shepherding its growth ever since. The next several years will prove crucial to further advance ThriveNYC from a set of programs, to a public mental health strategy with broad impact and sustainability. With her background, understanding, and skill set, Alexis is uniquely positioned to help lead ThriveNYC into its next phase.”

“Among the most exciting developments coming out of City Hall has been the extraordinary ThriveNYC initiative led by First Lady Chirlane McCray,” said **Gail Nayowitz, Chair of the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Community Services Board and member of the New York City Board of Health**. “The appointment of Alexis Confer as the Executive Director of ThriveNYC opens another exciting chapter in this essential work. In Alexis, we have a trusted public servant who will bring her passion for equity, opportunity and inclusion to the issues of mental health. Alexis will also bring her greatest assets — the ability to lead across city agencies and build strong partnerships with NYC’s nonprofit, faith and larger civic community — to meet the dual challenge of breaking down stigma and increasing access to mental health and substance use services for more New Yorkers.”

“Alexis Confer represents the very best in public service,” said **Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer**. “Smart, passionate, and deeply committed to the people we serve, Alexis also knows how to get things done. Her work on making Pre-K for All a reality as well as her leadership role with Deputy Mayor Buery have shown she is capable. As Executive Director of ThriveNYC, I know Alexis will do so much to bring more awareness to mental health issues and provide so many with the services they need.”

“Alexis and I have spent many years in the trenches together. She is a proven problem-solver and deadline beater with a knack for undoing the most complicated knots,” said **Councilmember Justin Brannan**. “Whether it was the rollout and implementation of Pre-K for All or really any of the administration’s ambitious initiatives that required major interagency coordination, Alexis was more often than not the quarterback behind the curtain. The impressive results speak to her legit abilities as a leader. I have no doubt Alexis will exceed all expectations at the helm of ThriveNYC.”

“Alexis Confer’s stellar leadership has already had an indelible impact on our city,” said **Council Member Paul Vallone**. “As Outreach Director of Pre-K for All and Chief of Staff to Deputy Mayor Rich Buery, she has been instrumental in so many of the de Blasio Administration’s successful policy initiatives. She is the right person to lead ThriveNYC as it continues to reach more and more people, and I applaud Mayor de Blasio and First Lady McCray on this excellent choice.”

“I applaud Mayor de Blasio for appointing Alexis Confer as the new Executive Director of ThriveNYC,” said **Councilmember Keith Powers**. “Throughout her career, Alexis has proven to be smart, pragmatic, and engaged. Her appointment reiterates the Mayor’s commitment to mental health services through ThriveNYC.”

“From Pre-K for All to the Young Men’s Initiative to ThriveNYC, Alexis has played an integral leadership role in many of the City’s most successful initiatives,” said **Assemblywoman Nily**

Rozic. “She is a committed public servant who knows how to get the job done and I am excited to see the impact she will have as ThriveNYC’s first-ever Executive Director.”

“As the Director of Special Projects in my City Council Office, Alexis played point on a wide range of projects, including the re-zoning of Astoria,” said **Justice Peter F Vallone Jr.** “Since her time in Queens, she has - unsurprisingly - continued to play a critical, leading role in the implementation of key mayoral initiatives. She is uniquely qualified to lead ThriveNYC into its next phase, and I am excited to see the positive impact her leadership will have on mental health services throughout NYC.”

“As Deputy Field Director for Pennsylvania during the 2012 Presidential Campaign, Alexis was instrumental in keeping the Keystone State blue and sealing a mandate for President Obama’s second term,” said **Mitch Stewart, Founding Partner of 270 Strategies and Battleground States Director for the 2012 Obama for America campaign.** “Alexis understands how to effectively build a team organized around a central goal. NYC is lucky to have someone so skilled, hard-working, and compassionate at the helm ThriveNYC. I’m excited to see what comes next.”

ABOUT ALEXIS CONFER

Alexis Confer most recently served as the Chief of Staff to former Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives Richard Buery, where she played an integral role in spearheading Pre-K for All, Thrive NYC, Minority and Women-Owned Businesses and the Young Men’s Initiative. Confer first joined the de Blasio Administration in 2014 as the Outreach Director of Pre-K for All. In this role she led the outreach, enrollment, and partnership efforts during the first year of the de Blasio Administration’s signature initiative. The success of this innovative and responsive outreach team ultimately became a model for other citywide outreach efforts, including the Mayor’s Public Engagement team as well as the current ThriveNYC Outreach organization.

Previously, Confer served as the first Field Director for Everytown for Gun Safety, where she ran a multi-state strategy to pass common sense gun reform. Before that, she worked for President Barack Obama first as his Pennsylvania Deputy Field Director in 2012, then on the Presidential Inauguration Committee as the Deputy Director of National Day of Service.

Confer started her career in Nairobi, Kenya before moving to New York City and taking her first job in the non-profit sector at the Union Square Partnership BID. Alexis then went on to work for the New York City Council, as Director of Special Projects for Council Member Peter F. Vallone Jr. and as Chief of Staff for Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer. Alexis has a BA from the George Washington University and a MPA from NYU Wagner School of Public Service.

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