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**FIRST LADY CHIRLANE MCCRAY LAUNCHES EFFORT TO PROMOTE MENTAL
HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN THE LATINX COMMUNITY WITH THE LAUNCH OF
“LATINX THRIVE”**

Latinx Thrive coalition will train 10,000 New Yorkers in Mental Health First Aid; promote mental health resources in their communities

NEW YORK — First Lady Chirlane McCray today announced **Latinx Thrive**, a grassroots effort led by **ThriveNYC**, Latinx advocacy organizations, and New York City elected officials to promote mental health literacy in their communities. The coalition will work to decrease mental health stigma while connecting more individuals and families to **ThriveNYC** services.

By the end of 2019, the coalition will train 10,000 community members in Mental Health First Aid and host 100 listening sessions, known as “Thrive Talks,” where community members can share their stories, connect with others, and learn about available mental health resources. The First Lady announced these efforts alongside partner organizations and elected officials at the Latinx and Hispanic Heritage event at Gracie Mansion this evening.

“The Latino community adds strength and sparkle to the fabric our city,” said **First Lady Chirlane McCray**. “Latinx Thrive is the City’s commitment to address the stigma and other barriers that keep New Yorkers in the Latinx community from using the behavioral health services available to them. By working together with elected officials and community leaders, we will ensure that more Spanish-speaking New Yorkers are more aware of and have access to culturally competent mental health resources.”

Lack of information and knowledge about mental health among Latinos, Latinas, and the Latinx community prevents individuals from seeking treatment. The Community Health Survey reported last year that Latinx New Yorkers had a higher prevalence of depression (12%) compared with white New Yorkers (8%). However, white New Yorkers with depression were more likely to receive treatment for a mental health problem (58%) compared with Latinx New Yorkers with depression (39%).

Additionally, the current political climate has created a culture of fear among the Latino, Latina, and Latinx community, traumatizing its members and further isolating them from needed resources. **Latinx Thrive** will also work to build trust in government and serve as a reminder that New York City is here to help.

First Lady Chirlane McCray is recognized nationally as a champion for mental health reform. Nearly three years ago, she launched [ThriveNYC](#), the City's comprehensive plan to address mental illness and substance misuse. The First Lady has expanded this mission to over 200 members that are working under the banner [Cities Thrive Coalition](#) to support a stronger, better funded and more integrated behavioral health system nationwide. **Latinx Thrive** will leverage existing resources of **ThriveNYC** to support volunteer efforts. **Latinx Thrive** also joins both **Brothers Thrive** and **Sisters Thrive**, volunteer efforts committed to improving mental health literacy in the African-American community.

"Partnering with communities is a pillar of ThriveNYC's work, we want to meet people where they are," said **ThriveNYC Executive Director Alexis Confer**. "This coalition will help us achieve our goal of breaking down stigma around mental health and substance misuse and connect more Latino, Latina, and Latinx New Yorkers to available resources. I want to thank First Lady McCray for making this work possible through her continued vision and leadership."

"Increasing awareness about mental health and expanding services to help Latino New Yorkers overcome stigma and seek help is a key component in our mission to achieving health equity," said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Dr. Herminia Palacio**. "I am thankful to First Lady McCray and the ThriveNYC team for prioritizing this initiative."

"We want Latino and Latina New Yorkers to know they can take Mental Health First Aid for free, in English or Spanish, in their own community," said **Acting Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot**. "This class gives New Yorkers the tools to understand and address mental illness and substance use, and Latinx Thrive will help connect more Latinos to it. I thank First Lady Chirlane McCray for her vision in making this effort possible."

"I look forward to partnering with ThriveNYC on their work to engage Latino students and families," said Schools **Chancellor Richard A. Carranza**. "Latinx Thrive is a critical initiative that will reduce stigma and raise awareness about mental wellness in our community and in our city."

"Mental health impacts each of us, and individuals seeking help for mental health issues are strong and should be encouraged along their journey," said **Rep. Adriano Espaillat (NY-13)**. "I commend First Lady Chirlane McCray, ThriveNYC, and each of the partners involved in today's launch of Latinx Thrive to help raise awareness of mental health throughout Latino communities and help address issues and challenges we face when accessing mental health care, resources, and treatment. We stand united in our collective efforts to support individuals who are bravely taking steps to address their mental health. Together, our work will help end the stigma of mental health once and for all."

"Data shows that white New Yorkers facing depression are more likely to seek the help they need than Hispanics. Latinx Thrive will help raise awareness about mental health and emotional wellbeing, expand access to counseling services, and increase the pool of culturally competent professionals among in NYC's Hispanic communities. Many Latin families are facing increased fear and uncertainty as a result of national policies, I thank First Lady Chirlane McCray and Mayor de Blasio for supporting this important and timely effort," said **Rep. Jose E. Serrano (NY-15)**.

"Misconceptions often prevent members of the Latinx community from accessing the mental health services they need," said **State Senator Gustavo Rivera**. "First Lady Chirlane McCray's

work to expand access by engaging communities that lack adequate care in a language they are comfortable with is a significant step to breaking down the numerous barriers that prevent New Yorkers from addressing their mental health.”

“As a Latina and the Chair of the City Council's Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities, and Addiction, I am thrilled to witness the launch of Latinx Thrive. This initiative will work to destigmatize mental health within the Latinx community and ensure they are connected to culturally competent resources,” said **New York City Council Member Diana Ayala**. “I am especially hopeful this initiative will aid the Latinx community as they grapple with mental health challenges triggered by federal government's punitive policies. I thank First Lady Chirlane McCray and ThriveNYC Executive Director, Alexis Confer, for their commitment to make this effort possible.”

“I want to thank First Lady Chirlane McCray for launching Latinx Thrive, which will focus on critical mental health issues that sadly do not get enough attention in the Latino communities in our city. The prevalence of mental health challenges among Latinos requires thoughtful and meaningful dialogue, culturally-competent treatment and resources, and support to overcome stigmas in seeking help. Many Latino families are struggling with the same wellness concerns so many of us face, like depression, stress and thoughts of suicide. But others are dealing with the aftermath of traumatic experiences, whether it is Hurricane Maria or the horrors committed by our own government at the border. These New Yorkers should know that our city is here, that it is not forgetting about them, and that it wants to help everyone strive towards holistic wellbeing,” said **New York City Councilwoman Carlina Rivera**.

“Lack of information, language barriers, and access to health insurance are just a few of the issues preventing many Latinos from seeking mental health treatment. Latinx Thrive is a great step toward ensuring that the Latinx community is informed of the many mental health and wellness resources available, while breaking through the stigma and building trust in local government. I applaud First Lady Chirlane McCray for her commitment to improving access to much-needed mental health services for all New Yorkers,” said **New York State Senator Jose Serrano**.

“One of my top priorities in this coming session in Albany is to push legislation to improve funding and the reporting system on suicide prevention programs. This as part of my general concern for mental health issues, particularly affecting the Latino community, and especially among Latino teenagers. Every effort, on both the city level, with this Latinx Thrive campaign, and on the state level with funding and general mental health programs, is a step in the right direction to address an issue that too often is considered a stigma, especially in the Latino community. I salute First Lady Chirlane McCray for her leadership, and proudly stand beside her in promoting this effort,” said **New York State Senator Luis Sepulveda**.

“I am proud to support First Lady McCray and the NYC Thrive initiative, which seeks to create an equitable system of delivery for Mental Health services in our communities.” said **New York State Assemblywoman Carmen De la Rosa**. “Today's expansion of Thrive to bring solutions to the unique issues impacting the Latino community. For the past two years, we have been working to ensure that suicide prevention and mental health education is a priority.”

“Depression and suicide rates within the Latinx community is astronomically higher than other demographics,” said **New York State Assemblywoman Nathalia Fernandez**. “The Department of Health estimated an almost 5% of all Hispanic-Americans over the age of 18 suffer from serious psychological distress. A far less percentage of Latinx New Yorkers who have depression will seek help. Mental illness in our communities often times becomes normalized and accepted as a part of life. We, however, refuse to accept that as the way the die was cast. The Latinx Thrive initiative – started by the First Lady Chirlane McCray – is an excellent, much needed first step in addressing these mental health stigmas. By informing our communities of the resources available to them and by opening a discussion, we will hopefully be able to better address our neglected communities and help those in need.”

“As a mental health professional and NYC Council member, I can attest to the importance of promoting mental health in Latino communities and addressing the stigma that prevents people from seeking the help they need. Mental health is too often overlooked as a factor in poor educational outcomes, barriers to employment, substance abuse and general quality of life. I’m proud to support Latinx Thrive to increase services to Latinos /Latinas and provide supportive environments where people can share, connect to resources and others who understand,” said **New York City Council Member Fernando Cabrera**.

“With mental health issues on the rise, including within the Latinx community, we need to destigmatize discussions around mental health, and provide critical support and resources,” said **New York City Council Member Carlos Menchaca**. “This will take a lot of work, especially given the current political climate where immigrants are under attack and communities live in fear and may even feel disconnected from government. But with ThriveNYC’s proven dedication to the health of all New Yorkers, and their incredible resources, we are going to show the Latinx community that better days are possible. I’m proud to partner with Latinx Thrive on this very important mission.”

“The South Bronx community I represent suffers from some of the worst health inequalities in the state and nationwide, including mental health issues. Unfortunately, there is still a stigma in the Hispanic community around seeking mental health services, but we need to reach out and let them know that there are programs and resources to help. I support the launch of Latinx Thrive and hope that this campaign spurs the critical conversations needed in our community,” said **New York City Council Member Rafael Salamanca Jr.**

“The Latinx Thrive program will help close the information and treatment gap when it comes to mental health for Latino New Yorkers. For too long, many members of the Latino community have lacked access to mental health resources. I am incredibly grateful for First Lady Chirlane McCray’s efforts to expand mental health services to all New Yorkers and look forward to working with the entire ThriveNYC team to ensure all New Yorkers receive the care they need,” said **New York City Council Member Rafael Espinal**.

“Depression, substance abuse and other mental health issues introduce countless hurdles that wall off those suffering from them from the rest of the world. I fully support Latinx Thrive’s mission to eliminate social stigmas and language barriers from such obstacles,” **New York City Council Member Francisco Moya** said. “Thank you to Latinx Thrive and ThriveNYC for understanding that mental health issues transcend race, ethnicity and language.”

“Physical and mental health are both critical components of overall wellbeing,” said **New York City Council Member Antonio Reynoso**. “Yet lack of information and social stigma has kept many members of the Latino community from accessing the care that they deserve. Latinx Thrive will connect Latino community members with NYC’s available mental health tools and resources while helping to break the stigma associated with mental care. I thank First Lady Chirlane McCray and ThriveNYC for their efforts to expand mental healthcare to all New Yorkers.”

It’s not only essential that we build strong and healthy bodies, but we must also focus on mental health wellness,” said **New York City Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez**. “I applaud the Latinx Thrive initiative, led by a grassroots coalition, to generate outreach to provide mental health resources to the Latinx community in the city, and train community members to promote the benefits of Mental Health First Aid. Thank you First Lady McCray and the Thrive NYC staff for your efforts improving the City by increasing mental health awareness to all communities, especially those that are underserved.”

"Since our founding in 1989, Comunilife has worked to improve the quality of life and create a healthier tomorrow, for New Yorkers with special needs in the Hispanic and broader communities. We have created and implemented many innovative programs to support mental health, including the creation in 2008, of our Life is Precious™ (LIP) program to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate educational support, creative art therapy, and wellness activities to Latina teens, aged 12 to 17, who have contemplated or attempted suicide and their families. We are delighted and proud to be partners in the Latinx Thrive initiative," said **Rosa M. Gil, DSW, Founder, President and CEO, Comunilife**.

“The Hispanic Federation stands with the City of New York as we work together to reach our community to decrease stigma around mental health and connect our people to care. We are proud to partner with ThriveNYC and First Lady Chirlane McCray to achieve this much-needed goal,” said **Hispanic Federation President Jose Calderon**.

“Mental health awareness is on the rise, and it’s important for cities to tailor their outreach efforts to match the needs of the communities they are trying to reach,” said **Jonathan Soto, Associate VP of Strategic Initiatives at Union Theological Seminary**. “I applaud First Lady Chirlane McCray’s commitment to promote mental health literacy through Latinx Thrive.”

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