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**MAYOR ADAMS, NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS EXPAND ACCESS LIFESTYLE
MEDICINE SERVICES CITY-WIDE**

*Announcement Represents Most Comprehensive Expansion of
Lifestyle Medicine Programming in U.S.*

*New Expansion Will Provide Dedicated Team-Based Support for
Healthy Lifestyle Changes, Including Emphasis on Plant-Based Diet*

*Programming to Help Address Burdens of Type 2 Diabetes, Hypertension, Other Common
Chronic Conditions Disproportionately Impacting Black and Brown New Yorkers*

Services Will Be Expanded to Six New Public Health Care Sites Across NYC

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams and NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H) today announced the expansion of their groundbreaking lifestyle medicine services at six public health care sites across New York City — the most comprehensive expansion of lifestyle medicine programming in the U.S. Modeled off the popular and successful Plant-Based Lifestyle Medicine Program at NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue, the new expansion will provide patients living with chronic disease the tools to make healthy lifestyle changes, included providing them access to plant-based diet resources. The program will expand to serve qualifying NYC Health + Hospitals adult patients at Jacobi, Lincoln, Woodhull, Kings County, and Elmhurst hospitals, as well as Gotham Health, Vanderbilt. The program expansion will be implemented over the coming year.

“Today, New York City is again leading the way with the most comprehensive expansion of lifestyle medicine programming in the nation,” said **Mayor Adams**. “This is personal to me — a plant-based lifestyle helped save my life, and I’m thrilled that New Yorkers in every zip code will have access to this critical programming. Together, we will stop feeding the health care crisis and ensure all New Yorkers can access the healthy lifestyle they deserve.”

“This expanded programming won’t only touch the lives of the patients served, but will extend to the families and communities of every person served,” said **Deputy Mayor for Health and**

Human Services Anne Williams-Isom. “That mom with type 2 diabetes or that dad with high cholesterol now has new tools to reclaim their health through everyday choices to eat, manage stress, and sleep better, as well as find enhanced social support. These programs can change individual lives by treating, preventing, and even reversing common chronic diseases, but will also ripple through to families and communities of those at risk of or living with a chronic disease. I want to thank Dr. McMacken, Dr. Katz, and all the staff doing this cutting-edge work and making a difference in the lives of so many New Yorkers.”

“Even through the pandemic, heart disease remains the leading killer of New Yorkers, with diabetes not too far behind,” said **Senior Advisor for Public Health and Incoming Commissioner of Health Dr. Ashwin Vasan.** “To move the needle, we will need to invest in both upstream policy reforms and downstream care and supports. Increasing access to dietitians, health coaches, and physicians through innovative approaches, like the Lifestyle Medicine Program, will help more New Yorkers with cardio-metabolic diseases live longer, healthier lives., I applaud Mayor Adams and our colleagues at NYC Health + Hospitals for their leadership and for taking a holistic approach to supporting the health of our communities.”

“I have seen the benefits of lifestyle medicine for patients with chronic diseases in my own clinical practice,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Dave A. Chokshi.** “As we continue to fight COVID-19, scaling these services will help build a healthier city for all New Yorkers. I applaud NYC Health + Hospitals for expanding this evidence-based program.”

“As a physician, I know that medicine doesn’t always come in the form of a pill. Eating a diet of fruits and vegetables can help prevent and treat chronic illnesses like heart disease - the leading cause of death among New Yorkers - cancer, and type 2 diabetes,” said **NYC Health + Hospitals President and CEO Mitchell Katz, MD.** “Low-income New Yorkers are much more vulnerable to these diseases and we want to continue offering them an alternative way of eating that works on a limited budget and is accompanied by a network of medical and nutritional professionals. NYC Health + Hospitals is grateful to Mayor Adams for his continued support and innovation as we tackle the problem of chronic illnesses.”

“The expansion of our lifestyle medicine services to New Yorkers throughout the five boroughs will be a powerful tool in addressing the burden of type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and other common chronic conditions, with benefits that could positively impact entire family units and those closest around them,” said **Michelle McMacken, MD, FACP, DipABLM, executive director, Nutrition and Lifestyle Medicine at NYC Health + Hospitals.** “We continue to be grateful to all of our advocates and partners who have made our existing lifestyle medicine services a success and this necessary expansion a reality.”

“Today's announcement that H+H's lifestyle medicine services are now available in all five boroughs is an exciting step forward for our city," said **Kate MacKenzie, executive director, Mayor's Office of Food Policy.** "Healthy food is essential for a healthy life, and this expansion couldn't come at a better time for New Yorkers. I am grateful to Mayor Adams for his passion and commitment to helping all New Yorkers make positive lifestyle changes and to Dr. McMacken and the team at H+H for executing on that vision."

In 2019, with the advocacy of then-Brooklyn Borough President Adams, the [Bellevue Plant-Based Lifestyle Medicine Program](#) — among the first of its kind in a safety-net health care setting — was launched. The program takes an interdisciplinary approach to reduce patients' cardiometabolic risk, where a team of physicians, dietitians, and health coaches support patients in making evidence-based lifestyle changes, including adopting a healthy plant-based diet, increasing physical activity, improving sleep habits, reducing stress, avoiding risky substances, and providing social support. The program has received national attention and there has been a high demand for services, including self-referrals from more than 850 New York City residents.

Each of the sites that will be receiving the expanded lifestyle medicine services will be equipped with a full-time dietitian and health coach, as well as physician teams. Participants will be referred by their health care providers or can self-refer. Eligibility criteria for participants include heart disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, prediabetes, and/or health concerns related to obesity.

Patients who enroll in one of the programs will receive a full medical evaluation by a team physician, with special attention to current lifestyle behaviors and social needs. They will also meet individually with a dietitian and a health coach and will participate in group education on topics including nutrition, physical activity, sleep, stress reduction, and other lifestyle pillars. The lifestyle medicine team will individualize the behavior change approach for each patient, considering cultural traditions, socioeconomic circumstances, family situations, and other key factors.

In addition to expanding access to lifestyle medicine services, NYC Health + Hospitals will partner with the American College of Lifestyle Medicine to help provide additional lifestyle medicine training to care teams, as well as with Plant-Powered Metro New York to offer cooking demonstrations to patients at the Kings County Hospital site.

“We know that evidence-based lifestyle medicine programs deliver powerful health outcomes, so seeing the significant expansion of these NYC Health + Hospitals programs to reach more communities affected by chronic disease and health disparities is inspiring,” said **Dr. Catherine Collings, president, American College of Lifestyle Medicine**. “This is innovative, vital, and time-sensitive work that will make a dent in the impact of chronic disease in New York City and provide a model nationwide. We applaud the leadership shown here by Dr. Katz, Dr. McMacken, and Mayor Eric Adams, and we encourage other health systems and political leaders to follow suit.”

“We are thrilled to partner with NYC Health + Hospitals to support its patient community with culturally-mindful education and skill-building for healthy eating,” said **Lianna Levine Reisner, president and network director, Plant Powered Metro New York**. “Throughout the city, people from all walks of life are being inspired by the power of food for health. They want to learn how to incorporate more fruits, vegetables, and other healthy plant foods onto their plates and into their daily routines. It's a great step forward to have the investment of the public health care system in life-changing programs and services that prioritize evidence-based nutrition and lifestyle.”

NYC Health + Hospitals' expansion of lifestyle medicine services builds on its commitment to put healthy eating and other beneficial lifestyle habits at the forefront of patients' care. In 2019, the system [launched Meatless Mondays](#) at all 11 of its acute care hospitals. The program was launched in an effort to provide a broader range of healthy, appealing meal options to inpatients and introduce them to the benefits of plant-based nutrition so that they could make important lifestyle decisions that would lead to living their healthiest lives.

"We are experiencing the worst public health crisis of our lifetime," said **New York City Councilmember Lynn Schulman, chair, Committee on Health**. "Contributing to that crisis was the lack of preventive and primary care services throughout the city. Today's announcement is a major step in providing accessible and essential health care services to all New Yorkers. These services will give them not only a revolutionary primary care option but also the opportunity to rethink their lifestyle. The development and expansion of innovative preventive services to address chronic conditions, like diabetes, is an important step in our recovery from COVID. I would like to thank the mayor and NYC Health + Hospitals for their commitment to better health equity for all."

"Communities of color are bombarded with unhealthy food choices and marketing, leading to poor health outcomes and racial disparities in diabetes, heart disease, and much more," said **New York State Senator Zellnor Y. Myrie**. "It's essential that we protect the health of New Yorkers and ensure they are able to make healthy lifestyle choices. I'm grateful to Mayor Adams and H+H for expanding these services at Kings County Hospital and the surrounding community."

"Connecting people with life altering services like these can change the course of their lives," said **New York State Senator Diane Savino**. "The connection between diet and disease is well documented and, sadly, far too many Staten Islanders don't know how to turn their health care crisis around. The addition of these services will be more than life altering, they will be life reaffirming."

"For years, the Bronx has lagged behind other counties in health indicators, and the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated existing health issues in our borough," said **Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson**. "The expansion of the lifestyle medicine services program citywide, including in two Bronx hospitals, will be an important step towards providing our communities with the resources needed to use food as a tool towards leading an overall healthy life and avoiding chronic illness. I applaud Health + Hospitals, Dr. Katz, Dr. McMacken, and Mayor Eric Adams for their continuous commitment to holistic health and equity."

"The expansion of this initiative will help more New Yorkers maintain healthy lifestyles by providing individualized health improvement plans and support," said **New York City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams**. "These services are critical for the many patients suffering from chronic disease to achieve holistic and long-term lifestyle changes that reduce their health risks. I thank Mayor Adams and NYC Health + Hospitals for expanding access to this innovative program."

"Offering lifestyle medicine service to more New Yorkers is a big step towards achieving health care equity in our city," said **New York City Councilmember Mercedes Narcisse, chair, Committee on Hospitals**. "With communities of color being disproportionately affected by

diseases, such as hypertension, diabetes, and other chronic illnesses, broadening access to this program within the H+H system will certainly be a valuable tool in helping patients make healthier, potentially life-saving, changes to their diet and lifestyle.”

“I applaud the mayor for the attention he is bringing to the health of New Yorkers, and ultimately as an example for the nation,” said **New York City Councilmember Gale Brewer**. “Eating more vegetables, fruits, and legumes most certainly will improve our immune system and keep New York strong. If this effort is coupled with training on how to prepare meals made from real, whole, delicious foods and not just swapping out one processed food for another. I am 100 percent on board.”

“I applaud Mayor Adams' holistic approach to medicine and the overall health and wellness of New Yorkers with the expansion of the Plant-Based Lifestyle Medicine Program to six more New York City hospitals,” said **New York City Councilmember Amanda Farias**. “I know that the neighborhoods and patients served by Jacobi Hospital will greatly benefit from the opportunity to have services to make healthier lifestyle changes to help with chronic disease and illness. Public health needs to be a constant priority for our communities. Thank you, Mayor Adams and NYC Health, + Hospitals, for your leadership in prioritizing the health and wellness of New York City.”

"As a lifelong vegetarian, I know that lifestyle choices have a direct impact on health. I'm excited that NYC Health + Hospitals will expand their lifestyle medicine program to Elmhurst Hospital, so that our community can access the life-saving expertise of physicians, dieticians, and health coaches," said **New York City Councilmember Shekar Krishnan**.

“NYC Health + Hospitals is leading the way in offering health care services that affect patients’ everyday lifestyle habits,” said **New York City Councilmember Julie Menin**. “Proper and effective nutritional guides and services are most important for our vulnerable populations, like those with chronic conditions. Expanding the reach of these services citywide provides access to dietary resources that individualizes its patients and offers an equitable approach for contemporary lifestyle needs.”

"A healthy lifestyle is the cornerstone of any person's wellbeing," said **New York City Councilmember Chi Osse**. “It is wonderful to see the city taking these steps to elevate this important component of health care, as well as to know that this program will be carried out in a culturally-mindful manner."

"There is no question that Mayor Eric Adams and NYC Health + Hospitals have embarked on a winning strategy to provide the most powerful patient-centric health and healing services to their communities,” said **Dr. Dexter Shurney, senior vice president/chief medical officer, Adventist Health Wellbeing, president, Blue Zones Well-Being Institute**. “Lifestyle medicine is a proven model for the prevention, treatment, and reversal of disease. As a result of NYC Health + Hospitals’ commendable expansion of their lifestyle medicine services, patients will benefit from improved health outcomes and well-being. This is truly a model to inspire the nation.”

"Today we face not just a pandemic of COVID-19, but also a pandemic of cardiovascular disease—which scientific literature demonstrates could be dramatically improved with the nutrition and

lifestyle behaviors that Dr. McMacken has championed for years,” said **Kim Allan Williams, Sr., M.D., MACC, FAHA, MASNC, FESC, James B. Herrick professor and chief, Division of Cardiology, Rush University Medical Center; past-president, American College of Cardiology.** “I applaud Mayor Adams, Dr. Katz, and Dr. McMacken for supporting the expansion of lifestyle medicine programs across NYC Health + Hospitals. This is timely if we expect to improve outcomes, extend lives, reduce health care costs and sustain the planet.”

“Investing in affordable, accessible, science-backed ways to use lifestyle as medicine for preventing and managing chronic diseases is the future of medicine,” said **Sharon Horesh Bergquist, MD, FACP, Rollins senior distinguished clinician and associate professor of Medicine, Emory School of Medicine; founding director, Emory Lifestyle Medicine & Wellness.** “I believe the expansion of lifestyle medicine services at NYC Health + Hospitals combined with Dr. Michelle McMacken’s leadership are a giant step toward addressing epidemic rates of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and obesity.”

“The American Heart Association supports efforts designed to make New Yorkers healthier. Better dietary habits, as well as increasing access to physical activity, improved sleep, stress reduction, and tobacco cessation are all needed to improve health outcomes in our city, especially in under-resourced communities,” said **Rafael Ortiz, M.D., president, American Heart Association Board of Directors in New York City, and chief of Neuro-Endovascular Surgery, Lenox Hill Hospital.** “The American Heart Association applauds the mayor and his administration’s efforts to make health a priority for all New Yorkers.”

“We cannot transform health care without addressing unhealthy lifestyle behaviors, the root cause of our chronic disease burden. Even though we know that the single greatest opportunity to improve health and reduce premature deaths lies in personal behavior, we have not addressed this major health determinant,” said **Padmaja Patel, MD, FACLM, DipABLM, medical director, Lifestyle Medicine Center, Midland Health in Midland, Texas.** “It is so encouraging to see NYC Health + Hospitals leading the nation in bringing about real change in health care under the leadership of Dr. Katz, Dr. McMacken, and Mayor Eric Adams. It is time lifestyle medicine becomes foundational to all health and health care.”

“We applaud the expansion of this powerful Lifestyle Medicine program throughout the NYC Health + Hospitals system,” said **Robert Ostfeld, MD, MSc., director, Preventive Cardiology, Montefiore Health System.** “In our aligned Cardiac Wellness Program at Montefiore, we encourage patients to embrace a plant-based diet with the goal of preventing disease and improving cardiovascular risk. In our experience, such interventions can lead to profound health benefits. This NYC Health + Hospitals initiative is an inspiration to health care systems worldwide, a boon for New Yorkers, and we are proud to share a similar vision.”

“NYC Health + Hospitals’ groundbreaking lifestyle program, supported by Mayor Eric Adams, is designed to incorporate plant-based diet resources, evidence-based nutrition, and lifestyle changes, and dietitians — everything New York City needs,” said **Theresa Gentile, MS, RDN, CDN, New York City media representative, New York State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.** “Science has long shown that lifestyle improvement aids in the management of chronic medical conditions and now New York City residents can receive culturally-minded skill building for healthy eating at six public health care sites citywide.”

“Broader access to lifestyle medicine services are needed now more than ever to address the epidemic of chronic diseases, like diabetes, obesity, and heart disease,” said **Dr. Kristi Artz, medical director, Lifestyle Medicine program, Spectrum Health in Grand Rapids, Michigan**. “The leadership shown by Mayor Eric Adams and Dr. McMacken is an inspiring example of how a city and a health system can come together to reach communities at scale for positive health impact using evidence-based lifestyle approaches. My hope is this will provide a framework for other cities to follow.”

"I am thrilled to hear about the expansion of this groundbreaking evidence-based Lifestyle Medicine program to more of NYC Health + Hospitals patient care sites — this is truly a game changer,” said **Mahima Gulati, MD, MSc, ECNU, FACE, FACLM, DipABLM, director, Lifestyle Medicine Program, Middlesex Health; attending endocrinologist, Middlesex Health Multispecialty Endocrinology; assistant professor, Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine, Quinnipiac University**. “Dr McMacken and her team at NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue have done trailblazing work empowering patients with simple, powerful, scientific tools that not only add years to their life, but also add life to their years. The six pillars of Lifestyle Medicine have been consistently shown to decrease blood sugars in patients with diabetes and in some cases, even reverse type 2 diabetes. I am hopeful that NYC Health + Hospitals’ leading plant-based program will set off ripple effects across health systems all over the country and inspire creation of similar programs nationwide, to help alleviate chronic disease burden and suffering among all communities.”

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