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**MAYOR DE BLASIO, FIRST LADY MCCRAY RELEASE THRIVENYC: A MENTAL  
HEALTH ROADMAP FOR ALL**

*Plan of action, developed with experts, providers and communities, will guide city toward more effective mental health system*

**NEW YORK**—Today, Mayor Bill de Blasio and First Lady Chirlane McCray released ThriveNYC: A Mental Health Roadmap for All. ThriveNYC is a plan of action to guide the city toward a more effective and holistic system that outlines 54 initiatives, 23 of them new, to support the mental well-being of New Yorkers. Additionally, ThriveNYC creates a model that can be applied nationally and a framework for advocacy.

ThriveNYC is a bold response to a challenging reality: one in five adult New Yorkers face a mental health disorder each year. Eight percent of high school students in New York City report attempting suicide, and more than one in four report feeling persistently sad or hopeless. Deaths because of unintentional drug overdose now outnumber both homicide and motor vehicle fatalities.

Many New Yorkers are suffering, even though mental health problems are treatable. In addition to the human toll, failure to adequately address mental illness and substance misuse costs New York City's economy an estimated \$14 billion annually in productivity losses.

ThriveNYC sets forth a plan to make sure that New Yorkers can get the treatment that they need – and lays out an approach that will improve the mental wellbeing of all New Yorkers. The plan sets forth six principles for achieving long-term change:

- **Change the culture** by making mental health everybody's business and having an open conversation about mental health.
- **Act early** to prevent, intervene more quickly and give New Yorkers more tools to weather challenges.
- **Close treatment gaps** by providing equal access to care for New Yorkers in every neighborhood.
- **Partner with communities** to embrace their wisdom and strength and to collaborate for culturally competent solutions.
- **Use data better** to address gaps and improve programs.
- **Strengthen government's ability to lead** by coordinating an unprecedented effort to support the mental health of all New Yorkers.

Taken together, these principles outline a public health approach to mental wellness that charts a path toward a healthier and happier future for all New Yorkers. ThriveNYC focuses on promoting mental health, preventing illness, and detecting problems early, in addition to treating mental illness.

Similar approaches have dramatically improved public health issues. For example, through a combination of policy bans on smoking, broad public communications, increased federal, state and local excise taxes and increased access to treatment tools, New York City cut the adult smoking rate by 35 percent in about a decade. The youth rate fell even more – by 52 percent.

“If you look at how mental illness has been addressed over the years, you see a lot of broken promises,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “You don’t see a concerted, holistic effort to help people be well and stay well. The people of NYC needed something different, something like ThriveNYC. It will take years to address the problem the way it should be addressed. But we need to start now, we need to start aggressively. The people of NYC deserve nothing less.”

“We want New York City to be a place where people can live their lives to the fullest,” said **First Lady Chirlane McCray**. “ThriveNYC is about more services, better services and easier access to services. It’s a plan of action that shows us how to treat mental illness – and also promote mental health.”

“Mental illness truly impacts the lives of every New Yorker – our quality of life, our health and our economy,” said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives Richard Buery**. “New York City can and will ensure that all New Yorkers have access to the services and treatment they need to feel better and live healthier. ThriveNYC is a plan of action to guide us towards a more holistic public health system that prevents, detects and treats mental illness.”

“Like much of the United States, New York City is facing a crisis when it comes to mental health. Mental illness and substance use disorders touch every family, and rank right up there with heart disease and diabetes as leading causes of poor health, shortening the healthy life years of New Yorkers,” said **Mary T. Bassett, Commissioner of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene**. “But there has been insufficient attention to prevention, and the fragmented array of services has allowed too many New Yorkers to fall through the cracks. The challenges ahead are significant, and the mental health system will not be fixed overnight. But the Roadmap launched today sets our City on a new path – with new resources and an unprecedented political commitment for all parts of city government to be part of the solution.”

“ThriveNYC fills both a vacuum of vision to align and guide policy, and a vacuum of credible action for realizing that vision. When we measure the huge impact and terribly common frequency with which mental illness and misuse of drugs and alcohol affects families in our city, it is clear we need to provide both,” said **Gary Belkin, MD, PhD, MPH, Executive Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene**.

ThriveNYC highlights include:

- **Mental health First Aid Training:** The City will fund and facilitate the training of 250,000 New Yorkers, to better recognize the signs, symptoms and risk factors of mental illness and addiction and more effectively provide support.
- **Public awareness campaign:** A city-wide public awareness campaign will reshape the conversation around mental health, promoting mental wellness and early intervention and educating New Yorkers about how to get services.
- **NYC Mental Health Corps:** The city will hire 400 clinicians and recently graduated Masters and Doctoral-level clinicians to work in substance abuse programs, mental health clinics and primary care practices in high-need communities throughout the city. When fully staffed, this Corp can provide 400,000 additional hours of service.
- **Mayor's Conference for Mental Health:** In 2016, the City of New York will host the first Mayor's Conference for Mental Health. The conference will bring cities together to share new ideas and promising initiatives and send a strong message that mental wellness must play a central role in ongoing policy development.
- **Mental Health in Schools:** Building on the expansion of mental health services in Community Schools, the City will hire 100 School Mental Health Consultants who will work with every school citywide to ensure that staff and administrators have an outlet to connect students with immediate needs to care.

For an overview of or to download ThriveNYC, click [here](#).

"Depression, substance abuse, and other behavioral health conditions take a terrible toll on American families and communities," said **CDC Director Tom Frieden, M.D., M.P.H.** "By scaling up effective prevention, treatment, and recovery supports, we can save lives, reduce suffering, and improve productivity. CDC is committed to working with New York City, SAMHSA, and other partners to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness in America."

**James B. Milliken, Chancellor of The City University of New York**, said, "CUNY is delighted to join Mayor de Blasio, First Lady McCray and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in the ground-breaking citywide initiative, ThriveNYC: A Mental Health Roadmap for All. This exciting new set of strategies, involving CUNY's School of Public Health and Hunter's School of Social Work, will offer much-needed resources for CUNY students and their communities throughout New York."

"New Yorkers identify mental health issues as one of the most prevalent and worrisome health issues in their communities. The urban environment, in all its complexity and diversity, can make addressing these issues all that more challenging. ThriveNYC uses a comprehensive approach that ranges from early prevention to treatment, which can result in systemic change that can promote mental health and improve mental health treatment for all New Yorkers," said **Jo Ivey Boufford, MD, President of The New York Academy of Medicine**

**Dr. Linda P. Fried, Dean of Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health**, said, "ThriveNYC approaches mental health with the population-wide lens that is critical to building sustainable solutions to benefit all New Yorkers. Mental health requires community-wide leadership and commitment, as well as solutions addressing individuals and the many factors that shape mental health. By improving the opportunity for mental health for all New Yorkers, New

York City's unprecedented leadership in these areas will strengthen our foundation as a city of well-being and economic vitality."

"The release of the Mental Health Roadmap for New York City by the de Blasio Administration and spearheaded by Chirlane McCray marks a historic, and potentially seminal, milestone. It is the first initiative by a government administration and First Lady on mental health care since Rosalyn Carter chaired the President's Commission on Mental Health in 1978. The vast problem of mental illness is in urgent need of a public health initiative for which the 'Roadmap' outlines an innovative and ambitious plan. The academic health care community welcomes and applauds this plan and stands ready to work with the Administration to refine, launch and implement its elements. This initiative has the potential to be game-changing, but requires commitment, coordination and funding. If successful, this effort could result in the improvement of the lives of many people and immensely benefit the city of New York as well as serve as a model to other parts of the country," said **Jeffrey Lieberman, Professor and Chair of Psychiatry at Columbia University and New York Presbyterian Hospital.**

**Dr. Herb Pardes, Former Director of the National Institute of Mental Health,** said, "I applaud First Lady Chirlane McCray's and the Mayor's leadership in launching an extensive plan to deal with the city's huge demand for mental health services. Expanding the services, focusing on early intervention, and sharing best practices are critical priorities. Mental wellness should be a universal concern. This is an important plan which means government will act to address the many widespread needs of our citizens for attention and action to address the destructive impact of mental illness and substance abuse."

**Mike Thompson, Principal of Global Human Resources Services, PricewaterhouseCoopers,** said, "PwC estimates the economic cost of mental health in the U.S. to be approaching a trillion dollars. Here in New York, we know that the success of our businesses is built on the efforts and effectiveness of our people and good mental health is foundational to helping our employees be the best they can be."

"As a federally qualified health center network that provides primary care and behavioral health services in several NYC neighborhoods, we are painfully aware of the need to address the mental health needs of our community members more comprehensively. The Mayor's initiative, ThriveNYC: A Roadmap to Mental Health for All, is one of the most significant changes to NYC's mental health system in many years, changes that will help our young people, seniors, those who use alcohol and drugs to cope with problems, as well as those who have chronic mental health problems. It will also increase access to care, and help reduce the stigma associated with mental illness, so people will be more likely to seek assistance," said **Dr. Virna Little, Senior Vice President Psychosocial Services and Community Affairs at the Institute for Family Health.**

"We applaud Mayor de Blasio and his Administration, as well as First Lady McCray, for their ambitious efforts to improve access to quality mental health and substance use services for city residents. ThriveNYC: A Mental Health Roadmap for All offers a comprehensive set of bold and innovative initiatives that when implemented will make a difference in the lives for those struggling with a behavioral health condition. Beacon Health Options is committed to work with the Mayor to improve the lives of New Yorkers and work towards the shared mission of

everyone living to their fullest potential,” said **Dr. Jorge R. Petit, Senior Vice President New York Region at Beacon Health Options.**

**Pam Brier, President and CEO of Maimonides Medical Center,** said, "Having worked in public service for more than 35 years, for more than five mayors, this is the first time that I've seen a thoughtful and concrete plan that lays out the public policy rationale and concrete plan to care for people's mental and physical health in a thoughtful way. The City's new Roadmap so obviously makes perfect sense, and it will have an enormous impact on the health and well-being of New Yorkers in a new and profound way."

“Identifying and treating mental health needs, as well as reducing the stigma around mental wellness, is particularly critical for children and youth. A big thank you to Mayor de Blasio and First Lady McCray for creating ThriveNYC, a roadmap for addressing the mental health crisis in New York. Starting early with children in pre-kindergarten, expanding access to school-based mental health clinics, partnering physicians in communities to address substance abuse issues, better data collection and a public awareness campaign are great steps towards addressing the mental health needs of our youngest New Yorkers,” said **Jennifer March, Executive Director of the Citizens’ Committee for Children.**

“Many congratulations to the City Administration, the Mayor and the First Lady for spotlighting the mental health and substance use services in the city. We agree that the children, families and adults who live with these disorders need assessment and help. ThriveNYC is a significant investment in giving major attention to the problems and the populations it is designed to address. The Roadmap to Mental Health for All is a momentous and valued supplement to the under-funded and very stretched array of community based services currently supported by the State and City. The Coalition and its members in every neighborhood are eager to be supportive to our City leadership as the new initiative rolls out,” said **Phillip Saperia, Chief Executive Officer of the Coalition of Behavioral Health Agencies, Inc.**

**Joel Copperman, CEO of the Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services,** said, “CASES applauds the First Lady's and the City's program to support mental health awareness, services, and innovation. CASES provides mental health services to justice involved youth and adults and their families. An innovation lab, using data better, supporting collaboration and public awareness represent the best practices to ensure all New Yorkers in need have access to critical mental health services. CASES looks forward to working with the City and our community partners on these important and innovative ideas.”

"Mayor de Blasio and the First Lady have demonstrated an unprecedented level of bold leadership that offers help and hope to thousands of New Yorkers with serious mental health conditions. In doing so, they are offering us a roadmap to improved health and recovery, housing not homelessness, diversion from jail and prison and a message that they are a welcome part of the fabric of their community,” said **Harvey Rosenthal, Executive Director of the New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services.**

“I applaud First Lady Chirlane McCray and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene for their sweeping vision for expanding access and availability of mental health and substance abuse treatment throughout the five boroughs. This is the start of an historic shift in the delivery of mental health and substance abuse care, because it will be tailored to meet the

special needs of every age group, from childhood through adolescence and throughout adulthood. It will tackle one of the most pernicious consequences of inadequate awareness and care – the stigma that prevents so many New Yorkers from seeking the help they need,” said **Dr. Angela Diaz, Director of Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center.**

**Steve Coe, Chief Executive Officer of Community Access,** said, “In response to a real and pressing need, the Mayor’s initiatives announced today point the way to a more hopeful future. It is time for conversations about mental illness to move out of the shadows, and I’m confident that the Mayor’s plans will have this effect. Drawn from innovative and effective programs, they provide new options for assistance that are alternatives to psychiatric emergency rooms and locked wards.”

**Tino Hernandez, President of the Coalition of Behavioral Health Agencies and CEO of Samaritan Village,** said, “I commend Mayor de Blasio and in particular, the leadership of First Lady Chirlane McCray for announcing ThriveNYC. Through their thoughtful leadership and commitment we will have additional resources and tools to address the mental health and substance use issues among New Yorkers.”

**David Rivel, CEO of the Jewish Board of Family & Children’s Services,** said, “It is highly commendable that the Mayor and the City of New York are recognizing that hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers struggle every day with mental health. We very much look forward to partnering with them as they tackle this most important of public health issues.”

“New York City has long been a leader in responding to the needs of people with mental health challenges from those in crisis, to those with serious mental illness, to those who are first experiencing symptoms of emotional distress. Similarly, MHA-NYC is committed to promoting mental health as a critical part of overall wellness, including the use of technology to help people access services, through programs like 800-LifeNet that has provided support and connections to services for 1.45 million New Yorkers since 1996 and now makes help available with text and chat. The Mental Health Roadmap demonstrates our City’s continued commitment to addressing behavioral health issues with innovative solutions, like the next generation call center. All New Yorkers deserve to have access to services, whenever and wherever they need them. The Roadmap makes that a priority,” said **Giselle Stolper, President and CEO of the Mental Health Association of New York City.**

“The VA Medical Centers of New York City are pleased to support the City’s efforts to expand outreach, education and holistic treatment options for veterans in need of mental health services,” said **Ann Feder, LCSW, VA’s Local Mental Health Programs Manager.** “We look forward to building upon our partnership with the Mayor’s Office of Veterans Affairs, and with the NYC Department of Health & Mental Health, to reach and provide mental health services to more veterans in our community.”

“Veterans and their families have unique mental health needs which are best addressed in the context of an integrative community health model, resourced to coordinate and integrate different levels of care, ranging from trained peer connections within families and communities to holistic interventions offered in non-clinical settings to clinical treatment and care extending back to the community,” said **Brigadier General (Ret.) Loree Sutton, MD, Commissioner, Mayor’s Office of Veterans Affairs.** “Under Mayor Bill de Blasio’s visionary leadership and

First Lady Chirlane McCray's courageous fortitude, New York City is leading the way to accomplish these goals for all New Yorkers, including those who have served and continue to serve on our behalf. Through our citywide collaborative partnerships and public education campaign, the stigma surrounding mental health challenges is well on its way to being overcome by a culture of integrative health and healing, comprised of community engagement, holistic services and clinical care accessible to all."

"Mental health issues have historically been high among America's veterans versus the general population, especially for those who served in Iraq, Afghanistan and the overall global war on terror. While the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has taken steps over the years to improve access to mental health care, today's release of First Lady Chirlane McCray's mental health roadmap puts New York City at the forefront of innovative and comprehensive leadership in supporting veterans' health while improving mental health outcomes for returning service members, veterans and their families throughout the five boroughs. The New York City Veterans Advisory Board applauds this initiative and looks forward to working with the de Blasio administration to help implement this roadmap," said **Todd Haskins and Joe Bello, Chairman and Secretary of the Veteran Advisory Board.**

**Kristen L. Rouse, Founding Director of the NYC Veterans Alliance**, said, "The NYC Veterans Alliance applauds the initiatives for veterans, service members, and their families outlined in First Lady Chirlane McCray's mental health blueprint. We are pleased that the City has heeded our call to connect the City's phone and online 311 service with the specialized resources of the national Veterans Crisis Line in the event of any queries related to veteran suicide. When we surveyed the NYC veterans community last spring, this initiative received the strongest support from respondents, and was the top recommendation in our detailed report last June. Another initiative we've strongly supported is the creation of a robust veteran outreach program, and the further expansion of this program under the blueprint will deepen and strengthen the City's capacity to address the needs of veterans and ensure they receive the services and benefits they've earned. And finally a coordinated public service advertising campaign that aims to reduce veteran suicide and provide positive messaging about veterans and military service will go a long way toward showing that our city is indeed marshalling its resources for veterans, service members, and their families – and that City government is increasingly a place where they can turn for help and support. We look forward to our continued work with the administration on this and future initiatives and programs."

"Trauma and Resiliency Resources, Inc. applauds Mayor de Blasio's launching of NYC Department of Veterans Services that includes expansion of the Veterans Outreach Team and integration of the VA Suicide Hotline into the 311 information system so the public will have immediate access to the Veterans Crisis Line phone, chat, and text resources. TRR also wholeheartedly supports the creation of a Veterans Holistic Treatment Fund that will provide grants to organizations that serve veterans and their families in order to bridge the gap between mind-body medicine and traditional clinical care. The grants will allow a variety of community-based settings to host evidence-based restorative practices. We look forward to collaboration with these much needed efforts to provide the very best treatment options for our city's veteran population. Thank you, Mayor de Blasio and First Lady Chirlane McCray!" said **Eva Usadi, Founder and Director of Trauma and Resiliency Resources, Inc.**

**Jo-Ann Yoo, Executive Director of the Asian American Federation** said, “We applaud our City’s First Lady for her singular effort to bring mental health to the forefront of our community’s discussions. In the Asian American community, the biggest barrier to accessing mental health services has been the lack of in-language assistance. We are doubly challenged by the deep-seated stigma of shame about acknowledging and addressing mental illnesses. Thus, we believe that the public awareness campaign will be central to helping our community begin a dialogue that will eventually remove this stigma and open the way for life-saving services.”

“Hispanic Federation applauds the Mayor and First Lady for their commitment to forging a roadmap for better mental health in New York City. The Latino community understands far too well the consequences of limited access to mental healthcare. In New York City, Latina teens are twice as likely to attempt suicide as their non-Hispanic counterparts. The interventions laid out in ThriveNYC will be crucial in supporting the excellent work being done by organizations across the city in the fight to eliminate mental health disparities,” said **Jose Calderon, President of the Hispanic Federation.**

**Reverend Dr. Cheryl Anthony, Founder at The Judah International Christian Center and Convener for the Health Committee of the Mayor’s Clergy Advisory Council,** said, “I am encouraged by the City’s commitment to engage communities of faith in its robust mental health roadmap. Oftentimes, faith leaders find themselves at the front-lines of the mental health crisis, yet many of us lack the training and resources needed to effectively address the mental health needs of the people we serve. We applaud Mayor Bill de Blasio and First Lady Chirlane McCray for taking this vital and courageous step. The faith community is prepared to be an active partner with the Administration and we look forward to providing a holistic perspective on this issue.”

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