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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO, FIRST LADY CHIRLANE MCCRAY APPEAR ON
NPR'S MORNING EDITION**

Linda Wertheimer: It's Morning Edition with NPR News, I'm Linda Wertheimer. Good morning.

As Mayor of New York City, what Bill de Blasio says and does often creates great interest – at times, scrutiny. This week de Blasio unveiled an ambitious plan to combat mental illness. ThriveNYC is an \$850 million program. Its aim is to hire 400 mental health clinicians for high-need communities, as well as providing mental health training to a quarter-million New Yorkers. Mayor de Blasio and his wife, Chirlane McCray, joined us from New York City to talk about how they hope this initiative will transform their city.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: We have a fundamental health problem in our city, in our nation, in New York City, as one-in-five New Yorkers affected by some form of mental illness. And this requires a very comprehensive response, and it begins with making sure people can get access to mental health services. One of the key components is something called NYC Support, which literally means if you call 3-1-1, you're able to get connected to a mental health professional, and then there's actual follow-up to make sure you get the appointments you need and the service you need – and that's something that never has existed. So, people typically have a problem and don't know where to turn, or try to get help and it doesn't stick.

Wertheimer: You know, mental health is often a struggle that gives rise to other issues, most notably, it seems to me, homelessness. Do you think that this plan would actually reach out and do something for the city's homeless population and people who clearly are in need of help?

First Lady Chirlane McCray: Absolutely. The key is to make sure that people who are suffering – people who have a mental illness – don't go on the street to begin with – that they are treated. There is such resistance to getting treatment because of the stigma, and we want to change that. We want to change the culture. We want to prevent people from living on the street because they – they can't get the kind of help they need.

Wertheimer: There's something that I thought was interesting about what you did, when you – when you unveiled your program. You did it with your family by your side. But beyond that, you're really drawing the family in and – and your family's issues with mental health. What on Earth made you decide – that's an extraordinary decision to make this so personal. Could I – could I ask you, Chirlane McCray, to answer that?

First Lady McCray: Yes, because it – it is personal. It's deeply personal. I wanted people to see us together because this is about families. You know – you've heard the statistics, one-in-five New Yorkers is likely to experience a mental health disorder in any given year. Well, that means that mental illness touches all of us at some time in our lives.

Mayor: And I think that it's also important to live out the notion of destigmatization. We had to come to grips with these challenges ourselves. And Chirlane and I both talk publicly about recognizing now, as adults, what our parents were going through – depression, in the case of Chirlane's parents, and alcoholism and PTSD in the

case of my father. And then, you know, what happens to us as a couple – our own daughter, Chiara, went through both substance abuse and anxiety challenges. And so, you know, we can't say we're going to address this problem and break down the stigma but not talk about the fact that it's in our own lives. We got to start with our own family.

Wertheimer: Mr. Mayor, I'd like to ask you about some of the things that are in the news – notably, the attacks, of course, that took place in Paris. As the mayor of the city, where the Twin Towers fell, you're facing a holiday season here. What are you doing to make people feel that this year it will be safe to go to the Thanksgiving Day Parade?

Mayor: Well, we've seen year-in and year-out the NYPD take that event – which is one of the biggest events in the nation – each year and handle it smoothly. One of the things we do in this city – we have 35,000 police officers and we don't skimp on putting out a very substantial police presence for these big events. You saw that on display with the Pope's visit, which was handled flawlessly by the NYPD. We have our own intelligence gathering capacity, which has proven to be very successful in the 14 years since 9/11. One thing I can say about New York City – we're the best prepared city in this country to both prevent terrorist attacks, and to respond, and we've had this parade for years. It's always been very well protected. Everyday people have two roles to play – one, not letting the terrorists win by not changing who we are; two – by being vigilant. You know, the eyes and ears of the people matter quite a bit here.

Wertheimer: That's the mayor of New York City, Bill de Blasio, and New York's first lady, Chirlane McCray – thank you both very much.

Mayor: Thank you, Linda.

First Lady McCray: Thank you.

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