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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 3, 2015

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**FIRST LADY MCCRAY REACTION TO STUDY SHOWING RISING DEATH RATES
DUE TO SUICIDE AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

Two Nobel-prize winning scientists from Princeton released new [research](#) showing that death rates for middle-aged white Americans are rising. The scientists concluded that the growing epidemic of suicides and the abuse of alcohol, heroin and prescription opioids are driving the rise. Below please find reaction from First Lady Chirlane McCray, which she posted on her blog, [FLO.NYC](#).

“This is not the type of finding we expect to see in the US: the mortality rate for white middle-aged men and women has been increasing since 1999. This kind of spike is 'virtually unheard of' in a country with access to advanced health care. Middle-aged blacks still have a higher mortality rate than whites – 581 per 100,000 compared with 415 for whites, but the gap is closing.

Researchers have attributed this spike in mortality deaths to an increase in suicides and substance use problems. In fact, a wider age group saw an increase in suicides, alcohol and substance abuse-related ailments.

This is the kind of study and these are the kind of numbers that should make our national and local representatives pay more attention. Clearly we can do more to attend to the mental health of all our citizens. If so many people are living in pain and dying due to mental health challenges, we have an epidemic on our hands that requires a public health approach.

Our City’s Roadmap to Mental Health is coming soon, and I hope other cities will join us in looking to reverse these numbers.”

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