

CUNY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH



New York City Health
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Intersectoral Forum on Advancing
Health and Equity in New York City
March 26, 2014

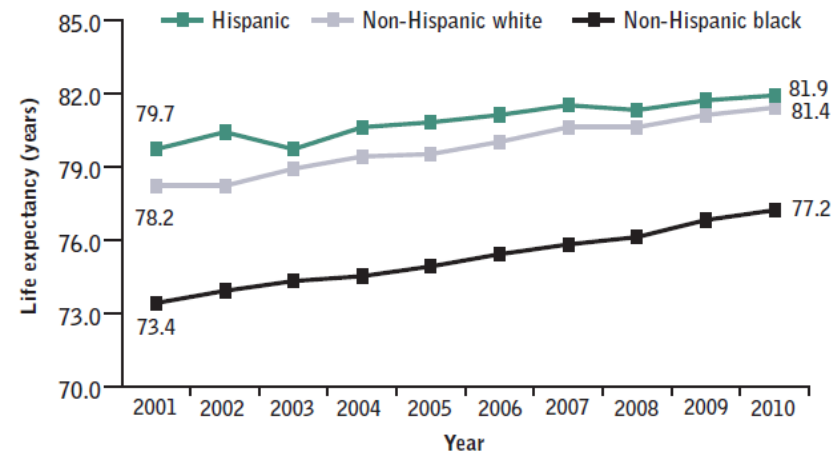
Forum Co-Sponsors



Forum Aim

Bring together officials from de Blasio Administration, health providers, community organizations and researchers to consider how best to maintain the public health advances of the Bloomberg years while taking on the deeper causes of ill health such as poverty, income inequality, unemployment, and inadequate housing.

Figure 3 Life Expectancy at Birth by Race/Ethnicity, New York City, 2001–2010



Forum Long-Term Goals

1. Initiate ongoing dialogue and action among city government, community organizations and leaders, health professionals, advocacy groups and researchers that encourages intersectoral action to advance health and equity in NYC.
2. Promote a “health in all policies” approach in NYC by identifying promising opportunities for adding health goals to policies in other sectors.
3. Engage community organizations, leaders and residents in shaping health policy in their community and in the city.
4. Produce and disseminate evidence that can guide policies and programs in NYC that modify social determinants of health and lead to improvements in living conditions and improvements in health equity.

Four Big Ideas Behind Forum

Take on the social determinants of health

Two centuries of public health research show that the most basic influences on health are the living conditions of ordinary people—their housing, education and working conditions and their access to clean air, water, safe food and affordable health care. The most significant increases in lifespan and reductions in premature death have resulted when these living conditions are improved for all sectors of the population.

Make “health in all policies” a reality

In 2010, the World Health Organization recommended that all levels of government adopt a “health in all policies” approach. Recognizing that today’s complex health problems have multiple causes, WHO urged policymakers to consider the health impact of policies in economic development, transportation, education, and workforce development, for example.

According to the American Public Health Association, health in all policies is a collaborative approach to improving the health of all people by incorporating health considerations into decision-making across sectors and policy areas. The goal is to ensure that decision-makers are informed about the health, equity, and sustainability consequences of various policy options at all stages of policy development.

Encourage intersectoral action to improve health

To make “health in all policies” a reality requires government agencies, nonprofit and private organizations and communities to work together across sectors to improve health and reduce inequality. For example, reducing obesity requires changes in our food system, schools, and parks and transportation designed to make it easier for people to choose healthier food and engage in more physical activity.

Engage communities in shaping health and health policies

In a democratic society, people have the right to participate in the decisions that shape their lives. Public health evidence shows that policies and programs that include insights of the people most affected by the problem to be solved are more likely to be effective, accepted, and sustained. Policy makers who want to make a difference find ways to engage community residents and organizations in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of public health policies and programs.

Workshop Questions

1. How can NYC overcome barriers to connecting young people aged 16 to 24 to work and education?
2. How can NYC develop an integrated affordable housing system that helps all sectors of the population find and keep safe, affordable, and stable housing?
3. How can NYC help older people find the resources to maintain community ties and health?
4. How can NYC help teens and adult women avoid unintended pregnancy?
5. How can NYC prepare young children to succeed in school?
6. How can NYC make healthy food more available and affordable and provide residents with the information they need to make healthy food choices?
7. How can NYC reduce interpersonal violence in homes, schools, communities and elsewhere?
8. How can NYC create new entry level jobs for the unemployed, recent immigrants and those with limited education in sectors that contribute to health?
9. How can NYC link people with mental health problems to services that can prevent more serious consequences?
10. How can NYC reform its approach to criminal justice to improve relations with communities, reduce rates of incarceration, and provide opportunities for reintegration of offenders into society?

Themes Emerging from Forum

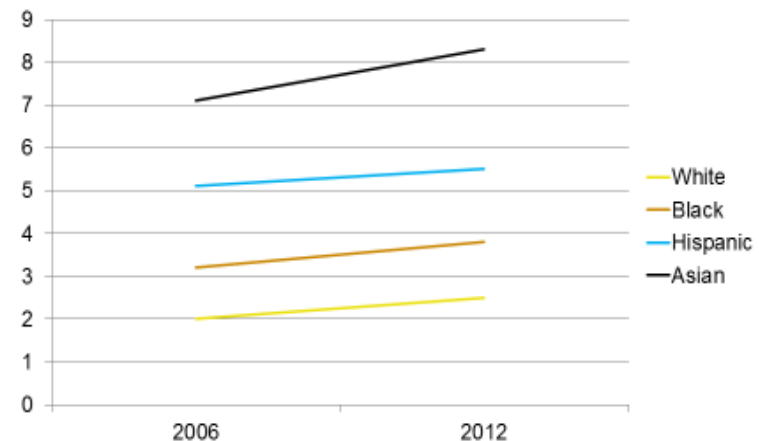
- Build on existing programs, policies and funding streams rather than starting a new initiative from scratch
- Create jobs that can help solve persistent health and social problems and also promote employment and economic development of low income communities
- Make existing data from multiple sources available to assess needs and inform and evaluate initiatives
- Use community and economic development to serve as a foundation and unifying theme for intersectoral initiatives
- Create safe spaces where different constituencies engaged in “making health” can convene, exchange information, evaluate, and debate policy options in order to find common ground for action
- Make economic and health equity an explicit goal of all intersectoral initiatives

Some Cross Cutting Questions Emerging from Forum

1. How can city agencies that serve defined populations with elevated burdens of ill health and risk better coordinate with other municipal agencies and nonprofit organizations to improve the health of the people they serve?
2. How can city government and community organizations identify policies that serve as obstacles to greater equity and take action to modify or end them?

Severe crowding: % of rental households, NYC, 2006 - 2012

(>1.5 household members/room)



More Cross Cutting Questions

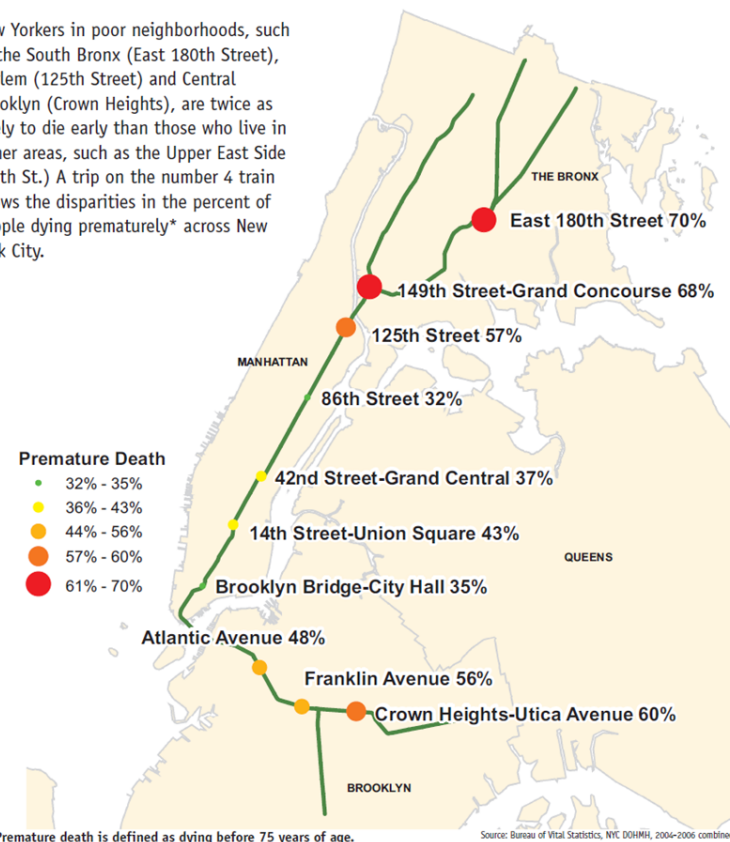
3. How can city government best use its capacities both to address social and health problems that represent market failures (e.g., in housing and food) while also recognizing opportunities for new public/private partnerships?

4. How can New York City modify existing safety net programs to create a suite of “second chance” programs and policies specifically designed to create new opportunities for health for the city’s most vulnerable populations?

HEALTH DISPARITIES ALONG THE 4/5 SUBWAY:

Residents of the poorest NYC neighborhoods die earlier than other New Yorkers

New Yorkers in poor neighborhoods, such as the South Bronx (East 180th Street), Harlem (125th Street) and Central Brooklyn (Crown Heights), are twice as likely to die early than those who live in richer areas, such as the Upper East Side (86th St.) A trip on the number 4 train shows the disparities in the percent of people dying prematurely* across New York City.



Thanks to Dr. Marc Gourevitch for image

Still More Cross Cutting Questions

5. How can city government best develop low income communities' health promoting assets such as experienced leaders and activists, networks of organizations with success in engaging residents in campaigns to promote justice, and young people wanting to make a difference in their communities?



El Jardin del Pueblo, Cypress Hills, Brooklyn. [Credit](#)

Possible Next Steps

1. Review and refine the recommendations developed at the Forum.
2. Re-convene workgroups to consider how its members can continue to work together.
3. Create Learning Collaboratives, groups of city agency leaders, nonprofit and community leaders, advocates and academics, to propose and evaluate specific options for advancing health and equity.
4. Organize Data Sharing Groups to identify existing sources of data on city's health and social problems and develop new inter-agency agreements to collect, analyze, and make public data from various sources that can re-frame our understanding of the problem in order to inform more effective policy and program responses.
5. Create an online inventory of model intersectoral policies and programs from New York and other jurisdictions to serve as a resource for city officials, nonprofits, advocates, and academics.
6. Prepare a policy brief describing an agenda for intersectoral, health-in-all-policies, and community engaged approaches to advancing health and equity in New York City in the next decade.
7. Re-convene in six months (i.e., September 2014) to meet with a larger group of Commissioners and Deputy Mayors to discuss concrete actions Forum participants and city government can take to advance the Forum goals.

Join the Intersectoral Forum?

- Add your name to our e-mail list.
- Suggest promising intersectoral programs and policies to advance health and equity in New York or elsewhere.
- Comment on our documents.
- Email your name and contact information to cdiamond@gc.cuny.edu



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Photo credit Ari Mintz

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