



**Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH**  
*Commissioner*

**Gotham Center**  
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Dear Health Care Professional:

According to recent estimates, more than half a million adults in New York City have depression and nearly 60 percent of these individuals do not receive treatment.<sup>1</sup> Mental illness impacts New Yorkers of all ages, races and ethnicities, but the distribution of mental illness varies greatly by income, with people living in poverty experiencing a disproportionate share of the burden.<sup>2</sup> Depression can also contribute to and worsen the course of chronic disease<sup>3</sup> and is associated with poor medication adherence among patients with chronic disease.<sup>4</sup>

Any primary care practice, no matter the size and resource level, can integrate depression care into their workflow. Collaborative care is one evidence-based model for providing medical and mental health care during the same visit. As a primary care provider, you play an essential role in detecting depression and engaging patients in treatment planning. The New York City Health Department urges you to:

1. Use the PHQ-9 to screen all patients for depression at least annually\* and to monitor response to care.
2. Educate patients on the connection between physical health and mental health, and counsel them on diet, exercise and other lifestyle modification, as well as self-care.
3. Develop and implement a treatment plan using key principles of collaborative care and engage patients in the planning process.
4. Consider social factors, such as employment and housing, that influence health and connect patients to community resources that address their social needs.

This Depression Action Kit provides clinical tools, provider resources and patient education materials to help you identify and manage depression with your patients and link them to resources that address their social needs. Your Health Department representative is visiting today to discuss ways to integrate these tools and materials into your work.

Working together, we can improve the health of all New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary T. Bassett".

Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH  
Commissioner  
New York City Department of  
Health and Mental Hygiene

\* Due to limited available evidence, the United States Preventive Services Task Force does not specify a screening interval for asymptomatic, average-risk adults. The recommendation to screen at least annually derives from expert opinion.