



## Overview of the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's COVID-19 Equity Action Plan

Though COVID-19 is a new disease, its patterns of devastation are familiar: Black, Latino, immigrant, and low-income communities have been disproportionately impacted.

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is implementing an **Equity Action Plan** to advance equitable policies and practices in the City's COVID-19 response. The plan uses focused messaging and increased engagement with community and health care partners in neighborhoods with a disproportionate burden of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths. **We recognize that underinvestment in these neighborhoods and structural racism are risk factors for COVID-19.**

The Equity Action Plan uses a racial justice framework and population-specific strategies to better reach community members. This approach makes sure that communities that have been hit hardest by COVID-19 receive the information, resources and support they need.

The Equity Action Plan has three main parts:

1. Engage with health care providers:

Work with community health care providers in settings with 10 or fewer doctors to increase their capacity to serve on the frontline of this public health emergency during all phases of the response; support providers to identify and address community health care needs to reduce risk factors for COVID-19.

To do this, we will:

- Assess the needs of independent providers in clinics and provide technical assistance to reopen their clinics and continue day-to-day operations.
- Encourage providers to offer telemedicine services and assist them with navigating reimbursement.
- Help providers reach out to patients to check in on them and connect them to care, including medication, vaccinations and health information and other resources.
- Explore ways to enable in-person primary care visits outside of usual office settings, such as mobile clinics.
- Provide medical supplies, including personal protective equipment.
- Sign up providers to become authorized enrollers in the City's COVID-19 Hotel Program, which provides hotel rooms for people who may have COVID-19 or who live with someone who may have COVID-19 and are not able to separate from other household members.
- Inform providers about City services and resources that can support their patients during and after the COVID-19 public health emergency (health, food, other social services).

2. Engage with community partners:

Work directly with community partners to identify health issues, create response strategies, increase awareness of general health information and make sure community members receive health care and have access to other resources.

To do this, we will:

- Continue to build relationships and partner with community leaders, community-based organizations and faith-based groups to better understand and meet community needs.
- Link community groups and members to City services and resources that can support their communities during and after the COVID-19 public health emergency (health, food, other social services).
- Conduct health and wellness check-ins with community members to identify health needs and educate them about a variety of health issues and connect them to care.
- Produce reports to City leadership identifying new and ongoing needs of community partners and members.
- Establish and lead the Test and Trace Community Advisory Board (CAB) in partnership with Health + Hospitals to ensure that the voices and needs of the community are considered as contact tracing moves forward.

3. Communicate with the community:

Give up-to-date information to increase community members' understanding of COVID-19 and work to combat misinformation; provide resources to help people stay healthy; and elevate community stories and highlight the impact of structural inequities on health.

To do this, we will:

- Provide COVID-19 guidance in more than 20 languages through community networks and signage in subways and local stores.
- Send community members direct mail and phone texts about COVID-19, including:
  - Symptoms
  - Risks for severe illness
  - Prevention and care
  - Coping skills and wellness strategies
- Produce tailored tele-town halls for communities co-hosted with community- and faith-based organizations, community leaders and elected officials.
- Produce targeted ads and promote through a variety of channels.

While every New Yorker has been profoundly affected by COVID-19, the disproportionate impact on Black, Latino, immigrant and low-income communities is unacceptable and must be addressed. The disproportionate impact is compounded by underinvestment and structural racism rooted in existing social, economic and health systems. Now is the time to help our fellow New Yorkers and the rest of the world understand the consequences of social inequity. **We are only as healthy and secure as our least healthy and most at-risk community.**