

## **DOHMH Key Agency Impact – 2003**

Over the past 2 years, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) has improved its capacity to protect and promote the health of New Yorkers. Through recruitment, restructuring, and technological innovation, the DOHMH is both more effective and more efficient.

- Through partnership with the Department of Education, the DOHMH is providing better services to New York City's schoolchildren.
- The DOHMH's syndromic surveillance system is a national model for an early warning system for natural or man-made epidemics.
- New York City's tobacco control initiatives have protected virtually all workers from second-hand smoke and helped thousands of smokers to quit.
- The DOHMH's community health monitoring has allowed New Yorkers to know more about their health than ever before.
- New Public Health Offices in New York City's sickest neighborhoods are promoting health where preventive interventions are most needed.

At the same time New York City must make more progress against evolving threats and epidemics such as HIV, tobacco use, bioterrorism, obesity, drug and alcohol abuse, and heart disease, it must also continue traditional public health activities ranging from monitoring the safety of food, water, and air to preventing and treating contagious diseases.

### ***In 2003, the DOHMH:***

#### ***Protected New Yorkers from contagious disease, including:***

- Provided oversight for more than \$200 million in funding for HIV care services, HIV prevention programs, and housing for New Yorkers living with HIV/AIDS.
- Provided HIV testing to more than 33,000 New Yorkers at high risk, identifying 553 HIV-positive persons and linking them to care.
- Evaluated and prevented outbreaks of communicable disease, including tracking 27 persons with suspected SARS and 141 of their contacts.
- Implemented a comprehensive strategy for SARS prevention and control, including intensive surveillance, guidelines for hospitals and workplaces, and isolation measures.
- Diagnosed and monitored infectious disease and environmental risks, including analyzing more than 400,000 clinical, toxicological, and environmental samples at the Department's Public Health Laboratory.
- Diagnosed and/or treated nearly 46,000 New Yorkers for sexually transmitted diseases in our STD clinics.
- Administered 4,600 doses of hepatitis B vaccine to people at highest risk.

- Prevented the spread of tuberculosis and TB hospitalizations and deaths by providing or monitoring treatment of 1,140 patients with active tuberculosis and 2,847 patients with suspected tuberculosis, identifying and testing 3,284 of their contacts, providing treatment of latent infection to 6,764 New Yorkers, and conducting 40 investigations of possible outbreaks, each resulting in the implementation of control measures.
- Monitored citywide immunization rates and worked to increase influenza and pneumonia vaccinations, especially among New Yorkers 65 and older and others at high risk for complications.
- Enhanced monitoring of infectious diseases citywide via electronic reporting and extension of integrated surveillance to selected hospitals in all five boroughs.
- Expanded the Electronic Clinical Laboratory Reporting System (ECLRS) to receive more than 244,000 electronic reports of reportable diseases.

***Promoted the optimal functioning of people with developmental disabilities, mental illness, and chemical dependency:***

- Enhanced the development of more than 40,000 infants and toddlers through the Early Intervention Program with the expectation that, as a result, many of these children will have an improved quality of life and fewer will require special education and other services as they get older.
- Planned, supported, and monitored services for more than 50,000 people with a chemical dependency so that they can receive effective treatment for recovery.
- Planned, supported, and monitored services for more than 185,000 people with mental illness so that they can receive effective treatment for recovery.
- Provided assistance to 2,500 children with special health care needs.
- Provided information to clinicians and supported training and clinical service development for conditions including post-traumatic stress disorder, treatment of opiate addiction with buprenorphine, treatment of depression in the primary care setting, and programs for developmentally delayed individuals.

***Protected New Yorkers by coordinating preparedness for bioterrorism and promoted continued recovery from the lasting impact of the WTC destruction:***

- Constructed a high-technology, secure BSL-3 laboratory.
- Expanded syndromic surveillance to cover more than 50,000 events each day, including 70% of hospital emergency departments and 86% of emergency department visits in New York City.
- Improved New York City's preparedness for disasters, including participation in City, regional, and national drills.
- Expanded New York City's unique injury surveillance system.
- Coordinated public health response to the August 14-15, 2003 blackout.
- Provided crisis education and counseling services to more than 518,000 New Yorkers through Project Liberty programs.

- Established the World Trade Center Health Registry to monitor health effects of exposure to environmental toxins in the debris cloud or during recovery efforts, registering more than 17,000 individuals as of Dec. 31, 2003, making it the second largest health registry in U.S. history.
- Coordinated planning for the Strategic National Stockpile, with NYC ranked as having among the highest preparedness levels in the country.

***Protected New Yorkers from environmental health threats:***

- Monitored more than 400,000 blood lead tests of NYC children.
- Through prevention, education, and testing, helped to reduce the number of children with elevated blood lead levels by 13% since 2002 and 80% since 1995.
- Conducted 3,830 inspections of homes of lead-poisoned children and issued 475 lead hazard abatement orders.
- Monitored the safety of New York City's drinking water, beaches, and radiation equipment to prevent disease.
- Inspected more than 20,000 restaurants and other food service establishments to decrease the risk of food-borne illness.
- Trained more than 14,000 restaurant food supervisors in food safety.
- Responded to more than 60,000 requests for emergency and routine safety, poisoning, and poisoning prevention information from the public.
- Reduced risk of West Nile infection through monitoring and control measures, including testing of more than 145,000 mosquitoes to target control efforts, application of natural larvicide to reduce mosquito populations, and issuance of 1,110 orders to abate standing water hazards.
- Reduced animal bites by 3%, to fewer than 8,000 for FY 2003, through licensing and control functions.
- Reduced rodent populations through education, enforcement, and more than 30,000 inspections and 57,000 exterminations.

***Promoted access to quality health care, particularly for New York City's most underserved populations:***

- Assumed direct responsibility for the health care of the more than 73,000 individuals incarcerated in City jails each year, providing approximately 1 million clinical visits.
- Monitored Medicaid Managed Care plans, increasing Medicaid Managed Care enrollment to 1.2 million New Yorkers and increasing Family Health Plus enrollment to 220,000 New Yorkers.
- Sent information on more than 67,000 newborns to the New York State Department of Health to facilitate their enrollment in Medicaid.
- Assumed direct responsibility for oral health programs and provided preventive and restorative oral health services to children and adolescents at 60,000 clinic visits and to City jail inmates at 20,000 patient encounters.
- Provided emergency contraception at STD clinics.

***Protected and promoted health of New Yorkers of all ages:***

- Implemented the Smoke-Free Air Act, which protects hundreds of thousands of non-smoking NYC workers from second-hand smoke and will save more than 10,000 lives, and ensured very high compliance.
- Expanded smoking cessation services, working with the Health and Hospitals Corporation to provide treatment to more than 7,500 patients, and through 311 and the NYS Smokers' Quitline to provide free nicotine patches to more than 34,000 New Yorkers, preventing more than 2,000 premature deaths.
- Established programs in New York City's 3 sickest neighborhoods to reduce preventable illness and premature death.
- Monitored the safety of more than 14,000 day care facilities.
- Attended to more than 1 million illness/injury visits and provided more than 6,000 health education sessions in schools.
- Provided community health education to reduce unintended pregnancy through promotion of family planning and emergency contraception.
- Began a demonstration program of the Nurse Family Partnership to reduce adverse maternal and infant health outcomes.
- Improved diabetes care through provider, patient, and community education and information sharing.
- Increased colon cancer screening, preventing at least 200 deaths from colon cancer.
- Implemented or enhanced health promotion activities at more than 100 worksites.
- Worked with 133 faith leaders and distributed materials to more than 1,700 faith-based organizations, with a combined reach of more than 1 million New Yorkers, to promote key health education messages.
- Integrated DOHMH and the Department of Education's programs to form a joint Office of School Health, and assisted the Department of Education with development of new nutritional and fitness guidelines for schools.
- Initiated rewrite of the Health Code, the first comprehensive revision in more than 40 years, to better serve today's public health needs of New York City.

***Monitored the health of New Yorkers and provided critical health information to doctors, nurses, policymakers, and the general public:***

- Established baseline health indicators for health conditions causing the greatest burden of preventable illness and premature death for every NYC community, and disseminated the information in print and online.
- Documented the burden of injury, including domestic violence, and the effectiveness of NYC Emergency Departments in identifying and referring those injured by domestic violence.
- Provided practical information on prevention and treatment of key medical conditions to every doctor in NYC as well as to other health care professionals, distributing more than 600,000 copies of *City Health Information* publications and other documents. Topics covered included: Depression, SARS, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Diabetes, Influenza, and Tuberculosis.

- Provided more than 800,000 birth and death certificates to the public, and monitored epidemiologic trends based on cause of death.
- Provided a booklet containing practical tips on care of newborns to every parent of the 125,000 babies born in New York City.
- Responded to more than 200,000 requests for health information from New Yorkers.
- Assessed more than 250 protocols for research from non-DOHMH investigators, in addition to 400 protocols from DOHMH investigators.
- Responded to more than 3,000 media inquiries and widely disseminated health information through print and online media, including more than 150,000 copies of Health Bulletins covering 11 different topics: HIV, colon cancer screening, women's health, alcohol use and abuse, depression, West Nile virus, healthy weight, flu shots, diabetes, cholesterol, and domestic violence.
- Recorded more than 40 million hits to the agency website ([nyc.gov/health](http://nyc.gov/health)), representing more than 2.8 million sessions and almost 1 million unique visitors.

In addition to recognizing recent impact, it is important to note that many conditions once common in New York City have been reduced drastically through public health action. These include:

- Childhood lead poisoning (among children age 6 months to 6 years, declined 79% in the past 7 years, from 19,232 cases in 1995 to 3,985 in 2002).
- Asthma hospitalizations among children (hospitalization rates among children age 0-14 declined 44% in the past decade, from 10.8 hospitalizations per 1,000 in 1993, to 6.0 per 1,000 in 2002; declines were greater in neighborhoods with the highest rates in 1993, including a 74% decline in East Harlem and a 66% decline in Hunts Point-Mott Haven).
- Tuberculosis (declined 70% since 1992, from 3,811 cases to 1,140 cases in 2003).
- Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (declined 95% since 1992, from 441 cases to 21 cases in 2003).
- Typhoid fever and other communicable diseases (typhoid fever declined 53% in the past decade, from 102 cases in 1992 to 48 cases in 2001).
- Syphilis and other sexually transmitted diseases (syphilis declined 98% during the 1990s, from 5,042 cases in 1988 to 82 cases in 1998, but increased to 434 cases in 2002).
- Measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases of childhood (measles and rubella declined more than 99.9% in the past 6 decades, from 38,000 per year during the World War II era to 13 in 2002; measles declined more than 99% in the past decade alone, from 1,909 cases in 1991 to 6 cases in 2002).
- Window fall fatalities (declined 97% in the past 3 decades, from 217 in 1976, the year the current law requiring window guards was enacted, to 6 in 2003).
- Dog bites (declined from more than 40,000 per year in the 1960s to 5,176 in 2002).

- Infant mortality (declined 84% in the past 4 decades and 47% in the past decade, from 4510 infant deaths in 1962, to 1,390 deaths in 1992, to 742 deaths in 2002).
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS declined by more than two thirds in the past decade).
- Maternal mortality (declined 71% in the past 4 decades, from 109 deaths per year during the early 1960s to 32 in 2002).
- Mortality due to cervical cancer (declined 71% in the past 4 decades, from 525 deaths per year during the World War II era to 151 in 2002).
- The rate of premature deaths among people under age 65 (declined 40% in the past decade, from 4.33 deaths per 1,000 people under age 65 in 1990 to 2.61 in 2000).