

# CRAIN'S NEW YORK BUSINESS

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## Trump administration names NY counties in HIV initiative but impact unclear

HEALTH PULSE TEAM 

A quartet of New York counties may benefit from a federal public health initiative to end the HIV epidemic in America, announced by President Donald Trump in Tuesday's State of the Union address.

The Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens are among 48 counties across the U.S. slated to receive additional support to address the HIV epidemic, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The goal is to reduce new infections by 75% in the next five years and 90% in the next decade, the equivalent of thwarting more than 250,000 new infections.

But health professionals in New York say it's unclear how the initiative will turn into action or what additional money may be made available.

While the federal government spends upward of \$20 billion annually on HIV prevention and care, and the number of new infections nationwide is down to about 40,000 per year, populations and communities are not all benefiting equally from advances, according to HHS. New infections are concentrated among men who have sex with men and minorities, including African-Americans, Hispanics and Latinos. Additionally, a decline in new infections has leveled off, and the opioid epidemic has created a greater occurrence of infections from sharing needles.

"For us, engaging people with lived-life experience must be part of any plan to end the epidemic," said Doug Wirth, president and CEO of Amida Care, a nonprofit community health plan specializing in serving Medicaid members with chronic conditions such as HIV/AIDS.

Trump's initiative is expected to invest in existing programs as well as a new high-risk prevention program through community health centers. It also will focus on using data to identify areas where HIV is spreading rapidly and guide decision-making at the local level. And it is slated to provide funds to create a local HIV HealthForce in targeted areas.

While "these are nice words in a television speech," there is concern whether "they reflect a commitment to achieve that goal," Wirth said, pointing to previous actions by the Trump administration.

Wirth said he believes New York can serve as a national model for tackling the HIV/AIDS epidemic. He cited Gov. Andrew Cuomo's campaign, launched in 2014, to significantly reduce HIV infections by 2020.

New HIV diagnoses in New York recently reached an all-time low of about 2,100 per year, down about 64% since reporting began in 2001, according to the state.

Manhattan-based federally qualified health center Ryan Health is also addressing health equity when it comes to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and not waiting on federal action or support.

Today, on National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, Ryan Health is launching the campaign "Ryan Health Equality: Stonewall 50" to promote health equity for LGBTQ communities of color and build on its community-driven efforts to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The campaign will conduct 50 community health events, including HIV screenings and educational activities, and it will connect at-risk individuals to PrEP and PEP (pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis medication) services and conduct a sexual health series for high school students.

"Taking those services to the patients, they're more inclined to come back to us," said Victor Hogue, director of support services at Ryan Health.

Kelsey Louie, CEO of Gay Men's Health Crisis, [wrote on the organization's website](#) that he was hopeful but skeptical.

"We're ready to work with the president to help him achieve his goal to end AIDS by 2030," Louie said, but added, "He's not going to be able to keep his pledge if he doesn't follow the data, trust the science, display compassion for the most at-risk populations and set aside many of the prejudices he has inflamed since taking office." —Jennifer Henderson

## New York–Presbyterian turns to data analytics to fight opioid misuse

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New York–Presbyterian said Wednesday it plans to work with data analytics company Splunk to track opioids and other controlled substances within the health system.

It had been using Splunk on IT security and approached the San Francisco–based company last year when it was looking for a way to prevent diversion of drugs to the black market, said Jennings Aske, New York–Presbyterian's chief information security officer.

Aske said he thought Splunk might be able to help analyze the data produced by the system's electronic health records, software for prescribing controlled substances and electronic medicine cabinets.

Splunk will help New York–Presbyterian compile profiles on their physicians' prescribing habits, providing alerts about suspicious activity such as when a provider's ID is used to access a drug cabinet when the person is on vacation, Aske said.

The health system plans to start using the service in the second quarter.

"Splunk has the ability to rapidly condense information and identify outliers," Aske said.

Nearly 1,500 New York City residents died from drug overdoses in 2017, with 82% of those cases tied to opioids.

"Any hospital that says there isn't diversion happening is kidding itself," Aske said. "This is a national crisis."

New York–Presbyterian is exploring ways to use Splunk to keep track of expensive cancer medications and could use it to track whether doctors are prescribing antibiotics inappropriately.

For now the service is free for New York–Presbyterian, which is paying Splunk for help with cybersecurity.

Splunk hasn't decided on pricing for future clients, said Shirley Golen, the company's director of health care strategy. She said the drug security product's advantage will be in how it can analyze information from multiple electronic health record and e-prescribing vendors.

"All of those various data sources are critical and have to be brought together to understand where there could be misuse of controlled substances," Golen said.

—Jonathan LaMantia

## Brooklyn-based Dialyze Direct completes Midwest acquisition

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Dialyze Direct, based in Brooklyn, has completed its [acquisition of Midwest provider Affiliated Dialysis Centers](#).

The acquisition, which closed Jan. 31, is part of the dialysis-services company's national expansion, Chairman Henry Kauftheil said.

Outside of New York, Dialyze Direct currently provides services in Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas. The company, which says it is now the nation's largest provider of staff-assisted hemodialysis services in skilled nursing facilities, said it expects to be in a dozen states by the end of this year.

About 30 million U.S. adults have chronic kidney disease, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, with about 340 people beginning dialysis treatment for kidney failure every 24 hours.

"We're very focused on finding innovative, creative solutions that will make these people's lives and treatment as comfortable as possible," Kauftheil said.

Dialyze Direct brings what it calls more gentle and frequent dialysis into patients' facilities, aimed at "reduced recovery time that allows them to participate in activities and rehabilitative services," he said. The model also is designed to provide a cost benefit to providers and payers, in part by reducing patient transportation, infection rates and hospital readmissions.

Treating Medicare beneficiaries with chronic kidney disease cost more than \$79 billion in 2016, the CDC said, adding that treating individuals with end-stage renal disease cost an additional \$35 billion.

The end-stage geriatric population continues to grow, Kauftheil said.

Dialyze Direct employs about 340 people, he said. He declined to provide company revenues.

## NYU Langone cancer center receives funding boost

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NYU Langone's Laura and Isaac Perlmutter Cancer Center will receive about \$600,000 more in funding annually from the National Cancer Institute after receiving an upgraded designation as part of its grant renewal.

The cancer institute has recognized NYU Langone as a comprehensive cancer center, a designation given to facilities that conduct extensive research, offer advanced therapies and clinical trials, study the prevention of cancer and train researchers and other health professionals.

"It means we're judged by our colleagues to have a full spectrum of basic and population science research," said Dr. Benjamin Neel, director of the Perlmutter center. "It reflects substantial investment the institution has made to expand and improve clinical trials operations."

NYU Langone will receive about \$20 million during the next five years to support direct expenses for research and indirect administrative expenses.

NYU Langone joins Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and New York –Presbyterian/Columbia's Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center among the local institutions with the top designation.

Neel said the center has undergone significant changes since NYU Langone was last reviewed by the institute in 2012. Since he joined Perlmutter in 2015, Neel said, the entire leadership of the center has changed, and NYU Langone has become more regional in scope with its acquisitions of the former Lutheran Medical Center in Brooklyn and Winthrop-University Hospital in Mineola, Long Island.

Neel expects about 600 people will be enrolled in Perlmutter's clinical trials this year, with greater outreach to Long Island residents and patients being treated by NYU Langone physicians at NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue.

"We're not your father's NYU," he said. "We're not the same institution anymore in the cancer domain." –J.L.

## AT A GLANCE

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**WHO'S NEWS:** Dr. Brett Luring is the new chief medical officer at Kallyope, a Manhattan-based biotech company working on drugs that affect how the gut communicates with the brain. Luring was previously vice president of translational research and early clinical development at Takeda Pharmaceuticals. Earlier in his career, he spent 11 years at Merck and was an assistant professor at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons.

**SUPERVISED INJECTION:** In what could be a challenge to other proposed safe injection sites across the country, federal prosecutors in Philadelphia filed suit against the nonprofit Safehouse, which is seeking to open an inaugural site for people with opioid addiction to use drugs under medical supervision, [NPR reported](#). New York Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker cautioned Tuesday that federal authorities could pursue legal action against the state if the state permitted a plan to open supervised injection facilities in New York City to proceed.

**INSURANCE COVERAGE:** A rising percentage of U.S. adults, 29%, were underinsured last year compared to 23% four years earlier, according to a [new report](#) from the Commonwealth Fund. Underinsured individuals might delay seeking care or struggle paying medical bills.

**PUBLIC ADVOCATE RACE:** Council member Jumaane Williams, who is running for public advocate, backed a city law that would protect women from discrimination based on reproductive health decisions but critics of Williams are troubled by his past views on abortion, [Politico reported](#).

Inline Play

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