

Testimony of Angelo Acquista, MD

before the

New York City Council Committee on Rules, Privileges, and Elections

March 15, 2023

Good morning, Speaker Adams, Chair Powers, and members of the Committee on Rules, Privileges, and Elections.

My name is Angelo Acquista and I want to thank you for considering my nomination to serve as a member of the Board of Health. I arrived in the United States at New York Harbor on February 11, 1963. I grew up in Astoria Queens and attended New York University as an undergraduate from 1973 to 1977. I attended NYU School of Medicine from 1977 to 1981. I was an intern and resident in Internal Medicine at Lenox Hill Hospital from 1981 to 1984. I have specialties in Internal Medicine, Pulmonary Medicine and Tropical Diseases. I served as Committee Chairman for Quality Assurance at Lenox Hill hospital from 1988 to 2012 and was the Assistant Director for the Intensive Care Unit at from 1989 to 2003.

I have been in private practice from 1986 to the present. I served as Medical Director for New York City's Office of Emergency Management and helped write protocols for New York City's response to biological, chemical and nuclear emergencies. I have authored books and publications on terrorism. I wrote a New York Times best seller, The Survival Guide: What to do in a Biological, Chemical or Nuclear Emergency. As Medical Director for OEM, I participated in the 9/11 recovery effort. At the request of the Centers for Disease Control and the New York State Department of Health I wrote A Physicians Resource Manual on Biological, Chemical and Nuclear Emergencies", a resource manual that served as the basis for my book The Survival Guide: What to do in a Biological, Chemical, or Nuclear Emergency. Physicians who pass a test that I created will receive a state issued ID that allows them to cross police barriers in the event of an emergency.

I was one of the first to profess the health benefits of the Mediterranean diet based on the medical literature and published the New York Times best seller, The Mediterranean Prescription. It is a diet book, cookbook and book that describes the health effects of being overweight and obese. I also wrote The Mediterranean Family Table addressing the need of introducing children to healthy food early in their development. I currently am the Executive Director for Signature Services International & Executive Health for Northwell Health.

I hold several patents on wireless sensors for wireless recording of vital signs, including heart rate, heart rhythm, respiratory rate, temperature, and oxygen saturation.

I want to serve on the Board of Health because I found my experience as Medical Director for OEM rewarding, and I would like to serve New York City once again in light of our recent pandemic.

I humbly look forward to serving the people of our City.

Testimony of Maida Galvez, MD, MPH

before the

New York City Council Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections

March 15, 2023

Good morning, Speaker Adams, Chair Powers, and City Council Members. It's an honor to join you all today.

My name is Dr. Maida Galvez. I am a pediatrician and Professor of Environmental Medicine and Public Health & Pediatrics at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. My parents immigrated to NYC from the Philippines and settled in Elmhurst, Queens where I was born (and where much of my extended family lives today) and then raised me and my brother in Westbury, NY a town that has been referred to as a melting pot village. My father, Manuel Galvez was a merchant seaman who worked in payroll for a NYC based shipping company and my mother, Aida, was a schoolteacher who then trained to be a dietician, working in nursing homes. I enrolled at CUNY Medical School at the City College of NY with an interest in teaching and caring for children and graduated from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai where I received my MD degree and later, an MPH degree. I trained for 4 years in the Bronx in the Social Pediatrics Program at the Children's Hospital at Montefiore and did a Pediatric Chief year at Jacobi Medical Center.

I saw firsthand in my clinical training how neighborhood shapes health and I completed Fellowship Training in Environmental Pediatrics at Mount Sinai so I could root my work in prevention of common chronic health conditions in childhood like asthma and obesity. Since 2006, I have served as Director of the CDC/EPA and AAP supported Federal Region 2 Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit (PEHSU) based at Mount Sinai, serving NY, NJ, PR and US Virgin Islands. The PEHSU is a go to resource for evidence based messaging for clinicians and

families on how to prevent and reduce environmental exposures in the home, school and larger community.

I am the Director of the New York State Children's Environmental Health Center (NYSCHECK)—the first in the nation state-wide, publicly funded model for children's environmental health services in the United States. There are 10 PEHSUs in the country, serving each federal region. There are 7 NYSCHECK sites in NY: in Albany, Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester, Westchester, NYC and Long Island. Mount Sinai serves as the Coordinating Center. I Co-Lead the Region 2 PEHSU and NYSCHECK Coordinating Center with my good colleague Dr. Perry Sheffield and Dr. Lauran Zajac serves as our Medical Director. Together we work with a wonderful team including diverse community partners to champion healthy environments for all children and their families. Through environmental health screening in pediatrics practices, families are now asked about their child's environment such as known asthma triggers like mold or pests, then families are connected to needed healthy homes interventions. As the 1st in the country to prescribe healthy homes as part of clinical practice, NY is truly leading the way for other cities and states to follow. We also work to build clinician capacity to respond to families concerns and a major area of work is focused on training the next generation of leaders in children's environmental health.

As Director for Community Engagement for the Mount Sinai NIH Center Conduits and the NIEHS Center for Health and the Environment Across the Lifespan, I work together with partners in education, housing, environmental advocacy and law to translate emerging research into programs and policies that prevent and reduce environmental exposures for children, their families, and their communities.

I am here today because sound public health policy is critically important to promoting the healthy growth and development of all children. As a pediatrician, I have witnessed firsthand how

public health policy can positively impact NYC families. NYC has truly led the way in ensuring the latest science informs actions at the program and policy level to benefit all New Yorkers. I am honored to be considered to serve on the Board, and to give back and be of service to New York City.

Thank you.

Testimony of Michael Lindsey, PhD, MSW, MPH

before the

New York City Council Committee on Rules, Privileges, and Elections

March 15, 2023

Good morning, Speaker Adams, Chairperson Powers, and members of the New York City Council. My name is Michael Lindsey and I want to thank you for considering my nomination to the New York City Board of Health.

I come to this moment with a deep appreciation of where I have been and where I hope to be – that is, in service to this great city.

As I reflected on this opportunity, I thought about my first social work client, Lionel. His mother was serving a prison sentence when she gave birth to him, and sadly, he died in prison this past summer. From the time he was born, his life was shaped by unaddressed anxiety and trauma, putting him on a trajectory to incarceration.

In thinking about Lionel, I am acutely aware of the lesson I learned from him as a beginning clinician: We cannot just attempt to “heal” the individual, we must also focus on the systems that perpetuate the circumstances that individuals like Lionel are subject to – poverty, lack of health care, racism and mass incarceration.

To be frank, my commitment to the field of social work started well before I met Lionel. As a young man in the 1980s, I saw immediate devastation in neighborhoods that had been upwardly mobile and whose residents had long been striving to make a better life for their families, all because of the crack-cocaine epidemic.

Getting to school safely, playing pickup basketball on neighborhood courts, going to teen parties without the risk of being shot —these are all experiences that young people in many

communities around this city and country take for granted. I couldn't do that. Even then, I knew that I wanted to do something about it.

I was propelled through my undergraduate studies in sociology at Morehouse College by the desire to understand how such conditions could be allowed to persist without a strong public response. Similar concerns galvanized my studies at Howard University, where I received a master's degree in social work; as well as my scholarship at the University of Pittsburgh, where I received a master's degree in public health and then my PhD in social work. Subsequently, I was a Postdoctoral Fellow at Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health.

My own adolescent experiences led me to focus my research and practice on the needs of young people, specifically investigating the mental health of children and teens, and developing evidence-based interventions to engage them in treatment. I've led research uncovering troubling trends in suicide behaviors—particularly among Black children and adolescents—which has been published in journals of record, such as the American Association of Pediatrics' journal.

Meanwhile, I have long recognized the importance of translating research into policy and action. My advocacy led to the creation of a working group of experts supporting the Congressional Black Caucus' Emergency Taskforce on Black Youth Suicide and Mental Health. It resulted in the report *Ring the Alarm: The Crisis of Black Youth Suicide in America* and related legislation that passed in the House of Representatives. Similarly in New York State, my work prompted the creation of the Office of Mental Health's Black Youth Suicide Prevention Workgroup, for which I am the primary subject matter expert.

My research has also garnered me various positions, including my membership on the CDC's Community Preventive Services Task Force. I also serve or have served on several editorial boards of leading journals of mental health.

Today, I am Dean of the NYU Silver School of Social Work, the first Black man and person of color to hold the position. With that, I carry the daily commitment and responsibility to educate the next generation of social workers, including those who will enter New York City's mental health workforce, which is needed more than ever.

My interest in serving on the Board of Health stems from a passion for addressing the mental health needs of children, youth and families — particularly those from vulnerable and marginalized communities — as well as a recognition that physical health, mental health and economic status are all inextricably linked and subject to systemic forces. We are just now emerging from a pandemic that exposed the inequities that are embedded in public health systems, leading to tragically unequal outcomes in disease and death.

As I think about the work of the Board of Health, I am reminded of the need to reform those systems in order to ensure that all people receive the physical and mental health care they need and deserve. And perhaps, the legacy of Lionel's life lies in the need for systems change.

In closing, all of these experiences that I have shared today will inform the work I hope to do with the distinguished members of the Board of Health. I want to thank you for your time and your gracious consideration of my nomination.

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