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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW YORKERS LIVING LONGER: 2004 DEATH RATE LOWEST EVER; 1,747 FEWER DEATHS THAN IN 2003

**1,243 Fewer Heart Disease Deaths; Still Leading Preventable Cause of Death
AIDS Deaths Have Decreased 80% Since Peak in 1994; Still 3rd Leading Cause of Death for NY'ers Under 65**

NEW YORK CITY – January 5, 2006 – There were 57,466 deaths in New York City in 2004, a reduction of 1,747 deaths – including 1,243 fewer heart disease deaths – from 2003. New York City 's death rate reached a historic low of 7.2 per 1,000 people in 2004. Today the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) released its 2004 *Summary of Vital Statistics* with these and other data. The greatest contributing factors to the decrease in deaths were a reduction in heart attack deaths (down 14% from 2003), other heart disease deaths (down 3%), and reductions in deaths from HIV/AIDS (down 12%), colon cancer and homicide (both down 9%). The *Summary* is available online at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/vs/2004sum.pdf>.

The reduction in cardiac deaths accounted for most of the overall decrease. The decline reflects a continuing improvement in medical care, including better control of blood pressure, cholesterol and management of patients with cardiac events. A more rapid decline in cardiac deaths in 2003 and 2004 is consistent with a decrease by 200,000 in the number of New Yorkers who smoke.

The number of total births was essentially unchanged with 124,099 in 2004, including 129 fewer teenage births. Life expectancy increased to 78.2 years for a New Yorker born in 2003 – 7.2 months more than the national average – and 6 months more than in 2000. Females born in 2003 have a life expectancy of 80.7 years, and males' life expectancy is 75.1 years. This compares with preliminary 2003 national life expectancy data of 80.1 years for females and 74.8 years for males.

Leading Causes of Deaths in New York City , 2004

All Ages – 57,466 Deaths total Deaths			<65 – 17,359 Deaths	
Rank	Cause	Deaths	Cause	Deaths
1	Heart Disease	22,632	Cancer*	4,693
2	Cancer	13,611	Heart Disease	3,491
3	Trauma/Injury	2,000	HIV	1,204



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3	Influenza/Pneumonia	3,003	HIV	1,384
4	Stroke	1,794	Psychoactive Substances**	837
5	Diabetes	1,734	Assault (Homicide)	574

* Top cancer killers of people under age 65 are: 1. Lung (1,010 deaths) 2. Breast (573 deaths) 3. Colon (443 deaths). 80-90% of lung cancer is due to tobacco. Tobacco use also increases the risk of breast and colon cancer.

** Includes long term use of or acute poisoning by psychoactive substances

"We reached another historic low number of deaths in 2004, and life expectancy increased by another four months over the past 2 years," said DOHMH Commissioner Dr. Thomas R. Frieden.

"New Yorkers are living longer and healthier than ever. But there are still too many people dying early and from preventable heart disease, cancer, and HIV. Large and unacceptable racial and geographic disparities persist, particularly in HIV, heart disease, and diabetes. I urge all New Yorkers to take steps toward a healthier life by following the Take Care New York recommendations appropriate for them - whether it's stopping smoking, controlling your blood pressure and cholesterol, taking an HIV test, or getting a colonoscopy."

There were 1,747 (3%) fewer deaths in New York City in 2004 than in 2003. The death rate reached another historic low at 7.2 per 1,000 population in 2004, down from 7.4 in 2003. The death rate for men remains significantly higher than that for women (9.5 vs. 6.3 per 1,000). The death rate for black and Hispanic men (11.9 and 9.5, respectively) remained higher than that of white (8.6) and Asian men (6.7). Similar trends were seen among women, with black and Hispanic women at (7.8 and 6.0) having higher death rates than white (5.7) and Asian women (4.6).

Heart disease and cancer persisted as the leading causes of death among all New Yorkers. Nearly 40% (22,632) of all deaths in 2004 were caused by heart disease. Smoking, poorly controlled high blood pressure and high cholesterol are major preventable risk factors for heart disease. Quitting smoking, controlling blood pressure and cholesterol, increasing physical activity and eating a healthy diet will help prevent heart disease.

Cancer is the leading cause of death for New Yorkers under 65. Many deaths from 3 major cancers - colon, breast, and cervical can be prevented if people at risk get screened. Colon cancer kills 1,500 New Yorkers every year; colon cancer deaths decreased from 1,638 in 2003 to 1,495 in 2004. DOHMH recommends that everyone 50 and older get a colonoscopy as more than 90% of colon cancers occur in this age group. Mammograms and Pap tests are critical in detecting breast and cervical cancers. Cervical cancer deaths decreased from 171 in 2003 to 135 in 2004.

In 2004, 1,451 people died of HIV/AIDS, a decrease of 12% from 2003 and an 80% drop since deaths from HIV/AIDS peaked in 1994, when there were 7,102 deaths. Additionally, for the first time since 1984, HIV/AIDS is no longer the leading cause of death for any age group, race or ethnicity. However, HIV remains the third leading cause of death below age 65.

Keeping a healthy heart, getting checked for cancer and knowing your HIV status are critical Take Care New York priorities. DOHMH has outlined these steps and others to help New Yorkers live longer, healthier lives. To learn more about Take Care New York and what to do to stay healthy, please visit <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/tcny/index.shtml>.

Births in New York City , 2004

The number of births was essentially unchanged: 124,345 in 2003 and 124,099 in 2004. Births to teenagers continued to decline in 2004, from 8,831 to 8,702 (a 1.5% decline) but disparities persist. 12.2% of all births in the Bronx were to teenagers as compared to

...disparities persist. Rates of unintended teen births in the Bronx were 66% higher than the citywide average of 7% citywide.

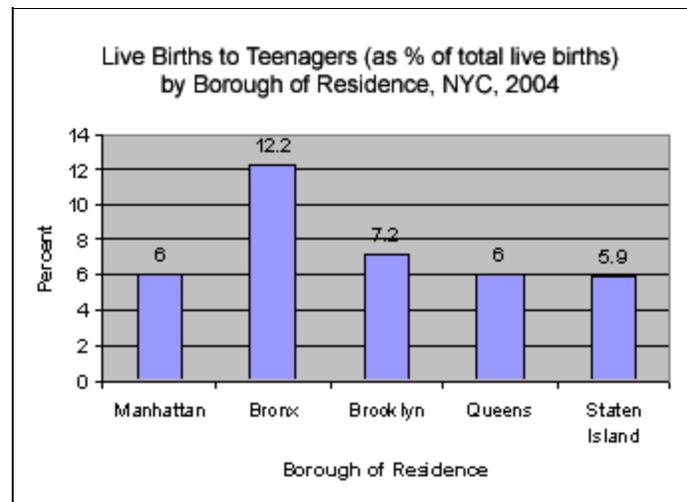


Chart: Live Births to Teenagers (as % of total live births) by Borough of Residence, NYC, 2004

“While fewer teens are becoming parents each year in New York City, teenage births are still very common in certain areas, especially the Bronx where rates are almost twice the citywide average,” Dr. Frieden continued. “We must continue to educate teenagers about avoiding unintended pregnancy, ensure that condoms and family planning are available to teens, and improve access to teen-friendly reproductive health care.”

In 2002, DOHMH established the South Bronx District Public Health Office to address the pressing health needs of this community. This office works to reduce unintended teen pregnancies by collaborating with parents, teens, teachers and others to ensure access to reproductive health services and educate teens about sexual health.

Other Highlights of 2004 Vital Statistics Summary

- *Years of Potential Life Lost (YPLL) to Disease down by 5% from 2003 to 2004.* People who die before 75 can be thought of as dying prematurely. The number of years between 75 and the age of the person who dies before that is called the Years of Potential Life Lost (YPLL). The decrease in HIV deaths accounted for nearly a quarter (24%) of the decrease in potential life lost, followed by cancer (16% of the decrease), accidents and drugs (13% each), homicide (11%), and heart disease (8%). These 6 causes account for more than 60% of total YPLLs lost; cancer accounts for 23% of the total, heart disease 17%, HIV 8%, drugs and homicide 5% each, and accidents 4%.
- *Infant mortality rate (IMR) down slightly.* As previously announced, deaths of infants under one year old – decreased from 6.5 per 1,000 live births in 2003 to 6.1 in 2004 – a 6% decrease. However, significant racial and ethnic disparities persist. New York City's IMR is lower than the national average, which, according to preliminary national data, was 6.9 in 2003.
- *Special section on using the Perinatal Periods of Risk (PPOR) approach to understand fetal-infant mortality.* PPOR is a broader measure than Infant Mortality designed to assess “periods of risk” and target those risk groups with appropriate interventions. This approach confirms the extent of health disparities in infant survival.
- *Alcohol-related deaths down 4.6% in 2004.* Alcohol is a leading contributor to preventable death, as both a direct cause for certain conditions (e.g., alcoholic liver disease, alcohol dependence), and factors in to deaths from a variety of other causes (e.g., motor vehicle crashes, homicides). Analysis of 2004 death data indicate that estimated alcohol related deaths decreased to 1,444 in 2004, down 4.6% from 1,514 in 2003.

The Summary is DOHMH's annual report of births, deaths, and other vital events in New York City , which is compiled by the Bureau of Vital Statistics. Tables, graphs, and figures provide New York City health statistics according to ethnic group, gender, age, health center district, community district and borough of residence. Deaths rates are age adjusted, which allows comparisons between rates to be made over time or between geographic areas.

Printed copies will be available in early 2006. For more information on New York City Vital Statistics, please visit nyc.gov/health. To learn how to obtain a birth or death certificate, visit nyc.gov/health or call **311**.

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