

*For Immediate Release:*

## **CEOs Gather in New York for the First Summit on Mental Health in the Workplace**

*Patrick Kennedy, Chirlane McCray and Other Mental Health Advocates Meet with Company Leadership to Outline a Framework that Supports Mental Health*

NEW YORK, October 29, 2015 – The National Alliance on Mental Illness of New York City (NAMI-NYC Metro) and Northeast Business Group on Health (NEBGH) co-hosted the first-ever CEO Summit on Mental Health in the Workplace in New York City. In partnership with the Kennedy Forum, the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City and the Partnership for Workplace Mental Health, Chief Executives Officers from over a dozen companies representing several industries met to discuss how companies can foster a culture that supports the mental health of their employees.

“One of the most critical things we can do as a nation is place a strong emphasis on mental health in the workplace,” said **Patrick J. Kennedy, former US Representative and Founder of The Kennedy Forum**. “For the business community, it’s also a matter of competitiveness – when workers are healthy, they’re productive, and that has a measurable impact on a company’s bottom line.”

One in five Americans live with mental illness and conditions often affect people during their prime working years. Treatment for the most common conditions is effective 80% of the time, yet only 33% of the people who need help will get it due to social stigma, fear of repercussions at work and the lack of access to quality, affordable treatment.

“Mental illness is pervasive. It touches every family, including my own, and reverberates all across our city,” said **Chirlane McCray, First Lady of New York City and Chair of the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City**. “New York City loses 14 billion dollars a year in productivity tied to depression and substance abuse. We must create a culture of mental wellness – one where seeking treatment for anxiety is as simple as seeking treatment for allergies. It will benefit us all.”

“Given the prevalence of mental illness and the historically low rate of help-seeking, it is essential to establish healthcare services that create a culture in which mention of depression, anxiety, post-trauma and other common illnesses become as mentionable as diabetes, hypertension, and migraines,” said **Wendy Brennan, Executive Director, NAMI-NYC Metro**. “Stigma drives silence, and silence prevents those who are impacted from seeking help. Breaking the silence on mental illness encourages those who will benefit to seek the help they need and deserve.”

“EY commends NAMI for convening business leaders to discuss the importance of mental health issues in the workplace. Discussions like this help to bring mental health to the forefront and allows executives to share best practices and lessons learned with other companies,” said **Stephen R. Howe Jr., EY’s US Chairman and Americas Managing Partner**. “Companies must raise awareness about mental health and provide the necessary support and resources in order to build a more inclusive culture that enables all professionals to thrive.”

The inaugural event included senior leadership from multiple companies and was attended by over 100 Human Resources and Benefits representatives from US and global employers. **Bill Ackman, Chief Executive Officer and Founder of Pershing Square Holdings**, kicked off the CEO discussion covering several key topics, including the substantial costs incurred when employee mental health is ignored and what needs to be done by employers to help fight the stigma.

“Fostering a culture of health that supports physical, mental, social, spiritual, and financial health, not only benefits your employees in countless ways, but it also benefits business overall,” said **Laurel Pickering, President and CEO of Northeast Business Group on Health**. “We believe that companies can and will continue to foster a new era of openness and improvement of mental health in the workplace.”

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### **About The National Alliance on Mental Illness of New York City (NAMI-NYC Metro)**

NAMI-NYC is a grassroots organization that provides support, education and advocacy for individuals and families of all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds who live with mental illness. As the largest affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, NAMI-NYC works collaboratively with stakeholders in the community to educate the public, advocate for legislation, reduce stigma, and improve the mental health system. NAMI-NYC provides peer-led services throughout New York City’s five boroughs on behalf of families affected by mental illness and their loved ones – all free of charge to the public.

### **About Northeast Business Group on Health (NEBGH)**

NEBGH is an employer-led coalition of healthcare leaders and other stakeholders with the mission of empowering members to drive excellence in health and achieve the highest value in healthcare delivery and the consumer experience. NEBGH currently has 170 members comprised of national and global self-insured employers based in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Massachusetts; plus national health plans, major consulting organizations, regional hospital systems and other key stakeholders. For more information, visit [www.nebgh.org](http://www.nebgh.org)

### **About The Kennedy Forum**

The Kennedy Forum was founded to advance the ideas, policies, and programming that we know work, and to light the path to the solutions of the future in order to create the behavioral health system we need. We are committed to providing the leadership needed at all levels to unite the country around a common vision to improve the lives of all individuals living with mental illness and addiction, and to promote behavioral health for all.

### **About Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City**

The Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City, chaired by First Lady Chirlane McCray, is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization committed to promoting partnerships between the City and the private sector in support of high-impact public programs. The Mayor’s Fund is focused on serving as a vehicle for the

generous business and philanthropic communities to contribute to City programs and enhance the lives of New Yorkers in areas ranging from mental health, to youth workforce development to immigration and citizenship. To learn more about the Mayor's Fund, visit [nyc.gov/fund](http://nyc.gov/fund).

### **About Chirlane McCray**

Chirlane McCray is First Lady of New York City. A writer and advocate all her life, this past year, she played a central role in the Administration's successful efforts to establish universal pre-kindergarten and after school programs for all middle school students.

As First Lady, she is a fierce advocate for high quality and accessible mental health services. She knows for far too long, New Yorkers experiencing mental health challenges have been left without the support and services they deserve. This year, she has committed herself to the creation of a mental health roadmap, which will set a citywide agenda to address the gaps and disparities in mental healthcare. In addition to mental health, she has lent her voice and position to furthering the administration's efforts to expand early childhood development and support the survivors of domestic violence. Follow her on Twitter @Chirlane.

### **About the Partnership for Workplace Mental Health**

The Partnership for Workplace Mental Health is a program of the American Psychiatric Association Foundation, a subsidiary of the American Psychiatric Association. The Partnership collaborates with employers to advance effective approaches to mental health and promotes the business case for quality mental health care. The Partnerships' network includes more than 9,000 employers and related stakeholders. For more information see [www.workplacementalhealth.org](http://www.workplacementalhealth.org). The American Psychiatric Association is a national medical specialty society whose physician members specialize in the diagnosis, treatment, prevention and research of mental illnesses, including substance use disorders. Visit the APA at [www.psychiatry.org](http://www.psychiatry.org).

### **About EY**

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