



The Commonwealth Fund Launches Commission to Envision a National Public Health System in the U.S.

Margaret Hamburg, M.D., former Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, to chair reform effort building on recent reports and assessments from the COVID-19 pandemic response

NEW YORK, March 3, 2022 — The Commonwealth Fund announced today the formation of the new Commonwealth Fund Commission on a National Public Health System, which seeks to lay out a vision for reform of the U.S. public health infrastructure at the federal, state, and local levels. The nonpartisan commission will be chaired by **Margaret Hamburg, M.D.**, the former Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, former Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services for Planning and Evaluation, and former Commissioner of Health and Mental Hygiene for New York City. Dr. Hamburg also currently serves on the board of the Commonwealth Fund and as Interim Vice President for Global Biological Policy and Programs at the Nuclear Threat Initiative.

The commission will build on recent reports and assessments from the COVID-19 pandemic response to identify key steps for strengthening U.S. public health infrastructure. Commissioners and staff will review the evidence, engage with experts and public health leaders, and develop a report with specific policy recommendations for all levels of government. The report is scheduled for release in late spring 2022.

“The national response to the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed profound weaknesses and disorganization in the U.S. public health system,” said **David Blumenthal, M.D., M.P.P.**, Commonwealth Fund president. “The commission has the opportunity to take lessons learned from the highly decentralized approach to public health that hampered the response to the pandemic and articulate a vision that supports health and equity — improving health every day and enhancing preparedness for future crises.”

Dr. Hamburg will be joined initially by seven commissioners who are nationally recognized for their thought leadership and experience in public health but who do not currently serve in government positions: **Mandy Cohen, M.D., M.P.H.**, former Secretary, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services; **Karen DeSalvo, M.D., M.P.H., M.Sc.**, Chief Health Officer, Google; **Joneigh Khaldun, M.D., M.P.H.**, Vice President and Chief Equity Officer, CVS Health; **David Lakey, M.D.**, Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs and Chief Medical Officer at the University of Texas System, and Professor of Medicine at the University of Texas at Tyler Health Science Center; **Ellen MacKenzie, Ph.D., Sc.M.**, Dean, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health;

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The Commonwealth Fund is a private, nonprofit foundation supporting independent research on health policy reform and a high-performance health system.

Herminia Palacio, M.D., M.P.H., President and CEO, Guttmacher Institute; and **Nirav Shah**, M.D., M.P.H., Senior Scholar, Department of Medicine, Stanford University.

The commissioners will be supported by a project team including **Jeffrey Levi**, Ph.D., Professor of Health Management and Policy at the Milken Institute School of Public Health at The George Washington University; **Nicole Lurie**, M.D., M.S.P.H., former Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; **Anne Morris Reid**, M.P.H., former Deputy Chief of Staff, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and **Joshua Sharfstein**, M.D., Vice Dean for Public Health and Practice and Community Engagement at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

“Our goal is to guide policymakers toward a stronger, more effective public health system in the U.S.,” said Dr. Hamburg. “At stake is the nation’s success in preventing illness and saving lives, in the face of both present and future challenges.”

Additional information about the Commonwealth Fund Commission on a National Public Health System can be found at <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/about-us/public-health-commission>.

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About the Commonwealth Fund

The mission of the Commonwealth Fund is to promote a high-performing health care system that achieves better access, improved quality, and greater efficiency, particularly for society’s most vulnerable, including low-income people, the uninsured, and people of color.