



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, NY 10007

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** June 1, 2015

**CONTACT:** [pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-2958

**MAYOR DE BLASIO ORDERS IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TO END THE USE OF  
SUBSTANDARD THREE-QUARTER HOUSES IN NEW YORK CITY**

*Human Resources Administration will stop payments to landlords with serious or repeat housing violations*

**NEW YORK**—Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced that an interagency task force will review the use of three-quarter houses in New York City. The Mayor ordered his senior staff to immediately conduct a full review of all residences identified by the Human Resources Administration that house 10 or more unrelated adults that receive the \$215 State-set public assistance rent allowance. Starting this week, inspectors from several City agencies, including the Department of Buildings, the Fire Department, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, the Human Resources Administration and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, will visit identified locations to document health and safety violations. Where serious or repeated violations are found, HRA will invoke its authority under the State’s social services law provision to withhold rent. If necessary, alternative accommodations will be found to protect the health and safety of residents.

“We will not accept the use of illegally subdivided and overcrowded apartments to house vulnerable people in need of critical services,” said **Mayor de Blasio**. “The City has already been working to identify these residences and this task force will accelerate inspections and enforcement, relocate residents where necessary, and make recommendations to end this terrible practice.”

The City will continue to partner with law enforcement to address Medicaid fraud that it has been investigating at three-quarter houses, and will make additional referrals for prosecution.

The City is already working with the federal court receiver and Samaritan Village to ensure that the 1,200 residents that have been receiving services from Narco Freedom, the substance-abuse-treatment provider where an investigation has already resulted in criminal indictments, will be placed in appropriate programs and living conditions.

The Mayor will also request all State agencies to stop referrals to three-quarter houses, which has been City policy since 2010 when then-Public Advocate de Blasio pushed for the change. Additionally, the City will ask the State to increase the public assistance rent allowance for singles and families, and continue to fight for an adequate allocation of supportive housing units for the five boroughs.

“Nothing can trump ensuring the safety of New Yorkers, especially our at-risk populations seeking to transition from challenging circumstances toward independent living. For years, unscrupulous landlords have shunned safety concerns in favor of pure profit, operating scores of illegal three-quarter houses in central Brooklyn and other neighborhoods with foul, hazardous conditions. We can no longer allow taxpayers to underwrite such squalor. I thank the de Blasio administration for this essential multiagency approach that will lead to safer housing, better use of critical social services and treatment, as well as effective enforcement of bad actors,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**.

“When the systems that are supposed to help our society’s most vulnerable are corrupted, our action to make it right must be swift and uncompromising,” said **Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer**. “Mayor de Blasio is right to convene this task force, and Gov. Cuomo should follow our city’s lead and cut off state agency referrals to these ‘three-quarter houses.’”

“We simply can’t allow some of our most vulnerable New Yorkers to continue to endure hazardous conditions at subpar three-quarter homes throughout the city,” said **Congressman Joe Crowley**. “I thank Mayor de Blasio for making this issue an immediate priority and putting together this task force so that we can do better by those residents who are looking to get their lives back on track and become productive members of our society.”

“Those who are homeless or suffering from drug addiction have significant obstacles to overcome. It is our duty as public servants to ensure they are afforded every possible opportunity to succeed. We cannot allow predatory landlords to exploit them, while simultaneously engaging in Medicaid fraud. I applaud Mayor de Blasio for taking immediate action to end substandard and dangerous three-quarters housing in New York City,” said **Congressman Eliot Engel**.

“Thousands of New York City families and individuals without a home have been forced to rely on three-quarter houses because of a lack of other viable options in our community. We have to end this practice once and for all and provide homeless people, recovering addicts and other vulnerable individuals with access to proper living conditions and services. I applaud Mayor de Blasio for taking immediate action to address this issue and I look forward to supporting his efforts,” said **Congressman José E. Serrano**.

“Abuses in so-called three-quarter houses prey on some of our most vulnerable neighbors and simply cannot be tolerated,” said **Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez**. “It is important that the City move swiftly to investigate and address these schemes, while working proactively to ensure residents are protected and able to secure quality, livable housing.”

“I commend the de Blasio administration for taking decisive action to identify and correct the dangerous and deplorable conditions found in many three-quarter houses and move residents into

more appropriate placements. New Yorkers in need deserve a safe and supportive environment and the city must hold all providers and programs to that standard,” said **Council Member Stephen Levin, Chair of General Welfare Committee.**

“Three-quarter houses have long been dangerous, exploitative environments for drug users and the formerly incarcerated, masking as havens for support while in reality fostering an environment that is unsafe and unhealthy for its residents,” said **Alyssa Aguilera, Political Director of VOCAL-NY.** “The fact that landlords profit off this exploitative housing scheme makes the conditions even more appalling. We applaud Mayor de Blasio for his efforts now, and as Public Advocate, to draw attention to the dreadful conditions of three-quarter houses and hope that the City and State create more affordable housing units for New Yorkers to get support services in healthy and safe conditions.”

###