

### **MARY T. BASSETT, MD, MPH**

Mary T. Bassett was appointed Commissioner of Health of New York City in February 2014. Her focus is on ensuring that every New York City neighborhood supports the health of its residents, with the goal of closing gaps in population health across this diverse city. Originally from New York City, Dr. Bassett lived for nearly 20 years in Zimbabwe. Previously, she was a Program Director for the African Health Initiative and the Child Well-being Program at the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. She completed her medical residency at Harlem Hospital Center, and has a Master's degree in Public Health from the University of Washington.

### **MARGARET CROTTY, MPH**

Margaret Crotty is the Executive Director of Partnership with Children, which provides mental health, community school, and trauma-informed counseling services for students and families in high-poverty schools. Previously, Ms. Crotty launched and ran Save the Children's \$2 billion newborn and child health campaign, focusing on Nigeria, India, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone. Prior to that, she served as the President and CEO of AFS-USA, formerly the American Field Service. In the private sector, Ms. Crotty spent seven years at the global corporation EF Education, living in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Paris, first on the founding management team of EF's online education business, and later as President of EF's higher education business. She has worked in Indonesia twice, at Save the Children and McKinsey and Co. Ms. Crotty has a BA from Princeton, an MBA from Harvard Business School, and an MPH from Columbia University's Mailman School. She serves on the boards of Northwell Health, Lenox Hill Hospital, Seachange Capital, Crutches 4 Kids, and several schools. She is a YPO member, and chairs Emerging Leaders for social sector managers.

### **ROB DESALLE, PhD**

Rob DeSalle works in molecular systematics, microbial evolution, and genomics. His current research concerns the development of bioinformatic tools to handle large-scale genomics problems using phylogenetic systematic approaches. Dr. DeSalle has worked closely with colleagues from Cold Spring Harbor Labs, New York University, and the New York Botanical Garden on seed plant genomics and development of tools to establish gene family membership on a genome-wide scale. His group also focuses on microbial genomics, taxonomy, and systematics. In particular, they approach tree-of-life questions concerning microbial life using whole genome information. Dr. DeSalle also dabbles in *Drosophila* systematics.

### **FRANCES CHAMPAGNE, PhD**

Frances Champagne is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at Columbia University and a faculty member of the Columbia Sackler Institute for Developmental Psychobiology and Columbia Population Research Center. Dr. Champagne's research concerns how genetic and environmental factors interact to regulate development through epigenetic changes in gene expression in the brain. The quality of maternal care received in infancy can lead to long-term changes in offspring gene expression and behavior. Dr. Champagne's current and ongoing research explores the implications of these influences for the transmission of behavior across generations and the molecular mechanisms through which these effects are achieved. Dr. Champagne studies epigenetics, neurobiology, and behavior in both laboratory and clinical contexts to better understand origins of variation behavior and mental health. In addition to investigating the modulating effects of mother-infant interactions, Dr. Champagne is currently exploring a broad array of social influences and environmental exposures and is exploring the mechanisms of risk vs. resilience to such early life experiences. Professor Champagne received an MSc in Psychiatry and PhD in Neuroscience from McGill University. In 2007, she received an NIH Director's New Innovator Award and her research is funded by NIMH and NIEHS.

### **VIRGINIA RAUH, ScD**

Virginia Rauh, is Professor and Vice Chair of the Heilbrunn Department of Population and Family Health at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, and Director of Neurodevelopmental Studies at the Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health. Dr. Rauh is trained in both perinatal epidemiology (the study of risk factors for morbidity and mortality in mothers and infants) and psychiatric epidemiology (the study of determinants of cognitive, behavioral and clinical problems). For the past 15 years, she has studied the longitudinal effects of early toxic environmental exposures on child health and development in the U.S. and globally. Her current work focuses on the brain and behavioral effects of exposure to air pollution, including polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, second-hand smoke, endocrine disruptors, and pesticides, and the susceptibility of individuals and disadvantaged populations to environmental exposures. Dr. Rauh has been principal investigator and collaborator on numerous studies, including the impact of insecticides and secondhand smoke on child neurodevelopment and brain abnormalities in an urban minority cohort, a randomized intervention trial for low birth weight infants, a multi-site U.S. study of lifestyles in pregnancy, a

study of developmental outcomes of children born to inner-city adolescent mothers, a multi-level analysis of the impact of Head Start on New York City school children, and several studies of the effects of air pollutants (coal and oil-burning emissions) on pregnant women and their children in low and middle-income countries (Poland and China). She received her BA from Middlebury College, MSW from Smith College, and ScD from Harvard University School of Public Health before joining the Columbia faculty. Dr. Rauh has served on numerous national committees including the Scientific Advisory Board for the Environmental Protection Agency, NIH study sections, and expert panels for EPA, NIEHS, NIMH, and NICHD.

#### RENÉE WILSON-SIMMONS, DrPH

Renée Wilson-Simmons is Director of the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP), leading the nonpartisan public policy research center's efforts to promote the economic security, healthy development, and wellbeing of America's poor children and their families. Before joining NCCP in 2012, Dr. Wilson-Simmons served as the Senior Associate for adolescent health and development at the Annie E. Casey Foundation in Baltimore, where she managed reproductive health initiatives and related grants and activities. She also served as Associate Director of the Evidence-Based Practice Group, which identifies, develops, and scales up evidence-based interventions for children and families involved with public social service systems. Prior to her role at Casey, Dr. Wilson-Simmons was a senior scientist at Education Development Center, a global nonprofit organization, where she led the development and implementation of a range of projects that addressed the health and safety needs of young people living in high-poverty urban areas. She was also Director of the Health Promotion Program for Urban Youth at Boston City Hospital, principal investigator of the first Office of Minority Health-funded grant to develop a community-based coalition to prevent homicide in the African American community, and Director of a five-year National Institutes of Health study of the long-term impact of a comprehensive adolescent health program on reductions in multiple-risk behaviors related to violence, substance abuse, and early and unprotected sexual activity among inner-city African American and Hispanic youth.

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# POVERTY, THE BRAIN AND MENTAL HEALTH

## How Stress Affects Learning, and the Science Behind It

Tuesday, May 3, 2016

American Museum of Natural History

Current brain science ascribes the foundation of mental health over the lifecourse to a child's experiences in the earliest years. Join a conversation that explores the outcomes of poverty as a stress factor and how families, communities, and schools must be informed by this science.

**Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH**

Commissioner, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

**Frances Champagne, PhD**

Associate Professor of Psychology  
Columbia University

**Virginia Rauh, ScD**

Professor, Population and Family Health  
Columbia University Mailman School of  
Public Health

**Margaret Crotty, MPH**

Executive Director  
Partnership with Children

**Renée Wilson-Simmons, DrPH**

Director, National Center for Children  
in Poverty, Columbia University Mailman  
School of Public Health

**Rob DeSalle, PhD**

Curator  
Sackler Institute for Comparative  
Genomics  
American Museum of Natural History