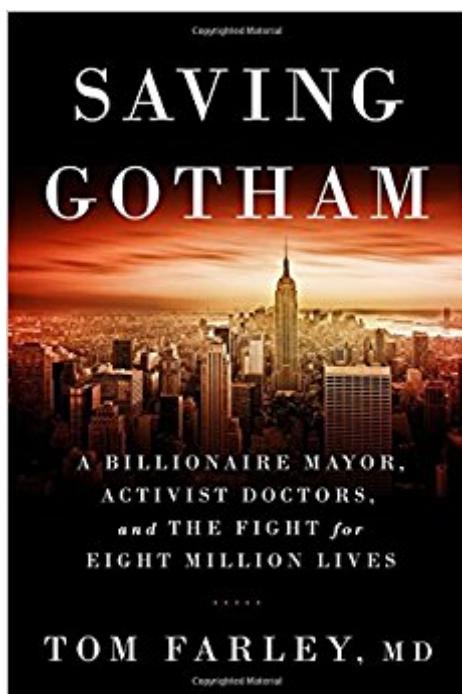


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Saving Gotham: A Billionaire Mayor, Activist Doctors, And The Fight For Eight Million Lives



Synopsis

The inside story of the most audacious public health campaign of the twenty-first century. In 2002, a dynamic doctor named Thomas Frieden became health commissioner of New York City. With support from the new mayor, billionaire Michael Bloomberg, Frieden and his health department team prohibited smoking in bars, outlawed trans fats in restaurants, and attempted to cap the size of sodas, among other groundbreaking actions. The initiatives drew heated criticism, but they worked: by 2011, 450,000 people had quit smoking, childhood obesity rates were falling, and life expectancy was growing. Saving Gotham is the behind-the-scenes story of the most controversial—and successful—public health initiative of our time. Thomas A. Farley, MD, who succeeded Frieden as health commissioner, introduces a team of doctors who accepted the challenge of public health: to care for each of New York City's eight million inhabitants as their own patients. The biggest threats they faced were not cholera or chemical toxins or lack of medical care but instead habits like smoking and unhealthy eating. As these doctors pressed to solve these problems, they found themselves battling those who encouraged those habits, and they reshaped their own agency for a different sort of fight. Farley shows what happens when science-driven doctors are given the political cover to make society-wide changes to protect people from today's health risks—and how industries exploit legislatures, the courts, the media, and public opinion to undermine them. With Washington caught in partisan paralysis and New York City's ideas spreading around the world, Saving Gotham demonstrates how government—local government—can protect its citizens and transform health for everyone.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Ã¢ "In recent years, New York City adopted a series of bold initiatives to reduce smoking, to combat childhood obesity, and otherwise to promote public health. Tom Farley was there, and he tells the gripping inside story. Think that a public health department canÃ¢ "t save lives? Think again!Ã¢ " - Cass R. Sunstein, Robert Walmsley University Professor, Harvard University, and coauthor of *Nudge*Ã¢ "For twelve years, Mike Bloomberg was mayor of New York City, and the two Toms (Frieden and Farley) ran the health department. The brash, fearless trio took on Big Tobacco and salt- and sugar-pushers to make New York the healthiest city in America, with a life expectancy three years longer than the nationÃ¢ "s. This great book tells you how they did it.Ã¢ " - Laurie Garrett, Pulitzer Prize-winning writer and author of *I Heard The Sirens Scream: How Americans Responded to the 9/11 and Anthrax Attacks*Ã¢ "There is a reason why people in New York City live longer than average Americans, and this book tells you why. Tom Farley has written a fast-paced chronicle of those exciting years and recounts how a mayor who didnÃ¢ "t have to worry about raising funds for his campaigns told his health commissioners to think big and save lives.Ã¢ " - Richard Besser, MD, chief health and medical editor, ABC NewsÃ¢ "As mayor of NYC, Michael Bloomberg showed the world that an enlightened leader can tremendously improve the health and well-being of his constituents. In this riveting book, Dr. Farley uses his experiences as a member of BloombergÃ¢ "s public health team to describe the challenges and opposition faced at every step.Ã¢ " - Walter Willett, MD, DrPH, chair, Department of Nutrition, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public HealthÃ¢ "In *Saving Gotham* the former New York City health commissioner provides the inside story on how the city led the nation by dramatically reducing smoking rates, eliminating artificial trans fats from restaurants, getting calorie information on restaurant menus, and reducing soda consumption and obesity. Those efforts are saving thousands of lives every year.Ã¢ " - Michael F. Jacobson, PhD, executive director, Center for Science in the Public Interest

Tom Farley, MD, served as an epidemic intelligence service officer with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention before becoming commissioner of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. He lives in New York City.

A good introduction to what the NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene has been doing to improve the health of the city's populations. Focuses on the battles against smoking, excessive sugar and salt in our food. Well-written and fast-paced work by a former Commissioner of Health. Somewhat triumphalist -- the city did succeed in many of these endeavors, but perhaps not quite as much as the author would have us believe, and somewhat hero-worshipping of his predecessor, Tom Frieden, whose leadership was indeed import and but appears exaggerated here. It also leaves out discussion of some of the more serious arguments and controversies around the DOH policies, politics, and priorities. A more thorough, more academic account, with a longer historical perspective, is available in James Colgrove, *Epidemic City: The Politics of Public Health in New York* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2011), a fine book indeed.

I wish this book had been available earlier this fall, so that I could have assigned it for my class on state and local government! Dr. Farley's book reads like a fast-paced thriller recounting the health and well-being of New Yorkers. Farley's book is a useful text for understanding the particulars of New York City's most innovative public health solutions, however, more importantly, the book also offers unique insight into the jostling that goes into getting policies through at the local level. Dr. Farley's commentary regarding relations between state, local, and federal government is fascinating and highlights the complexity of associated with addressing public health crises.

Everyone in public health (and really just everyone in general) should read this book!

Fascinating view into the inner workings of NYC public health and how they implemented some policies that saved lives and changed public health throughout the country.

A great book on public health for both the professional and layperson. A great integration of story and facts. A surprising "page turner." I didn't want to put it down.

Very interesting if you are interested in the public health field. Very easy to follow.

Very readable account of Tom Frieden's impact as the head of the NYC Dept of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Great read

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