

Report: Obama selects Frieden as CDC director

May 15 2009

(AP) -- President Barack Obama on Friday will name Dr. Thomas Frieden as director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, administration officials told The New York Times.

Frieden has served as New York City's health commissioner for the past seven years. In that time, he spearheaded a campaign to ban smoking in restaurants and bars, boosted the number of New Yorkers getting [HIV](#) tests and helped to distribute millions of free condoms.

He will inherit a looming decision on how best to manage a swine [flu outbreak](#), including whether or how to produce a [swine flu vaccine](#). The virus has infected 6,673 people in 35 countries.

Health experts say the CDC needs to make immediate improvements in employee morale and organization as the Obama administration works to overhaul the national health care system.

"I think the administration selected Tom Frieden because he can take public health to a new place," Jeffrey Levi, executive director of Trust for America's Health, a nonprofit public health advocacy organization, told The Times. "He's a transformational leader."

Frieden, 48, is expected to take office next month. His appointment does not require Senate confirmation.

He will succeed Dr. Julie Gerberding, who resigned in January. Dr.

Richard Besser has served as acting head of the Atlanta-based CDC in recent months.

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