



Margaret A. Hamburg, M.D.

Commissioner of Food and Drugs

Margaret A. Hamburg, M.D. is the 21st Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. As the top official at the FDA, Dr. Hamburg is committed to strengthening programs and policies that enable the agency to carry out its fundamental mission — to protect and promote the public health.

Only the second woman ever to serve as Commissioner, Dr. Hamburg earned her M.D. from Harvard Medical School and completed her residency at what is now New York Presbyterian Hospital-Weill Cornell Medical Center. She conducted neuroscience research at Rockefeller University in New York and at the National Institute of Mental Health, and later focused on AIDS research as Assistant Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

In 1991, after just a year in the New York City Department of Health, Dr. Hamburg was named its Commissioner. During her six-year tenure, she implemented rigorous public health initiatives that tackled the city's most pressing crises head-on — including improved services for women and children, a needle-exchange program to combat HIV transmission, and the nation's first public health bio-terrorism defense program. The most celebrated achievement during her leadership was her aggressive approach to the city's tuberculosis epidemic, which led to an 86% decline in drug-resistant TB in just five years.

In 1997, three years after she was elected one of the youngest-ever members of the Institute of Medicine, President Bill Clinton named Dr. Hamburg Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, where she served until the end of the Clinton Administration. She then became founding Vice President for Biological Programs at the Nuclear Threat Initiative, a foundation dedicated to reducing the threat to public safety from nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.

President Barack Obama nominated Dr. Hamburg for the post of FDA Commissioner on March 14, 2009. As the Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Dr. Hamburg has emphasized the critical role of innovation in meeting the nation's rapidly growing public health needs. She provided leadership for the implementation of three groundbreaking measures: the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, a 2009 law that gives FDA the authority to regulate the manufacture, distribution, and marketing of tobacco products; the Food Safety Modernization Act of 2011, which changed the focus of food safety measures from responding to food-borne outbreaks of illness to preventing them; and a thorough review of the system for the evaluation and approval of medical devices.

Beyond these specific undertakings, Dr. Hamburg has set the agency's paramount course for fulfilling two central public health tasks. She has launched a nation-wide public-private effort to strengthen regulatory science as a means for advancing the development and evaluation of innovative, breakthrough medical products; and she is leading FDA's transformation into a global regulatory agency capable of ensuring the safety and quality of imported food, drugs and medical devices. Commissioner Hamburg is committed to ensuring that FDA is poised to meet the public health challenges of the 21st century.