

HIV Expert Who Resigned From the CDC in Protest Finds a New Home at Callen-Lorde

Demetre Daskalakis will help lead the LGBT health center Callen-Lorde. He's also on a transition team for NYC Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani.

December 5, 2025 By [Trent Straube](#)

Nationally known [HIV](#) and [LGBTQ](#) health expert Demetre Daskalakis, MD, MPH, has been named the new chief medical officer of [Callen-Lorde Community Health Center](#), which serves LGBTQ clients at three locations across New York City. He will step into his new role February 2026, according to a [press announcement from Callen-Lorde](#).

In addition, Daskalakis and Callen-Lorde CEO Patrick McGovern were named this week to New York City Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani's transition committee on health.

Since 2021, [Daskalakis](#) has helped lead the nation's HIV prevention efforts and monkeypox (also known as mpox) response while at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). He made national headlines in August when he resigned as director of the CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases.

He left the position [in protest as CDC director Susan Monarez was being ousted](#). In a resignation letter he made public, Daskalakis wrote in part: "[A]fter much contemplation and reflection on recent developments and perspectives brought to light by [Health] Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., I find that the views he and his staff have shared challenge my ability to continue in my current role at the agency and in the service of the health of the American people. Enough is enough."

Read his complete resignation letter here:

My resignation letter from CDC.

Dear Dr. Houry,

I am writing to formally resign from my position as Director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), effective August 28, 2025, close of business....

— DrDemetre (@dr_demetre) [August 27, 2025](#)

Daskalakis's new position at Callen-Lorde will mark a return to New York City and specifically to its queer community and health needs. In fact, his connection with Callen-Lorde dates back to 1997, when as a New York University medical student, he did rotations at some of its clinics. In a [statement posted on Callen-Lorde.org](#), he recalls, "At Callen-Lorde, I learned the true meaning of service: to uplift and protect the very community I hold most dear. I witnessed a safe space based in science, a mission lifted by and for community."

"New York City is home for me, and my number one professional objective right now is to make sure that the full breadth of the LGBTQ+ community has a strong medical home in New York," Daskalakis said in a separate press statement. "Callen-Lorde is the obvious wellspring from which to make that happen. Through clinical leadership, medical research and community engagement, Callen-Lorde has set the standard in LGBTQ+ health care since the days of Stonewall, through the early years of the AIDS crisis, up to now."

"Demetre's experience is everything that Callen-Lorde and the LGBTQ+ community need right now," CEO McGovern added. "He has been a leader in the treatment and prevention of HIV and will use this next chapter to bring us closer to ending the epidemic. He successfully led the national response to mpox, and he has defended science-backed standards of health care at a time when medically necessary health care for transgender people is under attack."

"Demetre follows the science, and so does Callen-Lorde. He's also someone who knows how to get things done, having delivered win after win for our communities during his career. That's why this match meets the moment."

Here's a post from October highlighting Daskalakis's advocacy for HIV prevention and his fight against HIV budget cuts:



[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by PrEP4All (@prep4all)

[In an interview with STAT News this week](#), Daskalakis criticized today's federal health agencies, saying they could no longer carry out their mission. Case in point, under the direction of RFK. Jr., the CDC has reversed many stances on vaccines; just today, a panel of CDC advisers (including vaccine skeptics) voted to end recommending the birth dose of the hepatitis B vaccine, despite longstanding evidence of its success.

"My career has taken me from local to federal," Daskalakis told STAT news. "I started really doing clinical work in New York City and learned to do public health as an attending physician at Bellevue Hospital. Then I moved to the Department of Health in New York City and then over to CDC. As I learned more from the local, it became important for me to go to the place [CDC] where that local experience would influence the direction that public health went nationally and, frankly, globally.

"In an environment where I really don't think that federal public health is able to actually execute on its mission, this is when it's time to go back to local," he continues. "For me, the opportunity to go back to New York City and back to the grassroots front line is extremely appealing. It becomes a local charge to have to execute on the public health mission. And I believe in the work that Callen-Lorde does—LGBTQ work has been at the core of my career in so many different things that I do. And New York City—though I was born in DC—is where I grew up from the perspective of my own social awareness as well as public health. And so all of it made sense to go back to my roots."
