

NEW YORK STATE

Howard Zucker, MD, JD

ASTHO Representative, Region II

Commissioner of Health, New York State Department of Public Health



Howard A. Zucker is commissioner of health for New York State. In his previous role as first deputy commissioner, Zucker led the state Department of Health's preparedness and response initiatives in natural disasters and emergencies. He worked closely with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and other health-related entities in New York City.

A native of the Bronx, Zucker earned his Doctorate of Medicine degree from George Washington University School of Medicine at age 22, becoming one of America's youngest doctors. He is board-certified in five specialties/subspecialties and trained in pediatrics at Johns Hopkins Hospital, anesthesiology at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, pediatric critical care medicine/pediatric anesthesiology at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and pediatric cardiology at Children's Hospital Boston/Harvard Medical School.

Before joining the state Department of Health in September 2013, Zucker was a professor of clinical anesthesiology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University and pediatric cardiac anesthesiologist at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx. He was also an adjunct professor at Georgetown University Law School, where he taught biosecurity law.

His vast experience in public policy began as a White House fellow under then-health and human services secretary Tommy Thompson. Subsequently he became the deputy assistant secretary of health where he developed the nation's Medical Reserve Corps, which today is run by the U.S. Surgeon General and includes more than 200,000 volunteers across nearly 1000 programs. Zucker has also been an institute of politics resident fellow at Harvard Kennedy School.

In addition, Zucker is recognized internationally for his work to advance global health. As senior advisor in the Division of Global Health and Human Rights at Massachusetts General Hospital, he leads a team of experts in developing a community peace index, a research initiative aimed at identifying the effectiveness of peace intervention programs in countries impacted by war, political strife, and economic instability.

Previously, he served as assistant director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO) in charge of the health technology and pharmaceuticals cluster. In this capacity, Zucker was the highest ranked American at WHO and spearheaded efforts to globally combat counterfeit medicines as well as address the interface between intellectual property rights, innovation, and public health. He is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, Council for Emerging National Security Affairs, and was a "high-level expert" on public health for NATO.

While working on a public-private partnership with an educational technology company, he developed The Afghan Family Health Book, a health literacy project that has educated millions of women in Afghanistan. Zucker has traveled to China and Haiti on medical missions and has spoken extensively throughout the United States on national health policy issues as well as internationally on global health challenges.

Additionally, Zucker served as associate professor of clinical pediatrics and anesthesiology at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons and pediatric director of the ICU at New York Presbyterian Hospital where he launched the re-structuring of the critical care complex both from a physical environment as well as clinical care delivery standpoint. He has also held academic appointments at Yale University School of Medicine, the National Institutes of Health, and as a research affiliate in the Center for Space Research at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Zucker received his Bachelor of Science degree from McGill University. As a student at McGill University, he helped design zero-gravity medical experiments that ultimately were conducted aboard several space shuttle missions. Today, he serves on the board of directors of the nongovernmental organization that oversees the U.S. National Lab on the International Space Station.

Zucker holds a Juris Doctorate from Fordham University Law School, a Master of Laws degree (LLM) from Columbia Law School and a postgraduate diploma from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He is a former ABC World News' Person of the Week and Columbia University Pediatrics Teacher of the Year. He has been listed in Best Doctors in America as well as Who's Who in the World, and is a member of the Bar of the U.S. Supreme Court.