The Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University is committed to a vision for public health characterized by a fervent support of human rights, the creation of evidence-based science, and the elimination of health disparities in all populations. Through a School-wide collaboration of students, faculty, staff, and alumni, Dean Linda P. Fried developed an Oath for Public Health in 2008 to articulate our professional commitment and provide guiding principles and inspiration to incoming students and to graduates.

The first recital of the Oath took place on May 19, 2009. In the years that followed, the Oath for Public Health has become a School tradition, taken by students as they begin their education and again at graduation, as they embark on public health careers. To date, more than 2400 Mailman School students have taken the Oath.

As part of the public health community, we invite other schools and programs of public health to incorporate the oath into their orientation and commencement programs. Institutions are welcome to use the Mailman School’s Oath for Public Health, or to adapt it to meet the special needs of their institution. We would appreciate any use citing the Mailman School as one source for this important pronouncement of our profession’s responsibilities.

### The Public Health Oath

Health is a human right. The public health community exists to safeguard that right. I believe it is a defining element of a civil society. Public health represents the collective actions necessary to protect the health of all people. Through prevention science and practice we can accomplish this goal. As a public health professional, guided by these principles, I declare the following:

I will work to ensure that people have the chance to live full and productive lives, free from avoidable disease, injury and disability and supported in their pursuit of physical, mental, and social well-being.

I will hold myself to the highest ethics, standards, values, and responsibilities as I move forward the science and practice of public health.

I will respect the rights, values, beliefs, and cultures of those individuals and communities with whom I work.

I will rely on evidence to support my decisions and actions, and translate that evidence into policies and programs that improve health for all.

I will add to the body of research and knowledge and share my discoveries freely.

I will continuously seek new information and be open to ideas that can better protect and promote the health of populations.

I will advance health literacy for all and seek equity and justice for vulnerable populations.

With this oath, I commit to the ideals and mission of public health.