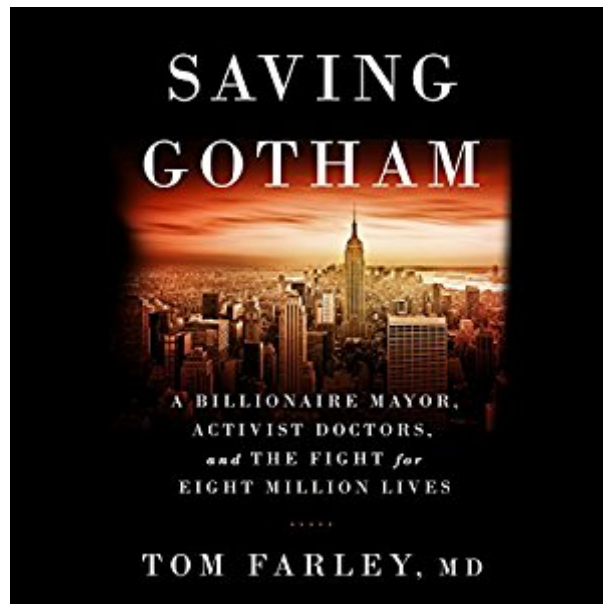


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# Saving Gotham: A Billionaire Mayor, Activist Doctors, And The Fight For Eight Million Lives



## Synopsis

The inside story of the most audacious public health campaign of the 21st century. In 2002, a dynamic doctor named Thomas Frieden became health commissioner of New York City. With support from the new mayor, billionaire Michael Bloomberg, Frieden and his health department team prohibited smoking in bars, outlawed trans fats in restaurants, and attempted to cap the size of sodas, among other groundbreaking actions. The initiatives drew heated criticism, but they worked: by 2011, 450,000 people had quit smoking, childhood obesity rates were falling, and life expectancy was growing. *Saving Gotham* is the behind-the-scenes story of the most controversial - and successful - public health initiative of our time. Thomas A. Farley, MD, who succeeded Frieden as health commissioner, introduces a team of doctors who accepted the challenge of public health: to care for each of New York City's eight million inhabitants as their own patients. The biggest threats they faced were not cholera or chemical toxins or lack of medical care but instead habits like smoking and unhealthy eating. As these doctors pressed to solve these problems, they found themselves battling those who encouraged those habits, and they reshaped their own agency for a different sort of fight. Farley shows what happens when science-driven doctors are given the political cover to make societywide changes to protect people from today's health risks - and how industries exploit legislatures, the courts, the media, and public opinion to undermine them. With Washington caught in partisan paralysis and New York City's ideas spreading around the world, *Saving Gotham* demonstrates how government - local government - can protect its citizens and transform health for everyone.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I'm a medical student very interested in public health and health advocacy, and read a good deal on the subject. But I've yet to find a book as interesting, well-written, informative, and inspiring (not to mention funny) as *Saving Gotham*. This book tells the story of the public health warriors at the New York Public Health department as they battle Big Tobacco, Big Soda, Big Food, standing in front of these behemoths and trying to turn back the tide of preventable death and disability from the obesity and vascular disease epidemics. And the inspiring thing is that they succeed- not always, but enough to make a difference that we feel in everyday life. From calories on menus to smoking bans in bars and restaurants, the stories of laws and policies many of us now take for granted, policies that have saved thousands of lives, is told right here- in a form that is friendly to beginners while holding important pearls for even seasoned health advocates. The book is fascinating because it does several things well. It explains the details- legal structures, how to run an ad campaign, the importance of sound research- that need to be worked through to make change happen. It explains the science behind the laws that were passed. It explains the strategies employed by the activist doctors and their colleagues, and how these evolve. It delves into politics local, global, and national, and explains their intersection. In doing these things, it acts like a playbook for current and future advocates. It also delves into the people behind the work- their characters, successes and failures. It shows us how the way relationships unfold can change the course of policy. You really feel like you get to know the people at the Public Health department by the end.

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