

MANHATTAN VOICE

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Visiting Nurse Service introduces new initiatives to address health disparities



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From left: President of VNSNY's CHOICE Plans Dr. Hany Abdelaal, VNSNY President and CEO Dan Savitt and Senior Vice President of Partners in Care James Rolla.

By Chandra Wilson

Representatives of Visiting Nurse Service of New York (VNSNY) met with the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) at a press conference to discuss VNSNY's initiatives to address health disparities and continued commitment to New York City's Chinese community.

The event, which was held at the VNSNY Chinatown Community Center at 7 Mott Street, was also an opportunity for many in attendance to welcome Dan Savitt, who became VNSNY President and CEO of the Visiting Nurse Service of New York in February. Savitt announced that VNSNY will soon be opening two new community centers in Sunset Park, Brooklyn and Flushing, Queens.



Visiting Nurse Service of New York and the Chinese Consolidated Benevolence Association gathered in Chinatown Friday.

“All three community centers will be open seven days a week to provide easy access to care and services for the Chinese communities we serve,” Savitt said. “We look forward to continuing our partnership with all of you and our local community providers and community-based organizations to provide culturally-competent care and service to the Chinese communities.”

Since VNSNY first began working in New York City’s Chinese community in 1999, they’ve served more than 145,000 clients. They now have more than 11,600 Chinese Community Center members and have hosted more than 4,500 events. The Centers partner with many health- and community-based organizations to provide free health education, health screenings, social services and health care referrals for the Chinese communities.

CCBA President Justin Yu discussed the long history of both VNSNY and CCBA’s commitment to ensuring the well being of New York residents and highlighted how important that connection continues to be during the pandemic.

“I’m so glad Visiting Nurse Service of New York has expanded so much,” Yu said. “We are very, very happy to host many activities provided by VNSNY for the past few years and we will welcome you back again – not only here but in Queens and in Brooklyn.”

Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer praised the work of all the organizations present at the event – particularly in the trying times of the past 18 months.

“During the pandemic, everybody in this room was part of the solution in terms of food, PPE and care, day in and day out,” Brewer said. “I saw so many of you every day. I want to say ‘congratulations’ because we got through it [and we continue to] with the support of everyone in Chinatown. There have been so many times when VNSNY and CCBA worked together over the years. I could see the relationship was strong and special and what it should be.”

Brewer added her recollections of VNSNY's history of innovation through the years.

“Visiting Nurse Service of New York was the first organization to think about technology in healthcare, way before any other organization was thinking about the importance of tele-medicine,” she said.

Dr. Hany Abdelaal, President of [VNSNY CHOICE Plans](#) spoke of the familial relationship both organizations share.

“President Yu mentioned they were 10 years older than us and I couldn't pick a better brother or sister in the community for this length of time,” Dr. Abdelaal said. “Your commitment to the community and the people that live here is the same commitment that Visiting Nurse Service of New York has had for the past 128 years and I can promise that we will be here for the next 128 years along with you.”

He also thanked Drs. Henry Chen and Warren Chin who were present at the press conference along with the organizations that they represent and lead for the longstanding partnership.

Dr. Abdelaal added that CHOICE will offer two new Medicare plan offerings in 2022 for people with both Medicaid and Medicare beneficiaries with low-income subsidy.

“We are among the first to create a Medicaid Long Term Care (MLTC) plan in New York and know the ins and outs of New York's health care system,” he said. “We have longstanding relationships with physician groups, hospital centers, private practices, and health systems.”

Dr. Abdelaal added that VNSNY CHOICE health plans currently include a Medicaid Advantage Plus plan that brings together Medicare and Medicaid benefits in an all-in-one plan for people who need long-term help with daily activities; a MLTC plan that provides long-term help with daily activities for people who are not eligible for Medicare and want to keep it separate; and a specialized Medicaid plan for people living with HIV, individuals of transgender experience or gender non-conforming, or homeless individuals, regardless of HIV status.



Senior Vice President of [Partners In Care](#) James Rolla described much of the work that goes into their services.

“As part of the VNSNY family, Partner in Care shares its commitment to quality and compassionate care, Rolla said. “We’re committed to culturally-sensitive care to meet the diverse needs of New York’s communities. We work hard every day to help families by assisting those who need care such as help with daily activities like bathing, grooming, dressing, shopping and light housekeeping.”

Rolla announced a [Home Health Aide hiring event](#) on that was held on Aug. 28 at the VNSNY Chinatown Community Center (7 Mott Street).

“We offer free training for those who are looking to become certified as home health aides,” he said. “In addition, we offer great benefits such as a pension plan, paid time off, paid orientation, health insurance, flexible work schedule and sign-on bonus of up to \$1,000.”

Rolla added those who refer friends to the program can earn \$100 for each referral.

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