



# CRAIN'S HEALTH PULSE NEW YORK

July 27, 2020 05:30 AM | 37 MINUTES AGO

JENNIFER HENDERSON

## **New App Will Help Home Care Agencies with Contact Tracing**

The Visiting Nurse Service of New York's data science team has developed a contact-tracing app to help home care agencies limit the spread of Covid-19.

The free online tool, VisitContactTrace, lets users [upload their clinical-visit data](#) in order to map the potential spread of infectious diseases, VNSNY said. Organizations can see which patients and staff interacted with Covid-19-positive ones and who those individuals came in contact with in turn. They can then work to mitigate transmission by notifying individuals who could have been exposed.

Home care agencies already collect consumer data to bill Medicare and private insurers, said Carlin Brickner, head of VNSNY's data science team. They use the data to tell payers what happened on a visit.

"We're basically creating this tool to accelerate the ability to do contact tracing with the data the agency does have," Brickner said.

He noted that one caveat of the new app is that family members of patients and staff are not able to be observed.

Though the motivation for developing the tool was the pandemic, Brickner said, he doesn't want to limit its use to only that purpose. It could be applied to other infectious diseases, he said, adding that his team is interested in collaborating with others on advancing its scope. —Jennifer Henderson