



CRAIN'S HEALTH PULSE

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Visiting Nurse Service adds LGBT designation to home care offerings

The Visiting Nurse Service of New York has launched a new care delivery model tailored to LGBTQ patients, it told *Crain's* exclusively.

The home care agency, headquartered in Murray Hill, added a LGBTQ+ "care type"—a designation that captures a patient's health profile and needs—into its existing system. The designation will enable patients to receive services from clinically competent providers and be connected to its LGBT programs. The model went live in June.

"Not having this data prior made it difficult to identify care needs of this community that has experienced years of discrimination and stigmatization," said Arthur Fitting, program manager.

In 2020 VNSNY served over 75,000 patients, representing over 933,000 clinical visits. However, it is hard to ascertain what proportion of its patients will need specialized LGBT services as there was no such designation for them previously, he said.

The creation of the care type and its integration into VNSNY's electronic medical record systems took more than two years of work, Fitting said. VNSNY had collaborated with Dr. Barbara Warren, senior director of Mount Sinai's LGBT programs and policies in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, on how to create the designation and what to do with the data.

Mount Sinai and VNSNY also teamed up on a transgender care program in 2016.

"Very often LGBT seniors are faced with the choice of a nursing or an assisted-living facility, and many are forced to go back into the closet because of the lack of appropriate support," Fitting said.

This new care type will provide elderly LGBTQ individuals a safer alternative to age in their own homes, he said. —S.S.