



# Out-of-Town Partnership Saves 45 Jobs at Buffalo Health Care Company

Tracey Drury Feb 13, 2024

A partnership with an out-of-town health care company has saved 45 jobs at Elderwood Health Plan.

The company, which oversees managed longterm care plans for 1,200 local Medicare and Medicaid recipients, was slated to cease operations on May 1 after a change in state requirements.

Instead, the company has entered into an agreement with Manhattan-based VNS Health to continue serving existing and new members living in the Erie, Genesee, Monroe, Niagara, Orleans and Wyoming counties who opt into VNS Health's plan.

The changes are tied to changes enacted as part of last year's state budget, which introduced a new standard that requires all MLTC plans to have a dual-eligible special needs plan in place by Jan. 1. Elderwood Health Plan [started providing services](#) through the program in 2015.

The same issue led to the closure in January of Fallon Health Weinberg's MLTC program, resulting in [31 job layoffs](#). Elderwood avoided a similar situation through its agreement with VNS Health, the largest managed longterm care plan provider across the state.

According to the WNY Law Center, half a dozen MLTC programs across the state will be affected by the state's rule changes, including Kalos Health, a nonprofit [company affiliated](#) with Niagara Hospice that employed 150 just a few years ago. Officials couldn't be reached for comment on current size, and fate of the program.

Pending state approvals, Elderwood Health Plan will continue to manage care for members, unless they opt to sign up with an alternate MLTC provider.

VNS Health has members in Buffalo and in Monroe County as well, but no staff or physical office sites, said Alicia Laible-Kenyon, who will remain executive director for Elderwood Health Plan through the new partnership.

"That's why the partnership makes so much sense," she said. "We're bringing the knowledge of the Western New York community to them and they're bringing a vast amount of resources and technology that will be available for our members and staff."

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