



City renews \$55M VNS Health contract for mobile crisis, care coordination services

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Home health services provider VNS Health, formerly known as the Visiting Nurse Service of New York, has received a \$55 million city contract renewal for mobile crisis teams and care management.

The contract from the city Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has a retroactive start date of July 1 and runs through June 30, 2031, city records show.

The funding will enable the nonprofit to continue operating mobile crisis teams in Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx, VNS Health said.

The teams conduct home visits and assessments for adults and children referred by the city's NYC Well hotline or the new federal 988 mental health crisis hotline. Teams include licensed mental health counselors, social workers, peer specialists and family peer advocates.

VNS Health's mobile crisis teams served about 1,800 adults and 3,000 children last year.

Deirdre DeLeo, director of the behavioral health crisis and assessment team at VNS Health, said the broader goal of mobile crisis teams is to reduce costly ER and hospital visits.

"Most people when they don't know what to do, they either call 911 or go to an emergency room," DeLeo said. "Not everyone in crisis needs to be in a hospital."

VNS Health said it also will use the contract funding to provide care coordination to adults and elderly New Yorkers who have severe mental illness. Its care coordinators make medical appointments for clients, help them enroll in health insurance, communicate with their health care providers and remind them of upcoming doctor's visits. The program currently serves about 75 clients.

VNS Health, founded in 1893, is based in Midtown East.

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