



Meet Esther Kamara-Conteh, 2024 McKnight's Pinnacle Awards 'Inspiration' Honoree



Jessica Towhey, May 06, 2024

Esther Kamara-Conteh's life has taken her from Sierra Leone in West Africa to New York and beyond.

Her parents were healthcare workers and educators, and when she immigrated to New York City, she began as a home health aide, modeling her approach to the compassionate care learned at home.

Her patients often were the most vulnerable, managing their own multiple, chronic illnesses. Kamara-Conteh learned the true value of the insights from direct care aides as she worked with care teams to develop plans and deliver the highest quality care.

Her time as a home health aide propelled her to nursing school and from there, her career shot upward. Her current role as the vice president of care management for Health Plans from VNS Health has her at one of the largest US nonprofit home- and community-based healthcare organizations. She oversees clinicians and care managers to develop care plans for the 35,000 members it serves.

Remaining true to her roots as a home health aide, much of Kamara-Conteh's time is focused on members of VNS Health Health Plan Medicaid Advantage Plus and Managed Long Term Care, Medicaid plans for New Yorkers who want to remain in their own homes and communities but need help with activities of daily living. There, she continues to manage care for patients with multiple illnesses who also can struggle with access to food and housing.

Kamara-Conteh also is a mentor for the next generation of caregivers, helping them understand the big picture, which can get lost in the day-to-day.

“It’s important to look beyond the daily demands and challenges, because the reward over time will be so much more than you put in,” she tells younger employees.

- She moved to New York City when she was 16.
- Kamara-Conteh graduated as an advanced practice nurse from New York University.
- Her parents were healthcare workers and educators in Africa, providing early inspiration for Kamara-Conteh’s career in healthcare.

The [McKnight’s Pinnacle Awards program](#) is jointly administered by McKnight’s Senior Living, McKnight’s Long-Term Care News and McKnight’s Home Care. Honorees were recognized March 21 at a dinner and awards ceremony in Chicago.

The McKnight’s family of brands brings the most up-to-date news in home care to industry insiders. The brand covers the segments of in-home personal care, home health, hospice and palliative care. Readers are leaders in their respective organizations, ranging from owners and executives to clinical directors and other stakeholders. Content reaches an audience of 79,000, and focuses on news, trends affecting management decisions, personnel operations, patient care services, legal issues, facility design and resident safety. Features include updates on pharmacy service, legislation affecting the industry and vendor/product news.