

Meet Carol Odnoha, 2023 McKnight's Pinnacle Awards 'Agent of Change' honoree



Kimberly Hartley, April 17, 2022

For decades, Carol Odnoha and a legion of fellow nurses have ensured that New York's most vulnerable — including older adults and others with chronic health conditions — get the care they need inside their own homes and communities.

On any given day, that could equate to seeing more than 43,000 patients in the care of the Visiting Nurse Service of New York, now VNS Health. As director of several of the organization's programs, it's been Odnoha's job to coordinate the complex choreography of delivering that care.

Those efforts, and more, helped earn her Agent of Change honors in the 2023 *McKnight's* Pinnacle Awards program.

With the exception of her career's start at Mount Sinai Hospital, Odnoha has spent almost her entire working life at VNS Health, beginning in 1982.

The holder of an undergraduate degree in nursing from Adelphi University, she eventually went on to earn a master's degree in public administration in health policy and management at New York University.

The first dedicated nurse for maternal child health and pediatrics serving Queens, NY, she was responsible for programs that provided respite and home-based support services to families of

children affected by chronic illnesses, including AIDS. Later, she oversaw VNS Health's entire maternity, newborn and pediatrics home visiting program, which in 2004 involved 43,398 home visits by nurses and therapists.

Beginning in 2006, she spearheaded the addition of the Nurse-Family Partnership to VNS Health, including seeking grants and private funding to support it, helping first-time moms in need navigate the first two critical years of their baby's life, as well as their own since giving birth.

Since then, several thousand low-income New Yorkers have received access to the free assistance and counseling related to nursing, parenting, working and managing the emotional toll this new milestone can take.

The [McKnight's Pinnacle Awards program](#) is jointly administered by McKnight's Home Care, McKnight's Long-Term Care New and McKnight's Senior Living. Honorees were recognized March 7 at a gala banquet and awards ceremony in Chicago. The program's Platinum sponsor was MatrixCare. Omnicare was a Silver sponsor, and additional sponsors included Pinnacle Quality Insight, HealthDirect and Sentricks.

Editor's note: McKnight's Home Care, McKnight's Long-Term Care News and McKnight's Senior Living are profiling the McKnight's 2023 Pinnacle Awards honorees daily in April and May. For additional McKnight's Pinnacle Awards content, visit [this page](#).

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