

BRONX*Times*

New Clinic Treating Mental Health Challenges and Substance Abuse Opens in the South Bronx



By Emily Swanson, April 18, 2025

VNS Health, a longstanding mental health services provider in the five boroughs and surrounding counties, has expanded its South Bronx clinic to treat both substance abuse disorders and mental health challenges under the same roof.

Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, Dr. Ann Sullivan, commissioner of the NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH), and Dr. Chinazo Cunningham, commissioner of the NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS), joined the April 17 ribbon-cutting at the office near The Hub, which Congress Member Ritchie Torres has [called](#) an “open-air drug market.”

While VNS Health has been in the community for 20 years, the need for expanded offerings in that location is acute, and mental health struggles and substance abuse often go hand in hand, VNS Health leaders said.

The Bronx has seen a disproportionate share of drug overdose deaths compared to the rest of the city. While New York City’s [overdose death rates](#) have fallen slightly since 2023, the Bronx still has the highest rate by far, at 78.0 per 100,000 — more than twice the rate of Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens.

“This is an area of great need, and we’re ready to meet that need,” Gibson said. The expanded services will provide “a space of hope, of healing, of building our community,” she said.

Situating multiple services under the same roof is key, said Jessica Fear, senior vice president of behavioral health. When people have to run all over the city for care and have treatment plans that aren’t coordinated with each other, they can easily fall through the cracks and wind up in hospitals or on the streets, she said.

Staff expect to serve hundreds of new clients in the integrated clinic, which will be open Monday through Friday until 9 p.m. and until 6 p.m. on Saturdays.

Their existing clinic has close to 300 clients, and just as many more are expected to take advantage of holistic integrated services, said Annie John, vice president of clinical integrated programs.

To get people in the doors, John told the Bronx Times that VNS Health takes “a network kind of approach,” taking self-referrals from anyone regardless of insurance status or ability to pay, along with referrals from community and partner organizations.

“I think we’re at the right place and moment,” she said.

The Bronx Times is a weekly newspaper serving Parkchester, Hunts Point, Fordham South, Grand Concourse, Fordham North, Bronx North and Co-Op City. Articles reach an estimated audience of 400,848 through print, web and social media.