

## Governor Announces \$9 Million to Expand Services for Older New Yorkers in Underserved/Diverse Communities Hard-Hit By COVID

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GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL

### GOVERNOR HOCHUL ANNOUNCES \$9 MILLION IN AWARDS TO EXPAND MENTAL HEALTH, ADDICTION AND AGING SERVICES FOR OLDER NEW YORKERS IN COMMUNITIES HARD-HIT BY COVID

#### *Six Mental Health Providers Selected To Receive Funding Over 5 Years*

Governor Kathy Hochul today announced the selection of six mental health providers to receive up to \$9 million over five years to support community programs that identify and assist adults age 55 or older whose independence or survival in the community is in jeopardy because of a mental health, substance use, or aging-related concern.

"As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact communities across New York, we must do everything in our power to protect the most vulnerable among us," **Governor Hochul said.** "This financial support will help older New Yorkers in communities that have been especially hard by the pandemic, and the funding will ensure they have the assistance and support to live independently and with dignity."

The "*Partnership to Support Aging in Place in Communities Severely Impacted by COVID-19*" will focus on historically underserved, diverse communities that have been hard hit by COVID-19, and will help individuals to age in place in the communities of their choice. The program will create partnerships between OMH-licensed providers and agencies licensed by the NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) and the NYS Office for Aging (NYSOFA).

**Office of Mental Health Commissioner Dr. Ann Sullivan said,** "These awards will help older New Yorkers who are already facing great challenges live independently and with greater dignity in their own communities. These partnerships bring together all the resources available through OMH and our sister agencies - OASAS and NYSOFA -- to help ensure that older New Yorkers who are living with mental illness or substance use issues have the opportunity to remain safely in their own homes."

**NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports Commissioner Chinazo Cunningham said,** "This funding opportunity will provide access to quality health care for older adults impacted by substance use, addiction and mental health conditions. Working together through community and State-sponsored partnerships will ensure that we are providing effective, comprehensive and individualized services to address the needs of this vulnerable population."

**New York State Office for the Aging Director Greg Olsen said**, "This innovative partnership is yielding results by providing supportive services to help older adults in the community while addressing addiction or mental health needs which may jeopardize a person's ability to age in place. These programs succeed by serving older adults holistically, with a focus on an individual's complete needs. Their success is all made possible through the combined efforts of local offices for the aging working together with behavioral and physical health services partners. I commend the Office of Mental Health, Office of Addiction Services and Supports, and all the partners for their commitment to this vision, and I thank Governor Hochul for her steadfast leadership in continuing to support New York as the first age-friendly state in the nation through these successful partnerships."

**New York State Division of Veterans' Services Executive Deputy Director Joel Evans said**, "Despite the challenges and hardships presented by COVID-19, New York remains dedicated to serving those with unique needs and providing them with opportunities to remain independent and integrated within their communities. These funds provide a life-changing opportunity for these individuals to age in place with honor and dignity. I applaud Governor Hochul for her unwavering support in this endeavor which will promote the health and well-being of the over 50 percent of veterans, who are age 65 and older that call New York home."

OMH issued a Request for Proposals in April 2021 inviting eligible applicants to develop and submit plans to support older New Yorkers in communities hard-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic who face challenges living independently because of mental health, substance use, or age-related concerns.

The programs will help older adults age in place in either OMH supportive housing or other local housing for older adults. Funding can be used to expand or enhance existing programs or develop a new program that meets all program requirements.

The awarded programs include:

### **New York City**

#### **Service Program for Older People**

Partnering with the Metropolitan Center for Mental Health and the New York City Department for the Aging, the goals of Service Program for Older People (SPOP) is to support aging-in-place and reduce premature institutionalization of older adults by providing integrated services related to overall health - psychological well-being, medical care, and treatment for substance use disorders - while also addressing concrete needs through case management services, home health care, socialization opportunities, meals, minor home modifications, and connections to community-based programs. The program expects to serve 240 adults each year, a total 2,700 over the grant period, and to provide additional education and outreach 300 individuals each year through its two partnerships, one of which brings extensive outpatient substance use treatment experience to the table and the other concrete services to support aging-in-place.

#### **Samuel Field YM&YWHA**

Samuel Field YM&YWHA is partnering with Rego Park Counseling and the New York City Department for the Aging to identify and engage older adults in screenings in their home communities and connect them with services. Mobile outreach and off-site services are the dual focal points of the program and include assessment of behavioral health, physical health,

and aging services needs as well as unmet needs in other areas. An individualized plan of care is to be created for each client, and interim care and care coordination is to be provided until all identified services are in place. Counseling, including individual or family psychotherapy and psychiatric care, is to be provided through Samuel Field and Rego Park counseling services.

## **Jamaica Hospital**

Jamaica Hospital Medical Center is partnering with Flushing Hospital Medical Center and the New York City Department for the Aging in the *Jamaica Partnership to Support Aging in Place*. Project goals are to effect decreases in untreated mental health and substance use disorders among at-risk individuals; decreases in episodic care in the Emergency Department; decreases in maladaptive behaviors that contribute to poor mental health; increased engagement; and decreased unmet needs stemming from cultural and language barriers. The partnership expects to serve 360 individuals during the grant period, with Flushing providing substance use disorders treatment and telemedicine addiction support services and the Department for the Aging training medical staff on non-medical aging support and connecting medical center staff with aging services providers.

## **Ohel Childrens Home and Family Services**

Partnering with LSA Recovery, Inc. and the New York City Department for the Aging, the goal of Ohel's *Project WHEEL* is to provide wrap-around mental health services and connect older adults with a full array of services so that they can successfully age in place. They plan to implement a "hub and spoke" model where their multi-disciplinary team will conduct outreach, engagement, and field-based screening throughout the Rockaways, maintaining on-site presence within NYCDFTA-designated NORCS, Older Adults Centers, and NYCHA housing ("spokes") leading to linkage with OHEL mental health clinics and LSA substance use disorder clinics ("hubs") for additional assessment/treatment, as well as connection to NYCDFTA services and supportive technologies.

## **Hudson Valley**

### **Orange County Department of Mental Health**

Orange County's partnership project to support aging in place is called the *Enhanced WELCOME Orange Geriatric Initiative (WOGI)* and includes the Orange County Department of Mental Health, Catholic Charities of Orange and Sullivan Counties, and the Orange County Office for the Aging. Making use of the "Gatekeeper" model, the enhanced project aims to serve those who have been traditionally underserved by increasing stabilization in the community and reducing avoidable emergency department, hospital, and nursing home admissions; supporting older adults to improve their wellbeing and functioning so that can age-in-place; and improving the use of technology to better serve the target population by creating an infrastructure to match individuals with services and supports based on their unique assessed needs.

## **Long Island**

### **Central Nassau Guidance & Counseling Services**

Central Nassau Guidance & Counseling Services is partnering with the Family & Children's Association and the Nassau County Office for the Aging in what they call their *Link-Age* Project. Their goals are to integrate mobile outreach and service delivery among their agencies; identify and engage older adults; identify the specific needs of each older adult encountered; use technology to help older adults and their families/caretakers overcome

common barriers to access care and services; and utilize wrap-around funding and peer supports to address unmet needs. Mobile mental health and co-occurring disorders treatment and mobile targeted outreach to isolated seniors figure largely in their plans.

Information on all of the geriatric programs offered by OMH is available [here](#).

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