

Visiting Nurse Services in Westchester to Expand Services with \$15,199 Grant from Health Care Advocates International

This grant will support staff and leadership training and launch LGBTQ+ Care Navigation Program



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STATES , August 16, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Visiting Nurse Services in Westchester, a nonprofit Medicare-certified home healthcare agency based in Westchester, has received a \$15,199 grant to support a comprehensive training program for both staff and leadership in addition to the launch of the LGBTQ+ Care Navigation program thanks to Health Care Advocates International's The HCAI Fund. Visiting Nurse Services in Westchester is one of six organizations awarded funding in the most recent round of The HCAI Fund's grant cycle.

A study conducted by the National Coalition for LGBTQ Health, examining variations in LGBTQ health across the medical field, found that over 50% of medical professionals felt their formal training did not prepare them to treat LGBTQ patients. Additionally, Stony Brook Medicine of New York, reports that in a survey, 37% of LGBTQ patients report being treated disrespectfully by a healthcare provider. These findings highlight the critical need for improved training and education for healthcare providers to ensure they are adequately equipped to treat LGBTQ patients with respect and competence. VNS Westchester aims to have staff properly equipped to serve these individuals, reduce the gap in medical discrimination, and train professionals to provide equitable care and respectful treatment for this community.

"The HCAI Fund grant is enabling Visiting Nurse Services in Westchester to not only train our sizeable staff, but our leadership and board members as well, to be better equipped to meet the specific health needs of the LGBTQ+ community," said Timothy P. Leddy, VNS Westchester President & CEO. "We are also thrilled to announce the grant will support the launch of our LGBTQ+ Targeted Community Care Navigation program, which will increase the capacity of VNSW to improve the quality of care we provide to our LGBTQ+ clients."

"Visiting Nurse Services in Westchester stood out to our review committee because this grant will help support the launch of their LGBTQ+ Care Navigation Program, which is a first of its kind." said Pattie McKnight, HCAI Executive Director. "VNS in Westchester is making an impact by educating and training their staff to provide gender affirming care for all their patients. They are

truly making a difference in the lives of LGBTQ+ patients within their community.”

While HCAI has informally given more than \$2M since it opened its doors in 2017, The HCAI Fund was launched in 2023 with the mission of providing financial support specifically to 501(c)(3) organizations that strengthen, serve and advocate for the LGBTQ+ community. Applicants that address basic needs, foster safety and wellness, fight stigma and discrimination and promote equality and education through programs and services are given consideration.

“When I founded HCAI, my mission was not only to establish an inclusive and accepting medical practice but also an organization that the LGBTQ+ community could count on in times of crisis and need,” said Gary Blick, Chief Medical Officer and Founder of HCAI. “We are so proud of the funding that The HCAI Fund is able to provide to organizations, like Visiting Nurse Services in Westchester, which are helping to fulfill that mission every day.”

The HCAI Fund is now accepting applications for its next grant cycle through September 30, 2024.

About Visiting Nurse Services in Westchester: Visiting Nurse Services in Westchester (VNSW) is the largest and only independent not-for-profit, Medicare-certified home healthcare agency in Westchester County that also serves the Bronx, Dutchess, Putnam, and Rockland counties. VNSW promotes and supports the health and sustains the independence of residents in the communities they serve through the delivery of home healthcare and related community health services by VNS Westchester, VNSW at Home, VNSW at CCN, their Community Care Navigation agency, and other affiliates. For more information about VNSW and the services that they provide, please visit them online at www.vns.org or contact 914-682-1480.

About HCAI: Health Care Advocates International (HCAI) is a nonprofit health & advocacy organization dedicated to serving the needs of the LGBTQ+ community through prevention, programs, education, advocacy & treatment. As a medical practice and advocacy group, HCAI embraces the whole health (mental, physical and emotional) of the individuals who seek their help. The HCAI team’s mission is to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) by fighting stigma and discrimination and ending homelessness. With an emphasis on LGBTQ+ and HIV communities, we hope to end HIV as a global health crisis in the developed and developing worlds by 2030.

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