

CRAIN'S Health Pulse

City Health Works gets \$2M to expand coaching

City Health Works, a Harlem nonprofit that hires local health coaches to help people manage chronic diseases, has received \$2 million from the Helmsley Charitable Trust. The grant will help the organization bring its approach to more city neighborhoods.

The nonprofit is managing the health of 400 patients in East Harlem who have diabetes, hypertension, asthma or congestive heart failure. Manmeet Kaur, the nonprofit's CEO, said she would use the money to invest in its software platform and hire employees so it can expand its geographic reach.

The 15-employee nonprofit will soon rely more on its revenue than philanthropy, Kaur said. It has generated \$1 million in provider contracts and is negotiating with a large Medicaid managed-care plan in New York. City Health Works has received \$6.5 million in grants from organizations including the Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation, Robin Hood, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Mount Sinai.

Kaur said community health workers can help overcome the mistrust some people in low-income communities feel toward medical professionals. "When you hire someone who they see in the grocery store, who their niece went to school with or who grew up in the same [housing] project, there's a huge amount of trust that comes with that," she said.

Theresa Soriano, senior vice president for care transitions and population health at Mount Sinai St. Luke's, said the hospital is using City Health Works to work with congestive heart failure patients. Coaches advise on lowering salt and fluid intake and monitoring weight. "They're able to be the eyes and ears," Soriano said.