

Genoa's first behavioral health pharmacy in NYC is its 500th in the U.S.

Genoa Healthcare, a national pharmacy chain specializing in behavioral health, has opened its 500th location—in Jackson Heights, Queens—through a partnership with the Catholic Charities Behavioral Health Center.

The co-located pharmacy with Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens' clinic is Genoa's first location in New York City.

Genoa CEO Mark Peterson told *Crain's* that the company plans to double the number of its physical locations in New York state—there are now seven—in the next year and a half.

"It's an important state for us," Peterson said.

Genoa's model is to partner with community mental health clinics, operating pharmacies on-site and making its pharmacists available to patients' care teams. The pharmacy makes it easier for patients to pick up their prescriptions—which leads to higher medication adherence rates than retail pharmacies, the company says.

"Staying on your medications is a critical component to treating these patients, most of whom suffer from a serious and persistent mental illness," Peterson said. "Many of the things we do are designed to take down those barriers that prevent people from achieving their goals."

Those services include creating prefilled pill organizers for patients, synchronizing refills to avoid repeat trips to the pharmacy and coordinating refills to avoid gaps in treatment.

Monsignor Alfred LoPinto, president and CEO of Catholic Charities, said the partnership will "provide a higher level of support and service for those who need it most."

UnitedHealth Group's OptumRx acquired Genoa last year for about \$2.5 billion from private-equity firm Advent International, [according to Bloomberg](#). OptumRx is the health care conglomerate's pharmacy-benefit manager. Genoa, based in Renton, Wash., was the country's fifth-largest pharmacy chain at the time of the deal.

Peterson, Genoa's CEO, said the company works with a wide range of payers, not just United. Patients at its partner clinics have a choice of where they want to fill their prescriptions, he said.

Genoa's other location in downstate New York is in Huntington at a mental health and substance-use treatment center operated by the nonprofit WellLife Network, which was formerly called PSCH.

Several local health organizations use Genoa for telepsychiatry. Rising Ground in the Bronx, Wyckoff Heights Medical Center in Brooklyn, Services for the Underserved in Manhattan, the Family Service League in East Hampton and the Mental Health Association of Westchester in Tarrytown are all providing patients access to psychiatrists remotely through Genoa, according to the company's website.

Genoa's telepsychiatry services aim to improve access to care for providers who are having trouble finding a psychiatrist for a patient, Peterson said.