

Counseling Center to Use State Grant for Substance-Abuse Treatment, Prevention for Latinos in Nassau County

By Olivia Winslow olivia.winslow@newsday.com

Updated June 7, 2022 7:26 pm

A Long Island nonprofit providing substance abuse treatment and prevention services is one of 10 organizations statewide to receive a state grant totaling \$450,000 over three years to establish "substance abuse and prevention coalitions," which the Long Island group says it will use to help the underserved Latino community in Nassau County.

"Our effort now, in partnership, with the Hispanic Counseling Center [in Hempstead] will hone in on needs specific to the Latino community and create more inclusivity," said Adrienne LoPresti, executive director of the YES Community Counseling Center, which has offices in Massapequa and Levittown.

"Our efforts will focus on the Latino communities within our surrounding catchment areas and Nassau County at large to build a voice for the Latino families to receive prevention-based supports to prevent addiction," LoPresti said. The goal, she added, was to develop programs that were "culturally appropriate."

The counseling center's program is under development, but LoPresti said by way of example that if the counseling center were to go to alcohol retail vendors with a plan to prevent underage drinking, but some owners "speak Spanish, we need to make sure that training is offered in Spanish."

LoPresti added, "If we provide a parenting program, we need to make sure that program is offered in Spanish, or reach out to the community about why they may not attend such programs," in an effort to provide more effective outreach.

The funding YES and the other organizations across the state were granted — \$150,000 annually for three years — comes from a \$4.5 million federal Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant that New York State received. The 10 grant recipients were selected through a request for applications process administered by the state's Office of Addiction Services and Supports.

Gov. Kathy Hochul said in a statement: "Like far too many New Yorkers, my family has lost a loved one battling with addiction. New York State will never waiver in its commitment to establishing effective addiction prevention services, and my administration will continue to be laser-focused on supporting this important mission through coalitions such as these."