

## **Health + Hospitals takes over ThriveNYC's mental health corps, saving \$25M**

The Mental Health Services Corps, a ThriveNYC program that trains early-career behavioral health clinicians, has been transitioned to NYC Health + Hospitals from the city Department of Health.

Integrating ThriveNYC into the city's public hospital system is expected to reduce the program's annual budget from \$38.5 million in fiscal year 2019 to \$13 million in fiscal year 2021.

H+H is uniquely positioned to operate the program, the Mayor's Office of ThriveNYC told *Crain's*, adding that it will continue to provide thousands of hours of mental health support each year.

The redesigned program will offer three years of comprehensive training to help clinicians earn qualifying hours toward their license, the office said. Sixty corps members will be placed within 46 departments at 17 H+H facilities across all five boroughs, it added.

About 76% of new placements are located in federally designated mental health professional shortage areas, in which about 30% of New Yorkers live.

"We're filling critical gaps in the health care system through innovative work," said Susan Herman, director of the Office of ThriveNYC. "We believe in prioritizing high-need communities."

The redesigned program is a win for the city government, New Yorkers and the corps, Herman said. It includes a lower ratio of supervisors to corps members than its predecessor, and it focuses on diverse training opportunities—such as in pediatric, primary and women's health practices—where mental health services are not traditionally available.

"What the program allows H+H to do is increase access to mental health services to more New Yorkers," said Dr. Charles Barron, deputy chief medical officer for behavioral health at the health system. "It also allows us to provide training to people who are the future workforce for H+H and other community-based service providers throughout the city."

The corps was launched in 2016. Until the end of last year, it was overseen by the city Health Department and operated by City University's Research Foundation.

The mayor's office said in June that the corps would undergo a redesign.

The city said it has taken steps to support participating clinical practices and corps members affected by the transition, including career coaching, help with patient care transition and individualized support for clinical practices.

As a result, 49 affected corps members were hired directly by clinical practices that participated in the version of the program operated by the Health Department; 53 corps members were hired by H+H; and 82 corps members were hired by other employers in the social work field. The entire program consisted of about 250 people.

To date the corps has provided clinical services to more than 75,000 individuals and helped early-career behavioral health clinicians earn more than 375,000 hours toward their license.

ThriveNYC remains a sizable portion of city spending, with an annual budget of about \$250 million.