

CRAIN'S

## Health Pulse

### Montefiore exec touts commitment to care management despite layoffs

As Montefiore takes on more financial risk in its contracts with insurers, the health system has committed significant manpower and money to its team of care managers, who work to keep patients healthy outside of the doctor's office.

Now Montefiore is reorganizing that workforce, laying off 149 employees, all but one of whom worked at its Yonkers office. After the cuts, the Montefiore Care Management Organization has about 700 workers, including 450 in Yonkers.

Even as it reduces that headcount by 17%, Montefiore is committed to coordinating patients' care, with the goal of keeping them out of the hospital, said Stephen Rosenthal, president of Montefiore Care Management.

"We've been involved in population management now for 25 years," he said. "This does not reflect any change in that thinking."

Rosenthal said the cuts were the result of a drop in enrollment in some of the health plans that Montefiore has contracts with, particularly Medicaid plans. He attributed some of that decline to an improving economy, which has resulted in people losing eligibility for Medicaid and getting coverage through employers or the Essential Plan—products in which Montefiore has fewer value-based contracts.

The organization now manages about 360,000 people, a drop of about 50,000 from a recent peak, Rosenthal said. At a *Crain's* event in 2015, Dr. Andrew Racine, Montefiore's chief medical officer, [said the goal](#) was to reach 1 million.

Rosenthal said the organization's experience has made it possible to help patients with a smaller workforce.

"We've made lots of strides in understanding how to best manage folks," he said.

As part of the reorganization, Montefiore is looking to embed more care managers at its facilities and medical offices rather than in centralized offices.

The job cuts covered a variety of job categories. About 20 people belonged to 1199SEIU, and 14 were members of the New York State Nurses Association.

Rosenthal said Montefiore was working to find roles for both union and nonunion workers in other parts of the system, which employs about 40,000 in the Bronx and Hudson Valley region.

Restructuring the care-management organization and navigating the planned closure of Montefiore Mount Vernon will be among the responsibilities that fall to Dr. Philip Ozuah, who [will start as CEO](#) of the health system on Nov. 15.

Rosenthal said the decision to eliminate jobs wasn't a direct result of the state's [projected Medicaid budget gap](#) or the [looming end](#) of the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment program, which provided millions of dollars to Montefiore.

"We're highly focused on care management. We're continuing to invest in that," Rosenthal said. "Our goals are to make access to the network as broad as possible, make sure providers are fairly compensated and make sure our system remains fiscally sound."