

VNS Health and Elderwood Health Plan Announce Partnership for Managed Long Term Care

VNS Health, which operates the largest nonprofit managed long-term care plan (MLTC) in New York State, has entered into an agreement with Elderwood Health Plan (Elderwood) to enroll members of Elderwood's MLTC Plan into VNS Health's MLTC, pending New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) approval.

Under this new partnering agreement, Elderwood will continue to play a key role in the care of homebound older adults and people with disabilities in Western New York. Through a recently formed Independent Practice Association (IPA), Elderwood would manage the care of its former members who enroll in the VNS Health MLTC, along with any new and existing VNS Health members who reside in Erie, Genesee, Monroe, Niagara, Orleans and Wyoming counties. The IPA will include delegated care management, local provider relations, and certain administrative functions. Although Elderwood Health Plan is slated to cease its operations as an MLTC as of May 1, 2024, the IPA ensures a seamless transition for Elderwood members, staff, and providers.

The VNS Health–Elderwood partnership is in keeping with provisions enacted in the 2023-2024 New York State (NYS) Budget that require all MLTCs to have a Medicare Advantage Dual Eligible Special Needs Plan (D-SNP), with 3 or more stars.

Integrated benefits for Medicaid members who have Medicare is a priority for the NYS Department of Health this year. With approval by NYS DOH, the partnership will allow MLTC members from Elderwood to transfer to VNS Health, or to choose another MLTC plan in the area.

According to the agreement between the two organizations, VNS Health's MLTC plan will automatically take on any of the approximately 1,200 members now enrolled in Elderwood Health Plan who do not elect to join another MLTC plan in the area following the 60-day window after notification of the transition by NYS DOH.

"VNS Health and Elderwood are committed to ensuring this transition is a smooth one, with no disruption or change in care for any Elderwood members moving over to VNS Health's MLTC," notes Dan Savitt, President and CEO of VNS Health. "We're honored that Elderwood has entrusted its plan members to us, and we are committed to working closely with the new Elderwood IPA to provide outstanding integrated MLTC benefits and services."

"Elderwood is excited to find a partnership in VNS Health and believe this will benefit our members. VNS Health understands the importance of our Western New York community and keeping a local presence through Elderwood. We share the same values of putting our members, community, and employees first, and are excited to pursue this new opportunity." – Dr. Jeffrey Rubin, Co-Owner and Co-President of Elderwood Health Plan