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MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES GROUNDBREAKING FIVE-YEAR COMMUNITY CARE PLAN TO EXPAND AGING SUPPORT SERVICES

\$58 million investment in plan will add additional centers and services in underserved communities to help older New Yorkers age in place

NEW YORK — Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced the City will invest \$58 million in the first year of his five-year Community Care Plan for older New Yorkers. The plan addresses the importance of creating a network of services that support the independence, self-reliance and wellbeing older New Yorkers need to age in their homes.

“As they age, our seniors deserve to remain in their homes and the neighborhoods they know and love,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “The Community Care Plan not only offers services, but also a sense of security.”

“As our City recovers, we’re focused on keeping seniors front and center in all that we do, including continuing to provide vital resources and expanding services, from vaccine sites and outreach strategies to these new, crucial investments in community care,” said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Melanie Hartzog**. “We thank DFTA for their continued leadership and remain committed to uplifting older New Yorkers, which will help ensure New York comes back stronger and more inclusive than ever.”

“New York City is again modeling what is needed to be an age-inclusive City, where older adults can age in place with the support of their community, paving the way for what an aging-in-place city should be in this country,” said **Department for the Aging Commissioner Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez**. “The pandemic highlighted the detrimental effects that living in institutions had on both older adults and their families. This investment in Community Care will provide the continuum of services, safety net and community network that older New Yorkers need to continue living in their homes, communities and among their loved ones.”

"This \$48 million of funding for the Community Care Plan is a much-needed investment for our older adult population, which is the fastest-growing age demographic in New York City. Aging in place is more than physical permanence; it allows older New Yorkers to remain rooted in the communities they helped to shape throughout their lifetime. I am pleased that the Administration and the Council agreed that the RFP for Older Adult Centers was simply too important to rush. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have lost so many seniors to COVID-19. I am hopeful that with this new timeline we will see a seamless continuation of services for our seniors who have endured isolation, illness, and trauma this past year," said **Council Member Margaret Chin**. "Additionally, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of fulfilling

the commitment to add the additional \$10 million to the model budget. I thank Commissioner Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez, Deputy Mayor Melanie Hartzog, and Mayor de Blasio for including this funding in the Community Care Plan."

With this five-year Community Care Plan, the New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA) will add 25 additional Older Adults Centers (OACs) or Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) in communities with large aging populations that are currently underserved. In addition, investment in the Community Care Plan will provide additional program staff, transportation services, and robust outreach to expand services to older New Yorkers.

The plan will also increase existing services that allow older adults to remain in their homes with dignity and support and avoid institutionalization. It also builds upon the success and lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the expansion of virtual services that has kept many older adults active and engaged while mitigating social isolation.

This investment lays the groundwork for future investments needed to provide Community Care across the five boroughs. One of the first steps of the Community Care plan is the release of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for OACs and NORCs. It will seek proposals that foster collaboration across community-based programs that are aligned with the Community Care five-year plan, ensure congregate and home-based services for older adults throughout the City, and expand services in currently underserved neighborhoods.

"As neighborhoods change, our seniors often become priced out or unable to fully participate in the very same communities where they lived and raised their families," said **Council Member Alicka Ampry-Samuel**. "Expanding Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities in underserved areas is the response that we desperately need. Developments like RD Brown, which is located in my district, will finally have the opportunity to implement the services that our seniors need and deserve to ensure safe aging in place."

"Older adults deserve the resources, services, and support to age in place, where they can be near loved ones and in the comfort of their homes," said **Council Member Adrienne Adams**. "The City's five-year Community Care Plan is a long-needed, significant investment in our seniors, our JEWELS, who will greatly benefit from additional services, programs, and activities. This new plan will not only serve the current needs for expanded senior services, but create the blueprint for future NYC Administrations to earnestly follow. I am thrilled about this new plan and look forward to our seniors rightfully thriving in my community and throughout all communities in the entire City of New York!"

"I am pleased with today's announcement and implementation of a Community Care plan for older adults. A plan, that calls for the progression toward advancing and expanding services to those who reside within underserved communities. Communities, that have been hit hard by this pandemic which has exacerbated the need for care services for our older adults and their families," said **Council Member Diana Ayala**. "I applaud Mayor Bill de Blasio and DFTA Commissioner, Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez for setting a new standard in aging services. This new RFP will help to ensure services grow and adapt over the next few years to the needs of a growing and diverse older adult population, addressing their social and emotional well-being, paving the way for a gracefully aged-in-place community."

“I enthusiastically support the expansion of aging services in New York City. I established a NORC in our council district, and I have seen how it can provide valuable services to residents who are too often neglected. It has been a great success. Our elders are often the most informed and engaged community activists, and the more we empower them, the more we empower everyone. The expansion of senior services is a wise investment,” said **Council Member Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.**

“This Community Care Plan will ensure our most vulnerable neighbors, particularly our immigrant elders, can continue to live in their homes with dignity,” said **Council Member Carlos Menchaca**. “In February, the Immigration Committee held a hearing to discuss the challenges facing our immigrant elders in New York City. Prominent care providers testified about the superiority of allowing communities with older New Yorkers to transition naturally into retirement communities. I applaud the Mayor for listening to these experts and creating a plan that reflects the needs of our elders.”

“I am very much looking forward to this increase in funding for services that allow long-standing neighbors to age in place,” said **Council Member Carlina Rivera**. “We need to ensure investments that help our seniors thrive at home rather than make the difficult decision of relocating to specialized facilities. I thank the Mayor and Commissioner Cortés-Vázquez for expanding this essential programming.”

“Our aging population was among some of the hardest hit by the pandemic. Many seniors were unable to carry out their daily tasks like enjoying the outdoors or interacting with their loved ones. We need to make sure that they have the support and the resources they need to live comfortably in their community,” said **Council Member Ydanis Rodríguez**. “Institutionalization severely impacted the lives of many seniors during the height of the pandemic. I look forward to continuing to work alongside DFTA Commissioner Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez, my colleagues at the council, and advocates to ensure we’re supporting our aging community, especially those living in underserved communities.”

“We have continually worked to improve the quality of life for our seniors and today we stand together to once again make clear that New York City is reflecting the needs of our rapidly booming senior population,” said **Council Member Paul A. Vallone**. “This investment is crucial during the pandemic to assist older New Yorkers in being able to live in their homes near friends and family.”

“Many older adults were forced into social isolation with the closure of our senior centers as New York City remained the epicenter of the COVID-19 public health crisis. The expansion of Older Adult Centers and Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities in underserved communities will provide vital support and wrap-around services to older New Yorkers that have been detrimentally impacted by the COVID—19 pandemic. This announcement is a necessary step toward restoring normalcy for older New Yorkers and is an important investment in our city and its families,” said **Council Member Vanessa Gibson**.

“Our elderly community are the backbone of our families and our neighborhoods. The patriarchs and matriarchs of families have been the anchor of plenty of families especially during this pandemic. It’s important to provide services that create opportunities for support and

enlightenment for our seniors. I am excited about this initiative to support our seniors in this community care plan. This initiative can redefine the perception of ageing in New York. The ability to be able to provide resources for our ageing community that's substantial and reliable," said **Council Member Darma Diaz**.

"This investment will help more New York City residents choose how they live as they age - and maintain their dignity and independence. AARP applauds Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Cortés-Vázquez for this compassionate and cost-effective initiative," said **AARP New York State Director, Beth Finkel**. "AARP surveys have shown the vast majority of New Yorkers and Americans want to age in their own homes, in their own communities, with their own families. This funding will not only help many achieve that goal, it will also save taxpayers money; New York State estimated a similar investment of \$15 million in home- and community-based services for the elderly in 2019 generated \$34 million in savings to Medicaid, the taxpayer-funded program that pays for the majority of nursing home and institutional care."

"Presbyterian Senior Services is very excited to hear that New York City is investing in expanding aging services," said **Rimas Jasin, Executive Director of Presbyterian Senior Services**. "The staff at PSS's ten community centers, senior apartments, and caregivers' support program, experience the positive impact that comes with helping older adults remain active and engaged members of the community every single day."

"Neighborhood SHOPP is pleased to support Mayor de Blasio's proposed Five-Year Community Care Plan, creating a more robust service network for all older New Yorkers. As a service provider in the South Bronx, SHOPP has seen first-hand how COVID-19 has impacted older adults and their caregiving families as they faced challenges in locating and navigating services during this crisis," said **Katherine Martinez, Neighborhood Shopp President/CEO**. "The proposed funding provided through this initiative will ensure supportive services and effective care coordination to help the diverse communities of older adults age in place and avoid unnecessary institutionalizations."

"I welcome Mayor de Blasio's Five-Year Community Care Plan that will expand aging services and supports for the elderly in NYC. This funding will allow many of our older New Yorkers from underserved communities, the privilege and right to gracefully age in place. The Mayor's 5-Year Community Care Plan will not only sustain and enhance the Older Adult Centers which are currently in place but will also open doors for additional centers and services for our most vulnerable population to age in place. There is a vast need for technology and virtual services, and we must continue limiting social isolation and food insecurities," said **Claudette Macy, Executive Director of Fort Greene Council**.

"We applaud Mayor DeBlasio and Commissioner Cortés-Vázquez on developing a vision that addresses the changing landscape for older New Yorkers. We strongly support the expansion of community care models and the issuance of the new RFP that will address the need for more home-based and culturally-focused care," said **Frankie Miranda, President of the Hispanic Federation**. "It is critical to have a new model of service that can address the underlying inequities that have led to underrepresentation in care and services for multi-cultural seniors. This is particularly important given the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on the Latino community and specifically our elders."

"LiveOn NY commends Mayor Bill de Blasio, Deputy Mayor Melanie Hartzog, and Commissioner Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez on this historic investment in supporting older New Yorkers," said **Allison Nickerson, Executive Director of LiveOn NY**. "New York City's budget is a reflection of its priorities and values. For New York City to truly be the fairest big city, that fairness must extend across the lifespan. LiveOn applauds this investment, and we look forward to continuing to work with the City to build upon this progress and to truly make New York a better place to age."

"Older New Yorkers should have the right to remain comfortable and active in their homes and communities, surrounded by friends and loved ones for as long as possible. An increased investment in Older Adult Centers and NORCs is exciting, especially with an emphasis on community partnerships, continuity of care, virtual services, and congregate programming- all which are key to successfully aging and avoiding institutional care," said **Jeremy Kaplan, Executive Director of Encore Community Services**. "We look forward to the release of OAC and NORC RFPs that are strengthened by these components and an adequate financial investment."

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