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**SENIORS TO ATTEND SHINGLES EDUCATION AND VACCINATION SESSIONS
TO RAISE AWARENESS AND COMBAT PAINFUL DISEASE**

**New York Foundation for Eldercare Funds Shingles Pilot Program with Grant to Visiting Nurse Service
of New York Working with NYC Department for the Aging**

(New York, NY, January 15, 2015) – In an effort to raise awareness of shingles, a viral infection that will affect as many as one in three people, and one million people annually, the [New York Foundation for Eldercare](#) has granted \$15,000 to the Visiting Nurse Service of New York (VNSNY) for a pilot program of shingles education and vaccination.

Shingles is caused by the chickenpox virus, *varicella zoster*, and causes a painful rash that may take up to four weeks to clear up. People with weakened immune systems, such as seniors, may suffer even more severe cases.

The grant funds an education workshop where nurse educators from Partners in Care, an affiliate of the not-for-profit Visiting Nurse Service of New York, and the largest employer of certified Home Health Aides in New York State, will teach seniors about the risks of shingles as a disease and the benefits of the vaccine. After the session, participating seniors will be invited to sign up for a vaccination the following week at the same location.

"There has been an explosion of cases of shingles among the elderly in recent years, which is why the New York Foundation for Eldercare is excited to bring this education and vaccination program to seniors. A contributing factor is that *many seniors were not inoculated for chicken pox as children, rendering them more vulnerable to exposure to shingles later in life,*" said Tanya Figelman, Executive Director, New York Foundation for Eldercare. "This program directly addresses the low level of shingles awareness among seniors. It also provides seniors, who could not otherwise afford it, a no-cost vaccination that will protect their health."

"When seniors learn the causes, symptoms, treatment and prevention of shingles, they are extremely motivated to get a shingles vaccine. They also understand the possible side effects and weigh the benefits of the vaccination," said Jennifer LeeFlang, Senior Director of Private Care Services at Partners in Care. "We believe the positive experience of this pilot program will create demand for subsequent implementation and help further our mission to make sure the most vulnerable in our communities have affordable access to the care they need."

"The Department for the Aging recognizes that, although the Centers for Disease Control recommend the shingles vaccine for everyone over age 60, only 20% of seniors have been vaccinated for shingles. The vaccination rates are even lower among African-American and Hispanic seniors at 9% and are 16% for Asians," said NYC Department for the Aging

– more –

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Seniors to Attend Shingles Education and Shingles Vaccination Sessions to Raise Awareness and Combat Painful Disease (cont'd.)

Commissioner Donna Corrado. "DFTA's mission is to promote health and wellness and allow seniors to live their life to the fullest and we are excited to host this education and vaccination program at one site so that seniors can learn more about shingles, become vaccinated at no cost, and have less concern about contracting this painful illness."

The education workshop will be held at the **Amalgamated/Park Reservoir NORC, 80 Van Cortlandt Park South in The Bronx** on Wednesday, January 21 and the vaccination session will be held on Wednesday, January 28.

Vaccinations will be given to seniors who participate in the education session.

The \$15,000 grant covers the cost of each vaccination, as well as the services of the educators who lead the workshops and the nurses who administer the vaccines.

Based on pre-intervention surveys and workshop evaluations, the program will be evaluated for future implementation.

For more information about the shingles education and vaccination grant, please contact Tanya Figelman, Executive Director, New York Foundation for Eldercare at tfigelman@nyfe.org.

For more information about how senior-related organizations may participate in future education and vaccination sessions, please contact Rebecca Velez, Special Programs Supervisor at Partners in Care via email at Rebecca.Velez@vnsny.org.

About the New York Foundation for Eldercare

Dedicated to **helping seniors enjoy healthier, safer, more productive and dignified lives**, *The New York Foundation for Eldercare (NYFE)* supports the elderly population and Holocaust survivors in the New York metropolitan area, especially those residing in **nursing homes or other long-term care institutions**. NYFE also directly funds a variety of other programs that provide targeted services, *bringing caring and dignity to older New Yorkers since 1966*. For more information, please visit www.nyfe.org.

About Partners in Care and the Visiting Nurse Service of New York

[Partners in Care](http://www.partnersincareny.org), an affiliate of the not-for-profit [Visiting Nurse Service of New York](http://www.visitingnurseservice.org), is the largest employer of certified Home Health Aides in New York State and serves all of New York City, Westchester, Rockland, Suffolk, and Nassau Counties. The organization is accredited by the Community Health Accreditation Program (CHAP) and licensed by the New York State Department of Health. In 2013, the organization cared for more than 25,000 patients, and provided over 14 million hours of Home Health Aide services in addition to providing an array of services such as skilled nursing; geriatric care management; rehabilitation services, speech therapy; and immunization services to the community and corporate customers. **For more information call 1-888-735-8913 or visit <http://www.partnersincareny.org>.**

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About The NYC Department for the Aging

The New York City Department for the Aging is a local government agency and the largest Area Agency on Aging in the United States. DFTA administers and promotes the development and provision of accessible services for older persons and serves as an advocate on legislation and policy issues. The Department's mission is to work for the empowerment, independence, dignity and quality-of-life of New York City's diverse older adults and for the support of their families through advocacy, education, and the coordination and development of services. For more information, please visit www.nyc.gov/aging.

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