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The Mamdani Administration Launches NYC Men Heal to Support Young Men of Color Pursuing Careers in Behavioral Health

New citywide workforce initiative provides graduate students with mentorship, professional development, career support, workforce connections, and tuition assistance

NEW YORK, NEW YORK — The Mamdani Administration today announced the launch of NYC Men Heal, a new citywide behavioral health workforce initiative of the NYC Young Men's Initiative (YMI), developed in partnership with the Office of Community Mental Health, now part of the Mayor's Office of Community Safety, the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity (NYC Opportunity), and the Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services (HRA/DSS). The initiative supports young men of color pursuing careers in social work and mental health counseling, creating an intentional pathway from graduate education into the behavioral health workforce.

The inaugural cohort brings together graduate students from universities across New York City who are pursuing careers in behavioral health. 84% of the cohort is receiving full tuition scholarships through 1199TEF's Career Pathways Training program, while all participants receive NYC Men Heal's broader wraparound services, including a living stipend, mentorship, culturally grounded knowledge and skill-building workshops, career planning, resource navigation, workforce connections, and opportunities to build professional networks and community.

The pilot is designed to help strengthen a behavioral health workforce that reflects the communities it serves and, over time, expand greater access to culturally responsive care. Programming will continue through summer 2027 and includes ongoing mentorship, workshops, financial assistance, networking, career development and workforce support.

Learn more about NYC Men Heal [here](#) or at bit.ly/menhealpilot.

"Every New Yorker deserves mental health care that meets them with dignity and understanding, and every young person deserves a fair chance to pursue a career serving their community," said **Mayor Zohran Mamdani**. "NYC Men Heal brings those commitments together. By supporting young men of color with tuition assistance, mentorship, and a living stipend, we are helping them turn their aspirations into careers—and building a behavioral health workforce that better reflects the city it serves."

"Behavioral health workers spend their career supporting others; they deserve the same support in return. With the new NYC Men Heal initiative, we will provide that -- offering mentorship, workshops, and resources to help young men of color start and sustain a career in this critical

field," said **Deputy Mayor for Economic Justice Julie Su**. "This investment will not only help more people start a career in the year ahead. It will help create a behavioral health workforce that looks like the people it serves and deepen our efforts to build an economy for all."

"NYC Men Heal recognizes young men of color as caregivers, professionals, and leaders whose talents and experiences can strengthen our communities. By supporting their journey from graduate school into behavioral health careers, we are investing in their futures and in the health and well-being of our city", said **Deputy Mayor for Community Safety Renita Francois**. "Community safety means investing in people and making sure New Yorkers have the support they need to thrive."

"New Yorkers deserve care from people who understand their community, their language and their lives," said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Dr. Helen Arteaga**. "However men of color remain deeply underrepresented in mental health and social work spaces. NYC Men Heal opens doors for these men who have too often been shut out, and most importantly, it builds a workforce that looks like the City it serves."

"NYC Men Heal creates pathways to opportunity by investing in people who have too often been underrepresented in behavioral health professions," said **NYC Chief Equity Officer and Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Equity & Racial Justice, Afua Atta-Mensah, Esq.** "By supporting Men of Color as they pursue careers in behavioral health, we are expanding access to meaningful, family-sustaining careers as well as training the next generation of care providers who will shape and save lives."

"Building a behavioral health workforce that reflects our city requires more than opening the door to graduate education. It requires sustained support as students develop their skills, build professional relationships, and prepare to enter the field," said **Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Community Safety Ayesha Delany-Brumsey, Ph.D.** "NYC Men Heal pairs financial assistance with culturally grounded mentorship and career development, recognizing the expertise and lived experiences young men of color bring to this work. Our goal is to help these future clinicians build lasting careers providing care that respects and responds to the communities they serve."

"New Yorkers deserve behavioral health care from people who understand their experiences and communities, and that starts with a workforce that reflects the people it serves," said **DSS Commissioner Erin Dalton**. "NYC Men Heal opens that door for young Men of Color who want to build careers helping others. I'm proud that our Career Services team is part of this effort, connecting participants with employers who value what they bring. Together, we're investing in these young men and in a stronger system of care for our whole city."

"NYC Men Heal represents an important investment in the future of behavioral health and in the young Men of Color who will help shape that future. We know that talent and passion exist in every community, but too often, financial barriers, limited professional networks, and a lack of culturally grounded support can make it harder for diverse populations to enter and advance in

the behavioral health field. NYC Men Heal is designed to change that by meeting scholars where they are and providing the financial support, mentorship, professional development, and workforce connections they need to succeed," said **Executive Director of the NYC Young Men's Initiative, Dr. Steven Chambers**. "Through the NYC Young Men's Initiative, we have an opportunity to build not only pathways into meaningful careers, but a stronger behavioral health workforce that reflects the diversity and experiences of the communities we serve. Research tells us that when more Men of Color hold behavioral health positions, we can more effectively engage populations needing mental health supports most-bringing more healing and wholeness to communities of color."

"Our research points to the need for stronger, more intentional pathways into behavioral health careers for young Men of Color," said **Executive Director of the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity, Carson Hicks**. "NYC Men Heal responds to that need by investing in the pipeline, from graduate education and professional development to career connections and employment. We are proud to work alongside OCMH, YMI, and HRA on this effort to expand opportunity and support a behavioral health workforce that reflects the communities it serves."

"NYC Men Heal is about opening doors and building a behavioral health workforce that reflects the strength and diversity of New York City. OCMH is proud to partner on this initiative and invest in men of color who will bring their talents, lived experiences, and commitment to strengthening the mental health and well-being of our communities." said **Acting Executive Director of the Mayor's Office for Community Mental Health, Laquisha Grant**.

Supporting Young Men of Color from Graduate School into the Workforce

NYC Men Heal takes an asset-based, healing-centered and culturally grounded approach to workforce development. The program recognizes the strengths, experiences and aspirations that young Men of Color bring to the behavioral health profession while providing intentional support to help scholars navigate graduate school and prepare for long-term careers.

Program offerings include:

- **Mentorship:** Scholars are matched with experienced behavioral health professionals based on shared professional interests and relevant cultural, linguistic and/or lived experiences.
- **Knowledge and skill-building workshops:** Scholars participate in workshops designed to complement their graduate education and address their professional interests and needs.
- **Career planning and workforce connections:** Scholars receive support navigating career pathways, licensure and connections to potential employers.
- **Resource navigation:** Scholars receive individualized support identifying resources and addressing barriers that may affect their academic, professional or personal success.
- **Financial support:** Through the partnership with 1199TEF, eligible scholars receive full tuition scholarships through the Career Pathways Training program, while all NYC Men

Heal participants receive the program's broader wraparound services and a living stipend.

- **Peer support and networking:** Cohort-based activities provide opportunities to build community, develop professional relationships and strengthen networks.

The program is also developing a network of potential employers to support internships, practicum placements and employment pathways for scholars. The employer network is intended to connect participants with organizations committed to culturally responsive practice, quality supervision and opportunities for professional growth.

Vibrant Emotional Health Selected as NYC Men Heal Implementation Partner

Vibrant Emotional Health will serve as NYC Men Heal's implementation partner, supporting the delivery of key components of the pilot and helping create a supportive, culturally grounded experience for participating scholars.

Vibrant will support the program's mentorship and workshop offerings, helping connect scholars with experienced behavioral health professionals and subject-matter experts throughout the pilot year.

NYC Men Heal has also recruited and continues to build a network of experienced behavioral health professionals to serve as mentors. Mentors must have at least three years of behavioral health experience and are matched with scholars based on professional interests and relevant shared experiences. Mentorship is designed to provide career guidance, professional development and support as scholars transition from graduate education into the behavioral health workforce.

From June Launch to October Scholar Orientation

NYC Men Heal was announced through a June 18 convening at FDNY Headquarters, bringing together City leaders, behavioral health professionals, prospective mentors, students, community partners and other stakeholders to highlight the importance of creating pathways for young Men of Color into behavioral health careers.

The announcement event featured remarks from Chief Equity Officer and Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Equity & Racial Justice Afua Atta-Mensah and Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Community Safety Dr. Ayesha Delany-Brumsey, among other City and community leaders, and provided an opportunity to introduce the NYC Men Heal model and begin building the network of partners supporting the inaugural cohort.

The inaugural cohort officially began its formal program experience with the **NYC Men Heal Scholar Orientation and launch event on October 9, 2026, at Vibrant Emotional Health.**

The mandatory orientation brought together scholars and program staff to introduce program expectations, meet peers and program staff, and welcome scholars into the NYC Men Heal community. The orientation marked the beginning of a year of programming designed to support young Men of Color through graduate education and into the next chapter of their behavioral health careers.

About NYC Men Heal

NYC Men Heal is a citywide behavioral health workforce initiative of the NYC Young Men's Initiative, developed in partnership with the Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health, the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity, and the Human Resources Administration. The pilot supports young Men of Color pursuing careers in behavioral health through financial assistance, mentorship, knowledge and skill-building workshops, resource navigation, career planning, workforce connections and cohort-based peer support.

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