a.i.r. nyc Is Evolving Its Name And Integrating Its Home-Based Model To Address Multiple Chronic Diseases

The newly-named AIRnyc has almost two decades of experience of connecting people to care and helping them stay active and healthy.

NEW YORK, April 26, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- For many people in New York, living conditions can have a negative impact on their health. In fact, a 2018 study led by the New York State Department of Health found that 83 percent of the inspected NYCHA homes have unhealthy environmental hazards that can intensify and exacerbate chronic diseases. To better address these hazards, AIRnyc is transforming its time-tested model for helping people control asthma-inducing conditions in their home into an integrated approach for multiple and often related conditions. Now, in addition to asthma, the organization will lean on its 17 years of in-the-community work to inspire self-directed care and deliver interventions that address diabetes, hypertension, behavioral health, and conditions related to aging.
To reflect the integrated approach, Asthma Intervention and Relief Network, Inc. under the acronym a.i.r. nyc, has re-branded to be At-Home Integrated Relief for NYC, or AIRnyc.

"Health starts at home," said Shoshanah Brown, Chief Executive Officer of AIRnyc. "We promote and protect the ability of families to take action towards healthy living. We all need support to stay healthy, whether it's quitting smoking, losing weight, managing medications for multiple conditions or mitigating environmental hazards in our homes."

Poverty places demanding stresses on family life and mounts numerous challenges to wellbeing between visits to the doctor's office. Dr. Mary McCord, Director of Pediatrics at Gouverneur Health, sees this struggle daily with patients under her care.

"There is only so much we can do to help during occasional and brief visits to our office. AIRnyc has made an enormous difference," McCord said. "They meet patients where they live – both literally and metaphorically. That trust that they build is the foundation for improving communication, so families understand and begin to believe in the care plan."

AIRnyc's interventions are making a meaningful impact on people's lives. "When we compared the rates of hospital use before and after our intervention," said Brown, "we saw significant reductions with the potential for comparative cost savings." As a result of AIRnyc's intervention, and in collaboration with key partners, ED visits were reduced by 72% and hospital admissions were reduced by 84%, an indication of strong cost-effectiveness.

AIRnyc's new tagline is Healthy Has An Address which speaks to the importance of addressing conditions and factors in your home, and the need to create social and physical environments that promote and encourage good health.

The places people live, the conditions where people work and play and the social determinants of health can impact the internal workings of our bodies and our communities and make us vulnerable to diabetes, hypertension, asthma, depression, anxiety, and other challenges. For many in underserved communities, these conditions are compounded with barriers to accessing and understanding medical care, meaning that seemingly minor problems can spin out of control and send strained, overstressed families to the emergency room.
"We extend the great work of our clinical partners into the community to help families prevent a health crisis. It's the right thing to do from a public health perspective," Brown said, who holds an MS in Population Health from the Harvard School of Public Health and an MBA from Columbia University. "There is also a strong business case. By addressing health in the home and community, we can reduce hospitalization and avoidable costs paid by healthcare providers."

"We hear regularly from our physician partners as well as the families we serve that we are addressing gaps in care and creating value, and that makes sense," Brown said. "Investing in care models that extend beyond the clinical walls to where people live, work and play is exactly what we need to do at scale if we want all New Yorkers to have a chance to live healthy lives, no matter their address."

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AIRnyc serves New York City's most vulnerable families who live in parts of the city with the highest rates of chronic disease and believes that health must be addressed at home and in neighborhoods – in support of the valuable services, diagnoses, advice, and prescriptions provided by physicians. AIRnyc has honed its Community Health Worker-delivered model and cultivated a deep understanding of New York City's most vulnerable communities by helping people manage their health when poor housing, food insecurity, stress, injustice, isolation and other social determinants of health converge.

SOURCE AIRnyc