



Commissioner Donna M. Corrado, Ph.D.

For immediate release: July 26, 2016

DFTA wins prestigious n4a award, prize money for work with depressed elder abuse victims

SAN DIEGO – The New York City Department for the Aging is the proud recipient of an Innovations Award and first-place honors, which include \$2,000 in prize money, from the [National Association of Area Agencies on Aging](#). DFTA was recognized Tuesday for an initiative that helps depressed victims of elder abuse. The agency also received separate Achievement Awards.

The Innovations Award is the highest honor presented by n4a to member agencies. DFTA collaborated with [Weill Cornell Institute of Geriatric Psychiatry](#), of Weill Cornell Medicine, to create Providing Options to Elderly Clients Together, which provides therapy to abuse victims.

PROTECT uses evidence-based intervention, which means clinicians use approaches that are backed by research and scientific evidence. This approach helps address the underlying depression and anxiety that prevent abused older adults from seeking help.

“The program is based on the idea that if depressed elder abuse victims receive mental health treatment, they will be more likely to work with a social worker to restore their well-being and, thus, have the wherewithal to begin to resolve the abusive situation,” said **DFTA Commissioner Donna Corrado**. “PROTECT embeds a mental health practitioner within our elder abuse services program, and it emphasizes social workers’ use of standardized depression-screening tools and working with mental health professional.”

“PROTECT enables us to bring depression care to our most vulnerable older adults,” said **Dr. Jo Anne Sirey, of Weill Cornell Medicine**. “It is consistent with the move to integrate mental health services into aging-service settings to improve access for older adults.”

“I congratulate the Department for the Aging for being recognized by n4a,” said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Initiatives Richard Buery**. “By bringing together leaders in elder care and City resources, Commissioner Corrado and her staff have focused on advancing the mental and physical well-being of all of New York City’s seniors. Their model speaks to the values of the de Blasio administration, in particular our focus on promoting mental well-being.”

The award was presented at n4a's national conference in San Diego. N4a's program, sponsored by Critical Signal Technologies, recognizes agencies across the U.S. in the field of aging and Title VI Native American aging programs that have implemented successful initiatives to support older adults, people with disabilities and family caregivers.

Two other DFTA initiatives received separate Achievement Awards from n4a. One award honored DFTA's development of the web-based Simple Servings tool, which helps DFTA's network of seniors centers and home-delivery meal programs more easily create menus that use nutritious foods, appeal to various palates and meet city and state guidelines.

DFTA also won an Achievement Award for its training of volunteers to lead evidence-based health promotion programs at senior centers and in housing developments with large senior populations, which are known as naturally occurring retirement communities.

DFTA thanks the [Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation](#), which provided the funding for PROTECT staff, and DFTA thanks its partner, the [Aging in New York Fund](#), for making all of the projects possible through fiscal sponsorship services.

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