



**MEETING YOUR
COMMUNITY
WHERE IT'S AT:
ADDRESSING EVOLVING NEEDS**



STATEWIDE HARM REDUCTION SYMPOSIUM

September 11-12, 2025 | Albany Marriott



**NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION
OF COUNTY HEALTH OFFICIALS**
Leading the Way to Healthier Communities



**Department
of Health**

**AIDS
Institute**

WELCOME!

The New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO), in collaboration with the New York State Department of Health’s Office of Drug User Health, is proud to welcome you to the 2025 Statewide Harm Reduction Symposium! We are honored to host this annual event and bring together a diverse group of professionals, advocates, and experts committed to advancing harm reduction across New York State. Over the next two days, you’ll hear from inspiring plenary speakers and thought-provoking panels, and participate in engaging breakout sessions — all designed to deepen your knowledge, build your skills, and support your work in promoting the health and well-being of people who use drugs. We’re excited to spend this time together, exchanging ideas, fostering connections, and learning from one another. Thank you for taking time from your busy schedules to be here, and thank you to our speakers for sharing their expertise.

We also extend our appreciation to our exhibitors, who are here to showcase tools, resources, and services that can support your work. We encourage you to connect with them throughout the symposium to explore how they can help meet your community’s needs.

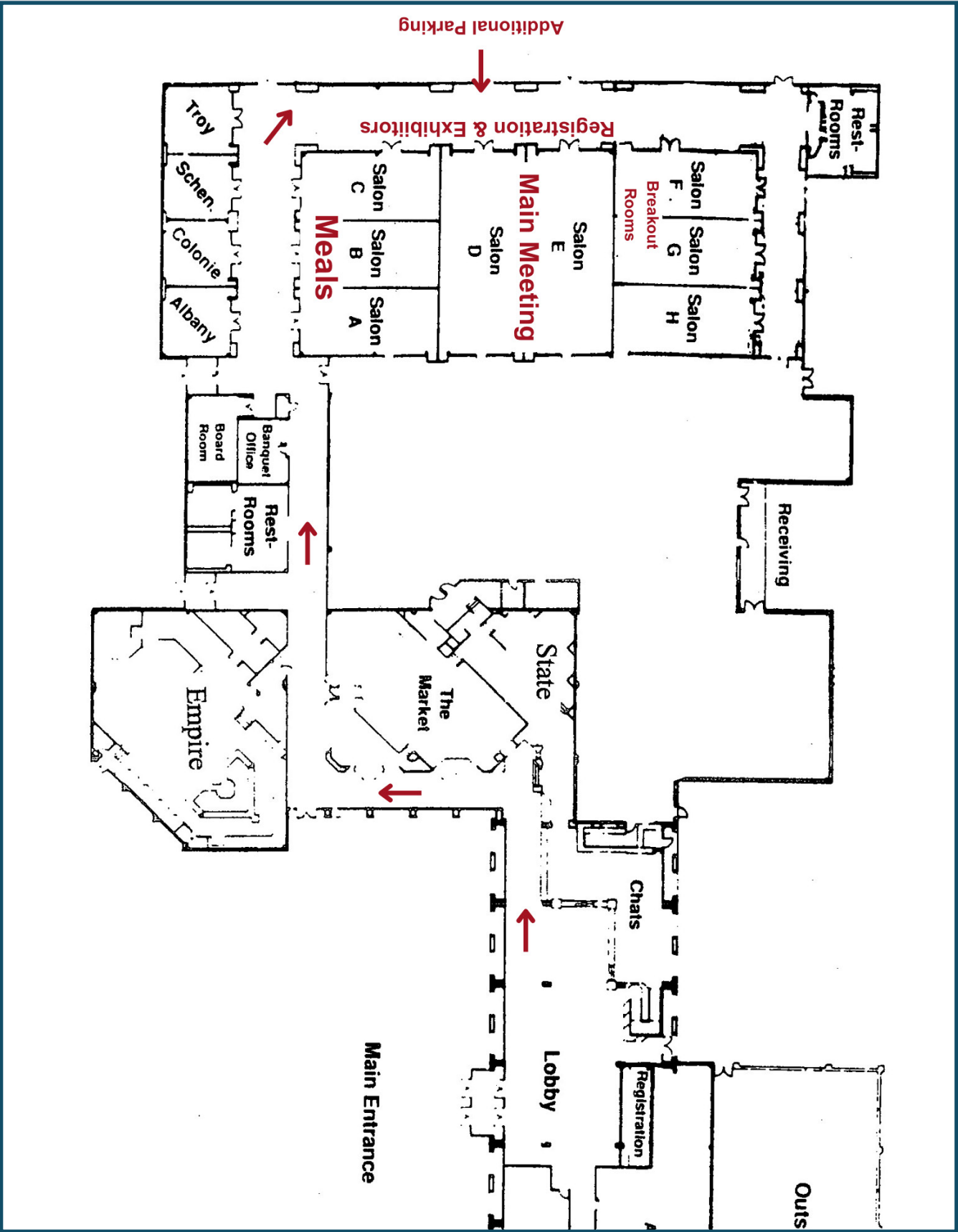
Please note that partners, sponsors, and exhibitors present at the symposium are here to share information and expertise as resources for attendees. The presence of, or remarks made by, an exhibitor does not constitute an endorsement by NYSACHO or NYSDOH of any specific vendor’s products, services, or views.

Hotel information

- **Check-in:** 4:00 PM
- **Check-out:** 12:00 PM
- **Parking:** complimentary on-site parking
- **Pet policy:** pets not allowed; service animals only

We look forward to spending the next couple of days with you!
- The NYSACHO Team

VENUE FLOOR MAP



Special thanks to the 2025 Harm Reduction Symposium Planning Committee for their time, insight, and dedication. This event would not be possible without their thoughtful contributions.

- Abigail Mosenthin, MPH, CIC, Public Health Educator, Otsego County Department of Health
- Geoff Tillou, Senior Public Health Educator, Albany County Department of Health
- Jennifer Garrigan, MPH, Project Coordinator, Office of Harm Reduction, Erie County Department of Health
- Kathy Staples, Office Manager, Truth Pharm
- Keith Brown, MPH, Public Health Director, Schenectady County Public Health Services
- Kristin Goodwin, MSW, Associate Vice President, Integrated Harm Reduction, Harlem United
- Laura Paolucci, Public Health Administrator, Wyoming County Health Department
- Marissa Knapp, MST, Supervising Public Health Educator, Director of Overdose Prevention Program, Broome County Health Department
- Paul Fahey, Vice President, Primeau-Fahey & Associates
- Romas Bajoras, CRPA, Program Manager, Friends of Recovery of Delaware and Otsego Counties
- Sarah Granquist, Public Health Educator, Franklin County Public Health
- Shanna Siegel, RN, BSN, Supervising Public Health Educator, Public Information Officer, Putnam County Department of Health
- Victoria Metz, CRPA, NYCPS, CASAC-Advanced, Run 4 Recovery



We are a harm reduction membership association promoting harm reduction as the entry point to care for people who use drugs or struggle with substance use disorder. We provide education and advocacy to advance harm reduction at the local and state level.

We have various accessible levels of membership. **Contact us today to explore your membership options!**

(607) 245-6878 nyshra.org

VIRTUAL STICKY THOUGHTS BOARD

We’re introducing a new virtual **Sticky Thoughts Board** at the 2025 Statewide Harm Reduction Symposium! This interactive space lets you:

- Share a moment, idea, or initiative that **stuck with you**
- Ask a question you’re still **stuck on**
- **Engage with peers’ posts:** like or comment to uplift, respond, or share your contact information for follow-up

When to Post:

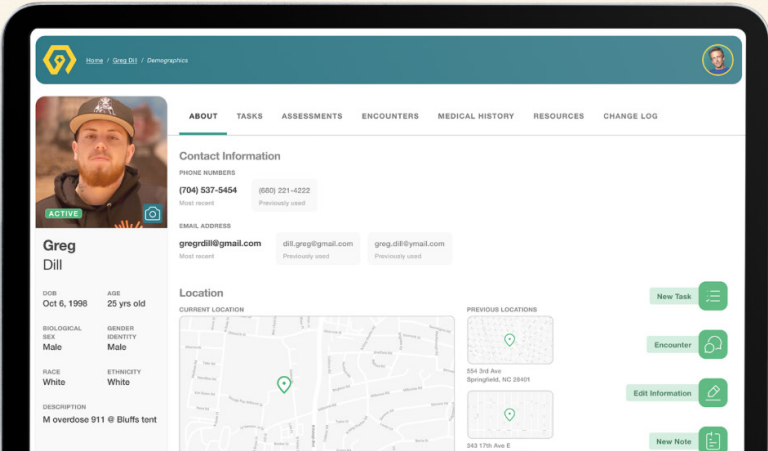
You can contribute **throughout the symposium**. We encourage you to post before or after any session when something resonates or you have a remaining question.

If you’d like your **unanswered question** considered for the **Open Q&A Lunch Session on Day 2 (September 12)**, be sure to submit it by **11:15 AM** that day.

Full instructions can be found on every table!

Access the Board:

Scan the QR code or visit:
padlet.com/dpellino/HR2025



DAY 1 – THURSDAY, SEPT. 11

- 9:30 – 5:00

Registration Open — Outside of Salons DE
Connect with exhibitors!
-
- 10:30 – 11:15

Welcome Remarks — Salons DE
 - Sarah Ravenhall, MHA, CHES, Executive Director, New York State Association of County Health Officials
 - Nabarun Dasgupta, MPH, PhD, Senior Scientist, University of North Carolina *(pre-recorded)*
 - Paula Bridgeforth, NYCPS/CRPA, Peer Navigator, Erie County Department of Health
 - David Holtgrave, PhD, Senior Policy Advisor to Commissioner of Health, New York State Department of Health, Office of the Commissioner
-
- 11:15 – 12:30

Breaking Down Silos: Harm Reduction, Mental Health & Co-Occurring Care Across Systems — Salons DE
 - Tracie M. Gardner, Executive Director, National Black Harm Reduction Network
 - Stephanie Marquesano, JD, Founder and President, The Harris Project, Inc.
 - Lauren Johnson, MA, CASAC-M, Dual Recovery Coordinator, Putnam County Department of Mental Health
-
- 12:30 – 12:35

Goldie Health Announcement — Salons DE
-
- 12:35 – 1:30

Working Lunch — Lunch buffet in Salons ABC
Connect with exhibitors & network with your peers!
Visit the virtual Sticky Thoughts Board *(information in program & at each table)!*
-
- 1:35 – 2:25

Breakout Session 1A — Salons DE
Responding to Current Overdose Trends Utilizing Detect to Protect Campaign and Application of Overdose Data
 - Angela Dieter, Director of Harm Reduction, Erie County Department of Health
 - Paula Bridgeforth, NYCPS/CRPA, Peer Navigator, Erie County Department of Health
 - Marilyn Lenus, RN, OFR Coordinator, RN, Erie County Department of Health
 - Jason Meurlin, Data Analyst, Erie County Department of Health**Breakout Session 1B — Salon F**
Leveraging Interactive Mapping to Expand Community Access to Naloxone and Harm Reduction Services
 - Dayquan Crandell, BA, Epidemiologist, Orange County Department of Health

DAY 1 – THURSDAY, SEPT. 11 (continued)

- Breakout Session 1C — Salon G**
Creating a Queer and Trans Connection Network: Peer-Led Mental Health Support as a Means of Harm Reduction in Rural LGBTQ+ Communities
 - Toby Boris-Schacter, BA, Youth Coordinator, Columbia-Greene Addiction Coalition
-
- 2:30 – 3:20

Launching Local Overdose Fatality Reviews: Why Mock Reviews Are a Powerful First Step – Hybrid — Salons DE and Virtually (Zoom)
 - Lisa Worden, Public Health Analyst – NY, CDC Foundation, Overdose Response Strategy
 - James Hawley, Overdose Response Strategy Drug Intelligence Officer – NY, NY/NJ HIDTA
 - Linda L. Beers, Public Health Director, Essex County Health Department
 - Shanna Siegel, RN, BSN, Supervising Public Health Educator, Public Information Officer, Putnam County Department of Health
 - Meghan Tice, Epidemiologist, Oswego County Health Department
-
- 3:20 – 3:30

Break
Connect with exhibitors!
Visit the virtual Sticky Thoughts Board *(information in program & at each table)!*
-
- 3:30 – 4:45

Workshop Breakout 1A — Salons DE
From Data to Dialogue: An Interactive Mock Overdose Fatality Review Using Aggregate Data
 - Lisa Worden, Public Health Analyst – NY, CDC Foundation, Overdose Response Strategy
 - James Hawley, Overdose Response Strategy Drug Intelligence Officer – NY, NY/NJ HIDTA**Workshop Breakout 1B — Salons FG**
Overamping Unpacked: Managing the Acute Effects of Stimulant Use
 - Kelly S. Ramsey, MD, MPH, MA, FACP, DFASAM, Addiction Medicine and Harm Reduction Consultant, Kelly S. Ramsey Consulting, LLC
-
- 4:50 – 5:05

Reflections on Day 1 — Salons DE
 - Joseph Kerwin, Director, AIDS Institute, New York State Department of Health
 - Kathy Staples, Office Manager, Truth Pharm

Add your Day 1 ‘sticky thoughts’ to our virtual board *(information in program & at each table)!*

END OF DAY 1

DAY 2 – FRIDAY, SEPT. 12

7:00 – 8:00	Breakfast Buffet Open — Salons ABC Network with your peers!
7:30 – 11:00	Registration Open — Outside of Salons DE
8:00 – 8:20	Day 2 Welcome — Salons DE <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Allan Clear, Director, Office of Drug User Health, AIDS Institute, New York State Department of Health■ Glynnis Hunt, MS, Deputy Director, Office of Drug User Health, AIDS Institute, New York State Department of Health
8:20 – 9:10	Stimulant Use Trends and Impact: Emerging Harm Reduction and Clinical Strategies — Salons DE <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Narelle Ellendon, RN, Opioid Program Manager, New York State Department of Health■ Anne DelVecchio, MPH, Evaluation Specialist IV, Program Manager, New York State Department of Health■ Blender Muzvondiwa, Graduate Research Assistant, New York State Department of Health■ Guen Argott, Hepatitis C Patient Navigator, Catholic Charities Care Coordination Services
9:15 – 10:05	Breakout Session 2A — Salons DE Leveraging Community Partnerships and Harm Reduction Philosophies to Solve Long-Standing Social Issues: The Schenectady Outreach Hub <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Jennifer Hayden, LMHC, CASAC, Dual Recovery Coordinator, Schenectady County■ Michelle Cejka, MA, Adult Behavioral Health Coordinator, Schenectady County■ Lauren Pierce, BA, Behavioral Health Navigator, Schenectady Police Department■ Lieutenant Ryan Macherone, Lieutenant of Neighborhood Engagement, Schenectady Police Department Breakout Session 2B — Salon F Beyond the Clinic Walls, Treatment Without Borders <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Ashley Spaulding, Director of Community Outreach, Baywood Center Breakout Session 2C — Salon G Monroe County C.A.C.T.U.S. (Community Action Coalition Committed to Uprooting Stigma): Changing the Conversation Around Substance Use Disorder <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Jessica O’Connor, MPH, Addiction Services Program Manager, Monroe County Department of Public Health■ Kelly Robinson, Addiction Services Outreach Supervisor, Monroe County Department of Public Health
10:05 – 10:20	Break Connect with exhibitors! Visit the virtual Sticky Thoughts Board (<i>information in program & at each table</i>)!

DAY 2 – FRIDAY, SEPT. 12 (continued)

10:20 – 11:10	Breakout Session 3A — Salons DE Peers, Data, and Partnership: Integrated Harm Reduction in Dutchess County, NY <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Lori Levine, MSPH, Quality Improvement Coordinator, Dutchess County Department of Health■ Allison M. Smith, MPH, Chief Epidemiologist, Dutchess County Department of Mental Health■ Gregory Gallo, LCSW, Clinical Program Manager, Dutchess County Department of Mental Health Breakout Session 3B — Salon F Bridges of Trust: Weaving Harm Reduction Into Community Hubs <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Tyler Gilyard, Program Coordinator, Onondaga County Health Department■ Julie Gilbert, Program Coordinator, Onondaga County Health Department Breakout Session 3C — Salon G Planning for Impactful Opioid Settlement Funding Utilization: Lessons Learned from Suffolk County <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Alyse Marotta, MPH, Coordinator of Community Based Programs, Division of Community Mental Hygiene Services, Suffolk County Department of Health■ Cari Faith Besserman, MS, CRC, CASAC-M, Director, Division of Community Mental Hygiene Services, Suffolk County Department of Health■ Tina Wolf, Executive Director, Community Action for Social Justice■ Melissa Wettengel, MPH, NYCPS, Chief Executive Officer, Hands Across Long Island
Reminder: Add your unanswered questions to our virtual Sticky Thoughts board by 11:15 AM for it to be considered for Q&A (<i>information in program & at each table</i>)!	
11:15 – 12:15	Working Lunch/Break Boxed Lunch in Salons ABC ! Open Q&A in Salons DE (grab lunch first, starts at 11:35) <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Keith Brown, MPH, Public Health Director, Schenectady County Public Health Services
12:15 – 1:30	Harm Reduction Policies for Protective Factors — Salons DE <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Toni Smith, Drug Policy Alliance NYS Policy Director and NYSHRA Board Member■ Alexis Pleus, Truth Pharm Executive Director and NYSHRA Co-Chair■ Julie Ritzler-Shelling, M.Ed., Trillium Health Senior Director of Community Prevention & Harm Reduction Services and NYSHRA Board Member
1:30 – 1:45	Closing Remarks — Salons DE <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Jennifer Heidemann, Health Program Coordinator I, Office of Drug User Health, AIDS Institute, New York State Department of Health■ Danielle Pellino, MPH, CHES, Program Manager, New York State Association of County Health Officials

Funding for this conference was made possible (in part) by Health Research Inc. (HRI) via Grant 140156902 Opioid Stewardship Funding. The views expressed in written conference materials or publications and by speakers and moderators do not necessarily reflect the official policies of HRI, NYS Department of Health or the Project Sponsor, Office of Drug User Health, nor does mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

SPEAKERS



ANGELA DIETER (she/her)

Director of Harm Reduction – Erie County Department of Health

Angela Dieter has served as Director of Harm Reduction at the Erie County Department of Health since February 2025. In this role, she leads initiatives to prevent overdose, reduce the harms associated with substance use, and expand access to life-saving tools such as naloxone, fentanyl test strips, and community-based education. She collaborates across public health, behavioral health, and criminal justice systems to advance evidence-based, person-centered harm reduction strategies in Erie County. Prior to joining the Department of Health, Dieter managed the Hepatology Center at Erie County Medical Center, where she oversaw clinical operations and programs supporting addiction medicine. She also held roles in physician practices and case work, gaining deep experience in patient care, service delivery models, and the local systems supporting individuals with substance use disorder and mental health needs. Dieter brings a strong commitment to public health, system integration, and equitable access to care—grounded in years of direct service and program leadership within Western New York’s health landscape.



PAULA BRIDGEFORTH, NYCPS/CRPA (she/her)

Peer Navigator – Erie County Department of Health

Paula Bridgeforth, CRPA, NYCPS is a Peer Specialist with the Office of Harm Reduction at the Erie County Department of Health. Drawing from lived experience and specialized training, they provide compassionate support and advocacy for individuals impacted by substance use. Their work focuses on harm reduction strategies, connecting clients to vital resources, and fostering trust within the community. Through outreach and education, they help promote safety, dignity, and recovery on each individual’s terms.



MARILYN LENUS, RN (she/her)

OFR Coordinator, RN – Erie County Department of Health

Marilyn Lenus, BScN, is the coordinator for Erie County’s Department of Health Overdose Fatality Review Program. With work experience in both Canada and the USA, she champions evidence-based strategies and collaborates with community partners to promote sustainable solutions. A public health nurse and harm reduction advocate, Marilyn works to strengthen overdose prevention efforts and improve strategies for individuals affected by substance use.



JASON MEURLIN (he/him)

Data Analyst – Erie County Department of Health

Jason Meurlin began his public health career during the COVID-19 pandemic while pursuing a Master of Public Health degree from the University at Buffalo. Through the degree program, he completed an internship with the Erie County Office of Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance, culminating in an analysis of Erie County COVID-19 data with a focus on vaccine breakthrough infections. Following the internship, he continued to work for the Office of Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance as an independent contractor before accepting the position of Data Analyst in the Erie County Office of Harm Reduction in 2023. In his current role, he primarily focuses on creating heat maps to visualize geospatial trends in overdose data.



DAYQUAN CRANDELL, BA (he/him)

Epidemiologist – Orange County Department of Health

Dayquan Crandell is an accomplished Epidemiologist at the Orange County Department of Health in Goshen, New York, holding a bachelor’s degree in health science. Initially starting in Environmental Health, Dayquan notably led the county’s COVID-19 vaccination initiatives, significantly influencing community health outcomes. He spearheaded the development of the innovative Health Equity Dashboard, highlighting disparities to inform impactful public health policies. Recognized with a meritorious award for his outstanding contributions, Dayquan remains dedicated to fostering health equity and improving community well-being.



JENNIFER HAYDEN, LMHC, CASAC (she/her)

Dual Recovery Coordinator – Schenectady County

Jennifer Hayden is the Dual Recovery Coordinator of the Schenectady County Office of Community Services since May 2017. Jennifer is a licensed mental health therapist and certified substance use disorder counselor with over fifteen years working in the behavioral health community. In her current position, Jennifer works with local stakeholders to create best practice initiatives that serve community members with mental health and substance use challenges. In 2021, the Office of Community Services partnered with the Schenectady Police Department’s Office of Neighborhood Engagement to co-create the Schenectady Outreach Hub, which provides comprehensive care to individuals deemed to be at-risk in the community.



MICHELLE CEJKA, MA (she/her)

Adult Behavioral Health Coordinator – Schenectady County

Michelle Cejka is the Adult Behavioral Health Coordinator for Schenectady County since October of 2016. She obtained her master’s degree in Counseling and Community Psychology from Sage College. Michelle assisted in establishing the Adults at Risk committee for Schenectady County and is a certified trainer in Mental Health First Aide. She has created and currently oversees many initiatives within Schenectady County that assist individuals in accessing any level of care needed within the mental health and substance use disorder field. Prior to working at Schenectady County, Michelle worked for Rehabilitation Support Services for 10 years. During her tenure there, she worked as a case manager in both the field and in residential programming. Michelle has a strong passion to help individuals and get them linked to services they are requesting.



LAUREN PIERCE, BA (she/her)

Behavioral Health Navigator – Schenectady Police Department

Lauren Pierce possesses a BA in Human Services with a concentration in Criminal Justice as well as an A.A.S in Chemical Dependency Counseling. In 2016 Lauren began her career in Chemical Dependency Counseling by assisting individuals with their recovery process at Hope House Adolescents and Women and Children Residential Programs in Albany, NY. In 2017 Lauren pursued a position at Mohawk Opportunities Inc where she was able to encompass her knowledge and skills to assist individuals in the community struggling with substance use disorder, mental health, and chronic homelessness. While in her position she pursued her bachelor’s degree from SUNY Empire and graduated in 2021. Since obtaining her degree Lauren has worked in the community assisting individuals with ongoing case management, support, and navigation to criminal justice diversion programs for those struggling with ongoing criminal justice barriers, and collaboration with a variety of community agencies and supportive programs. In July 2023 Lauren was hired as the Behavioral Health Navigator with the Schenectady Police Department where she assists with both the Schenectady Cares & Schenectady HUB programs. Lauren has a strong passion to collaborate and bring the community together while also assisting the Schenectady Police Officers firsthand with connections to community resources to support those who may be struggling in many different areas.

**LIEUTENANT RYAN MACHERONE** *(he/him)***Lieutenant of Neighborhood Engagement – Schenectady Police Department**

Ryan Macherone has been the Lieutenant of Neighborhood Engagement since 2019 and has worked with his partners here today to develop several public health-based initiatives in the City of Schenectady, including the Schenectady Cares Program and the Schenectady Outreach Hub. As Schenectady's first diversion and deflection program, Schenectady Cares has led the way in data collection, overdose surveillance, and post-overdose outreach coordination, referring over 1,800 individuals since its inception and helping to reduce non-fatal overdoses by 40% in 2024. In close partnership with the Schenectady County Office of Community Services, diversion and deflection programming continues to grow in Schenectady, and today, Lieutenant Macherone joins his colleagues in the Schenectady Outreach Hub, aimed at assisting those most at-risk in the community, often due to homelessness and co-occurring mental health and substance use-related disparities. Ryan holds a bachelor's degree in Political Science from SUNY Oneonta, a CGS in Public Health, and is currently concluding his MPH in Public Health at the Albany College of Integrated Health Science.

**NARELLE ELLENDON, RN** *(she/her)***Opioid Program Manager – New York State Department of Health**

Narelle Ellendon is a Registered Nurse and an Opioid Program Manager with the New York State Department of Health's, (NYSDOH), Office of Drug User Health and for nearly 10 years has lead statewide initiatives to increase access to services for people who use drugs. Prior to working for the NYSDOH, she was the Director of Capacity Building Services for National Harm Reduction Coalition (NHRC), overseeing their national training and capacity building services to support the integration and expansion of drug user health interventions. Before immigrating to the US over 20 years ago, Ms. Ellendon worked in Australia as an outreach community health nurse with the homeless, drug-using populations and as a registered nurse within correctional facilities, drug treatment and other healthcare settings.

**ANNE DELVECCHIO, MPH** *(she/her)***Evaluation Specialist IV, Program Manager – New York State Department of Health**

Anne DelVecchio is the New York State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System's Program Manager and a drug overdose epidemiologist, receiving her Master of Public Health with a concentration in Epidemiology and Biostatistics in 2008 from the University at Albany. She currently works within the Drug Overdose Surveillance and Epidemiology Unit within the Office of Drug User Health at the AIDS Institute, New York State Department of Health.

**BLENDER MUZVONDIWA** *(she/her)***Graduate Research Assistant – New York State Department of Health**

Blender Muzvondiwa is a third-year Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) student at the College of Integrated Health Sciences (CIHS), University at Albany. She currently serves as a Graduate Research Assistant with the AIDS Institute's Office of Program Evaluation and Research (OPER), where she supports the evaluation of harm reduction initiatives across New York State, including safer inhalation supply distribution and the impact of stimulant use on cardiovascular health. She has also contributed to the evaluation of the AIDS Institute funded research on innovative models for hepatitis C treatment and care through CIHS' Udo Lab.

MEGHAN TICE *(she/her)***Epidemiologist – Oswego County Health Department**

Meghan Tice is the Health Planning Epidemiologist at Oswego County Health Department. She has worked in overdose prevention since 2021. She coordinates the Oswego County Public Health and Safety Team, as well as the Overdose Fatality Review team.

**JESSICA O'CONNOR, MPH** *(she/her)***Addiction Services Program Manager – Monroe County Department of Public Health**

Jessica has 17 years of experience improving community health and currently serves as the Program Manager of the 24-member Monroe County Department of Public Health Addiction Services Division. Jessica has managed grant programs, including the recent NIH Healing Communities Study, and has been integral in the continued development of Monroe County's opioid response. Jessica is passionate about initiatives that highlight community partnership and reduce stigma around addiction. Jessica holds a BS in Psychology and a Master of Public Health degree.

**KELLY ROBINSON** *(she/her)***Addiction Services Outreach Supervisor – Monroe County Department of Public Health**

Kelly Robinson is an Outreach Supervisor for the Addiction Services Department within the Monroe County Department of Public Health in Rochester, New York. She has been working in the fields of Addiction, Mental Health, and Law Enforcement since 2011. Her most recent position within the county allowed her to work with NIH's and Columbia University's HEALing Communities Study (HCS) as the Community Engagement Facilitator for the Monroe County, New York team. Currently, Kelly has developed and is currently leading the first anti-stigma coalition, Community Action Coalition Committed to Uprooting Stigma (CACTUS) under Monroe County Department of Public Health.

**ALLISON M. SMITH, MPH** *(she/her)***Chief Epidemiologist – Dutchess County Department of Mental Health**

Allison M. Smith, MPH is the Chief Epidemiologist at the Dutchess County Department of Mental Health. Prior to her current role, she served as the epidemiologist for the county's former Department of Behavioral & Community Health and previously worked as a data manager of correctional mental health programs with NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and NYC Health + Hospitals. Allison holds a Master of Public Health in Epidemiology from New York Medical College and a Bachelor of Science in Biology and Education from the University at Albany. Her professional interests include the intricacies of correctional health systems and bringing mental health and wellness into everyday conversation.

**LORI LEVINE, MSPH** *(she/her)***Quality Improvement Coordinator – Dutchess County Department of Health**

Lori Levine works as the Quality Improvement Coordinator for the Dutchess County Department of Health. She has served the county in various roles, having managed the county's Opioid Overdose Prevention Program and having worked as a biostatistician tracking West Nile Virus. She started her career as a research assistant at George Washington University, studying the effects of prenatal cocaine and/or opioid exposure on infant development. Lori received her MSPH in Epidemiology at the University of South Carolina School of Public Health.

**GREGORY GALLO, LCSW** *(he/him)***Clinical Program Manager – Dutchess County Department of Mental Health**

Gregory Gallo, LCSW, has 15 years of experience in human services. He helped launch the Dutchess County Empowerment Center, which houses the Recovery Coach Program, and currently serves as a coordinator for the County's Suicide & Overdose Fatality Review and the Suicide Prevention Coalition. Gregory is also a clinician for Dutchess County's Hoarding Task Force and Trauma Team. Outside of work, he is a dedicated father, husband, volunteer EMT, and age-group triathlete.

**TOBY BORIS-SCHACTER, BA (they/them)****Youth Coordinator – Columbia-Greene Addiction Coalition**

Toby Boris-Schacter has a B.A. in Theatre & Performance and Gender & Sexuality Studies from Bard College and applies this knowledge in their work at the Columbia-Greene Addiction Coalition to create impactful, engaging experiences. A passionate advocate for collective decision-making, authentic self-expression, and harm reduction, Toby uses their vibrant energy and playful spirit to connect with youth and encourage informed, mindful choices. Toby is the founder of The Queer and Trans Connection Network, which offers safe sober spaces for members of the LGBTQ+ Community in our rural counties of Columbia and Greene.

TYLER GILYARD (he/him)**Program Coordinator – Onondaga County Health Department**

Tyler Gilyard is from Endicott, NY. He has a robust career in the non-profit sector, working with people experiencing homelessness and in supportive housing case management. His true passion is Harm Reduction. He is able to utilize his lived experience and his extensive professional experiences to inform both his personal interactions with program participants and constructing programs that tailor to their specific needs. He was the second employee to join OCHD's Substance Use Initiatives and has helped build the Syringe Services, Public Health Education and Peer Services programs from inception providing comprehensive services to people who use substances in Onondaga County.

JULIE GILBERT (she/her)**Program Coordinator – Onondaga County Health Department**

Julie Gilbert is originally from Philadelphia, PA and attended St. Joseph's University. She came to Syracuse, NY after joining the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. Julie spent the first sixteen years of her career running the case management and other supplementary programming at a Syracuse soup kitchen, serving a diverse set of community members facing food insecurity. That soup kitchen was the first community partner of OCHD's Syringe Services Program. She joined Onondaga County Health Department in 2025 and is so excited about building the Substance Use Supportive Services program to provide comprehensive case management services for individuals throughout our county.

DAVID HOLTGRAVE, PHD (he/him)**Senior Policy Advisor to the Commissioner of Health – NYSDOH, Office of the Commissioner**

David R. Holtgrave, PhD, joined the Department of Health in August 2024 as a Senior Policy Advisor to the Commissioner. From 2022 to 2024, Dr. Holtgrave served in the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, a post for which his portfolio spanned public health and translational research aspects of substance use policy. From 2018 to 2022, he was the Dean of the School of Public Health, University at Albany, SUNY. He is now SUNY Distinguished Professor Emeritus.

He has also served under the Obama Administration as a member and then Vice-Chair of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, at the CDC as Director of the Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention- Intervention Research & Support, at Emory University Rollins School of Public Health, and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health where he served as Founding Chair of the Department of Health, Behavior, and Society from 2005 to 2018, and is still an Adjunct Professor.

Dr. Holtgrave's 35 years of research experience have focused on bringing the highest quality scientific evidence to bear on urgent public health programmatic and policy decisions. This is evidenced, for example, by his translational work in addressing HIV-related health inequities in the U.S., rapid research to inform COVID clinical decision making, and the development of an evidence-based national response plan to confront the emerging challenge of fentanyl adulterated by xylazine.

**JOSEPH KERWIN (he/him)****Director – NYSDOH, AIDS Institute**

Joseph (Joe) Kerwin serves as the Director of the AIDS Institute. Joe is a native of Troy, NY. He holds a bachelor's degree in Philosophy, a Master of Divinity degree, as well as a master's degree in Applied Psychology from Yeshiva University. Joseph has been a Deputy Director in the AIDS Institute since 2018. His portfolio as Deputy Director has progressively expanded over the past four years to now include oversight of the AI's Health Care Programs, Uninsured Care Program, Medicaid Programs and Health Care Financing. Joseph has been with the AIDS Institute for more than ten years. He has been in the progressive roles of Assistant Bureau Director, Section Director, and Deputy Director. Prior to joining the AIDS Institute, Joseph was the Executive Director of AIDS Services at Catholic Charities from 2000 to 2004 and the Administrator of the AIDS Program and Division of HIV Medicine at Albany Medical Center from 2004 to 2011. Mr. Kerwin is responsible for the day-to-day decision making and operations of the AIDS Institute and has represented the AIDS Institute within the DOH, across state agencies and New York State. Priority efforts have focused on the integration of health equity principles to advance ending the epidemics of HIV, Hepatitis C, Congenital Syphilis, and opioid overdose, advancing LGBTQ+ health and wellness, and leading in many areas of the state's outbreak responses including COVID-19 and MPOX.

TRACIE M. GARDNER (she/her)**Executive Director – National Black Harm Reduction Network (NBHRN)**

Tracie M. Gardner, Executive Director of the National Black Harm Reduction Network (NBHRN), and former Senior Vice President of Policy Advocacy at the Legal Action Center, has worked for more than three decades in the public health, public policy, and not-for-profit fields. With a focus on substance use and the impact of the War on Drugs and incarceration on Black communities in the United States, Ms. Gardner is a nationally recognized expert on health and communities of color. In 2024, New York Attorney General Letitia James appointed Ms. Gardner to the state's Opioid Settlement Fund Advisory Board, which provides recommendations for how New York's opioid settlement funds should be used in communities across the state.

Tracie received a B.A. from Mount Holyoke College. In 2022, Ms. Gardner's alma mater recognized her career with the Mount Holyoke Alumnae Association Achievement Award.

Her proudest achievement is as a parent to her two sons, Caleb and Elijah Wright.

ALLAN CLEAR (he/him)**Director, Office of Drug User Health – AIDS Institute, NYSDOH**

Mr. Clear is the Director of the New York State Department of Health, AIDS Institute's Office of Drug User Health where he is responsible for program planning, design and implementation related to drug user health, including overdose, HIV prevention, low threshold buprenorphine, drug checking and access to care including medical care and mental health services. Mr. Clear has worked in the field of drug user health since 1990. He was the Executive Director of the Lower East Side Harm Reduction Center, one of the first syringe exchange programs in New York State, and of the Harm Reduction Coalition, which is the prominent community-based organization promoting harm reduction as a mode of working with drug users in the US. Mr. Clear has served on both local and international advisory bodies, including Governor Cuomo's End the Epidemic Task Force in 2015 and the United Nations Civil Society Taskforce on Drugs.

LAUREN JOHNSON, MA, CASAC-M (she/her)**Dual Recovery Coordinator – Putnam County Department of Mental Health**

Lauren Johnson is the Dual Recovery Coordinator for the Putnam County Department of Mental Health. Lauren has 16 years experience working in Behavioral Health. Her experience spans from residential and outpatient treatment, supportive housing, prevention, recovery and harm reduction. Lauren has a passion for working with people who use substances, co-occurring disorders and harm reduction.

**SHANNA SIEGEL, RN, BSN (she/her)**

Supervising Public Health Educator, Public Information Officer – Putnam County Department of Health

For nearly 20 years Shanna has been working to improve the health and well-being of communities and individuals. As a nurse and educator, she understands the importance of integrating person-centered, trauma-informed approaches into population health work. In her current role as Supervising Public Health Educator and Public Information Officer at the Putnam County Department of Health, Shanna believes that people are most empowered to make informed decisions about their health when they have reliable access to accurate and culturally appropriate information. She enjoys working closely with community members and local agencies to address systemic and societal barriers to optimal health.

**LINDA L. BEERS (she/her)**

Public Health Director – Essex County Health Department

Linda L. Beers has served as Director of Public Health for the Essex County Health Department since 2011, overseeing Public Health, Home Health, Children's Services, and WIC. She advances the department's mission through evidence-based practice, collaboration, and a focus on efficiency, including pursuing national Public Health Accreditation.

With a background in Social Work, Education, and Public Health, Linda approaches complex health challenges from multiple perspectives. Known for her approachable leadership and upbeat energy, she fosters collaboration across sectors to meet evolving public health needs.

In addition to serving Essex County, she advocates for statewide policies supporting underserved populations. Some of her active affiliations include: NYSACHO (Immediate Past President), Co-Chair of the Essex County Heroin Opiate Coalition, Essex County Suicide Prevention Coalition, and involvement with AHI, NYSAPHA, and NYSAC.

She is a multi-time award recipient, recognized for advocacy and leadership by NYSACHO, AHI, NYSPHA, and others.

**NABARUN DASGUPTA, MPH, PHD**

Senior Scientist – University of North Carolina

Dr. Nabarun Dasgupta is a street drug scientist and activist at the University of North Carolina with 2 decades of experience in overdose epidemiology and prevention. His lab analyzes street drug samples and large datasets to address public health challenges. His research is primarily funded by the US Food and Drug Administration. He is the co-founder of multiple non-profit organizations, most recently Remedy Alliance For The People, a groundbreaking non-profit bulk distributor of overdose reversal medications. Previously he co-founded Project Lazarus, a groundbreaking overdose prevention program in Wilkes County, NC. He also served as the Board Chair of the National Harm Reduction Coalition. Prior to UNC, he was the co-founder and Chief Science Officer of Epidemico, Inc., a successful multi-national public health informatics startup based out of Harvard Medical School. Dr. Dasgupta holds degrees from Princeton, Yale, and UNC. In recognition of his groundbreaking work in overdose prevention, Dr. Dasgupta was named to 2023 TIME 100 Next list of activist leaders globally.

**LISA WORDEN (she/her)**

Public Health Analyst - NY – CDC Foundation, Overdose Response Strategy

Lisa Worden is the Public Health Analyst (PHA) for New York with the CDC Foundation as part of the national Overdose Response Strategy (ORS) program, a CDC and ONDCP-funded initiative fostering public health and public safety collaboration. With over 25 years of local public health experience, Lisa has dedicated her career to overdose prevention, emergency preparedness, and community health planning. Her work involves implementing overdose prevention initiatives across the continuum of responses including ODMAP and spike response protocols, post overdose responses, leave-behind and other naloxone expansion activities, Overdose Fatality Review, low-barrier street outreach and multi-sector opioid task force coordination.

**JAMES HAWLEY**

Overdose Response Strategy Drug Intelligence Officer - NY – NY/NJ HIDTA

James Hawley is the Overdose Response Strategy Drug Intelligence Officer for NY and Public Safety and Public Partnerships Coordinator for NY/NJ HIDTA. In June 2016, James Hawley retired from the City of Binghamton Police Department after a distinguished 23-year career. He immediately went to work as a Drug Intelligence Officer for NY/NJ HIDTA, where he has worked for the last 8 years. In 2019, DIO Hawley was named the ODMAP Coordinator for NY/NJ HIDTA and became responsible for facilitating post-overdose outreach programs in New York. In 2021, DIO Hawley joined the Overdose Response Strategy, a collaboration between HIDTA and the CDC to reduce overdoses. In 2022, he was named the NY/NJ HIDTA Public Safety and Prevention Partnerships Coordinator. In this capacity, he acts as a liaison between NY/NJ HIDTA and the New York State Department of Justice Crime Analysis Center (CAC) Directors on overdose prevention activities and other HIDTA priorities.

**KELLY S. RAMSEY, MD, MPH, MA, FACP, DFASAM (she/her)**

Addiction Medicine and Harm Reduction Consultant – Kelly S. Ramsey Consulting, LLC

Kelly S. Ramsey, MD, MPH, MA, FACP, DFASAM is a board certified internal medicine and addiction medicine physician who has treated substance use disorder since 2004. She has focused her career on providing care for people who use drugs, treating HIV, hepatitis C (HCV), and substance use disorder. Dr. Ramsey has been an ardent harm reductionist for over 30 years since she volunteered at the Santa Cruz Needle Exchange in the mid-1990s.

**STEPHANIE MARQUESANO, JD (she/her)**

Founder and President – The Harris Project, Inc.

Stephanie Marquesano is the founder of The Harris Project, the only national nonprofit solely focused on co-occurring disorders (COD)—the combination of mental health challenges and substance use issues. After the accidental overdose death of her 19-year-old son Harris, she became a national leader advancing an integrated system of care that meet the needs of individuals with COD. She created CODA (Co-Occurring Disorders Awareness), a peer-led prevention movement that equips youth, adult supports and communities with knowledge, fosters connection, and promotes early intervention. She also champions Encompass, an evidence-based treatment model designed specifically for adolescents and young adults with COD. Stephanie continues to shape policy and practice across New York State through advocacy, curriculum development, and cross-sector collaboration.

**ALYSE MAROTTA, MPH (she/her)**

Coordinator of Community Based Programs – Suffolk County Department of Health, Division of Community Mental Hygiene Services

Alyse Marotta is a Coordinator of Community Based Programs with the Suffolk County Department of Health, Division of Community Mental Hygiene services. In this role, Alyse applies a public health lens to opioid overdose prevention through data surveillance and transformation, health promotions and communication, program management, and special projects. Prior to this position, she has worked as a Project Manager for the DSRIIP program in Suffolk County, a Program and Grants Coordinator for the Nutrition Division at Stony Brook Medicine, and a Community Health Educator in Maryland. Alyse has earned a Masters of Public Health from Stony Brook Medicine, and carries these principles into serving her community.

**ASHLEY SPAULDING (she/her)**

Director of Community Outreach – Baywood Center

I'm Ashley Spaulding, wife, mother of one with one on the way. I'm a credentialed addictions counselor for the last ten years and recently became certified to treat problem gambling. I also received my Masters' degree in Ayurveda and Integrated Medicine, which gives me a holistic perspective for recovery. I developed the Community Outreach Program in 2018 to help individuals overcome barriers to treatment and have been running it since its development.



CARI FAITH BESSERMAN, MS, CRC, CASAC-M (she/her)

Director, Division of Community Mental Hygiene Services – Suffolk County Department of Health

Ms. Besserman is the Director of the Division of Community Mental Hygiene Services for Suffolk County Department of Health Services. With over 30 years of experience in the field of Human Services, Ms. Besserman began her employment with the County as the Deputy Director of Alcohol and Substance Use Disorder Services in 2016, having previously worked in the non-profit sector with various disability disciplines, but primarily in the area of Substance Use. As the Director of the Division of Community Mental Hygiene, also known as the Local Governmental Unit (LGU), the Director has a statutory authority and responsibility for oversight and cross-system management of the local mental hygiene system to meet the needs of individuals and families affected by mental illness, substance use disorder and/or intellectual/developmental disability in their communities. Ms. Besserman recognizes the devastation resulting from the Opioid Epidemic; personal, familial, and community implications which have a ripple effect not only in our present, but into our future. Motivated by the brilliance of human resilience, Ms. Besserman understands that hope without action does not create change. Ms. Besserman feels honored to be part of this summit and to stand alongside like-minded individuals who understand and value harm reduction as a public health response. She is in awe of her co-presenters and cannot say enough about the amazing work they do every day.



TINA WOLF (she/her)

Executive Director – Community Action for Social Justice

Tina Wolf is Executive Director and Co-Founder of Community Action for Social Justice (CASJ), the Harm Reduction & Syringe Exchange Program on Long Island, since 2013. She is responsible for design, implementation, and reporting for all programs; grant writing and other fundraising efforts; and oversight of finance and operations. Tina began doing syringe exchange in the South Bronx in 2003 and continues to provide harm reduction training for other organizations throughout New York State.



MELISSA WETTENGEL, MPH, NYCPS (she/her)

Chief Executive Officer – Hands Across Long Island

Melissa serves as the Chief Executive Officer of Hands Across Long Island, Inc. (HALI), a peer-run mental health advocacy non-profit offering housing, street outreach, employment training, hospital/jail bridging, and wellness support. Prior to HALI, Melissa built and directed innovative peer-staffed crisis intervention programs, including Turquoise House, an alternative to psychiatric hospitalization, and Sherpa, linking people surviving overdoses to substance use treatment directly from emergency departments. Melissa also ran the Long Island Regional Planning Consortium, a community Board addressing complex behavioral health system issues related to the shift to managed care. Melissa is trained as both a Certified Peer Specialist and Certified Recovery Peer Advocate, holds a Master's in Public Health (MPH) from Stony Brook University, and is passionate about engaging communities directly and building on their inherent strengths to heal, grow, and thrive.



GLYNNIS HUNT, MS (she/her)

Deputy Director, Office of Drug User Health – AIDS Institute, NYSDOH

Glynnis Hunt is the Deputy Director of the Office of Drug User Health at the AIDS Institute/New York State Department of Health. She serves as Principal Investigator for the CDC's Overdose Data to Action in States Cooperative Agreement and the New York State Opioid Stewardship Fund, leading statewide efforts to use data to drive overdose prevention and harm reduction strategies.

With over two decades of experience in public health, Ms. Hunt has directed numerous complex, multi-sector initiatives at the local and state levels. Her work has leveraged millions in federal funding and helped translate public health data into actionable strategies. Ms. Hunt's personal mission is to improve care and outcomes for individuals with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders, advocating for integrated, trauma-informed, and person-centered approaches across systems.



TONI SMITH (she/her)

NYS Policy Director, Drug Policy Alliance; NYSHRA Board Member

Toni Smith is the New York State Director at Drug Policy Alliance, where she works in partnership with grassroots groups to advance public health solutions that support people who use drugs and end the War on Drugs in New York. Prior to joining the Drug Policy Alliance, Toni worked in the Field Department of the New York Civil Liberties Union where she worked to change laws, hearts, and minds to reduce discrimination and punishment of Black and Brown students and build a strong and fair public school system. Through this work, she was named to the 2021 and 2022 City and State New York's Power 100 Education list.

Toni graduated from Manhattanville College in 2003 with a degree in sociology. As a senior and co-captain of the women's basketball team, Toni sparked national debate about freedom of speech over her protest for racial and economic justice during the playing of the national anthem before basketball games. Toni has built a career in social justice work by supporting and developing young people, organizing with communities, and influencing lawmakers.



ALEXIS PLEUS (she/her)

Founder & Executive Director, Truth Pharm; Co-Chair, New York State Harm Reduction Association; Creator & Organizer, Trail of Truth National

Alexis is a professional engineer, artist, writer and activist, and mother of 3 sons. In 2014, she lost her oldest son Jeff to an overdose and as a result of that experience, founded Truth Pharm 6 months later with a focus on raising awareness, reducing stigma, educating and advocating to reduce the harms caused by substance use.

Truth Pharm has impacted legislation, the way our community views substance use and has gained national recognition. Alexis has testified at several New York State Legislative Hearings, served on state and national coalitions, testified for Congressional Hearings twice, has been keynote speaker for many events, spoke at multiple conferences, been included in national media coverage and is featured in several documentaries, articles and books. Alexis is the Co-chair of the New York State Harm Reduction Association. Alexis created the Trail of Truth in 2016, which is now a National event and movement providing memorialization and elevating the devastating loss families face in order to compel change.



JULIE RITZLER-SHELLING, M.ED. (she/her)

Senior Director of Community Prevention & Harm Reduction Services, Trillium Health; NYSHRA Board Member

Julie has been a harm reductionist at heart since her early undergraduate days at SUNY Geneseo, where she studied Biology and was a Peer Health Educator passionately focused on safer sex and substance using behaviors. She earned her Master of Education degree in Health Science at SUNY Brockport and has over 20 years' experience in community health promotion in the Greater Rochester/Finger Lakes area. Julie currently serves as Senior Director of Community Prevention & Harm Reduction Services at Trillium Health, an FQHC in Rochester; where she leads teams providing outreach, prevention education, point of care testing services, connection to care and lifesaving harm reduction services to community members. As a 500 RYT, Julie is also committed to spreading the word about the benefits of yoga and meditation to all!



GUEN ARGOTT (she/her)

Hepatitis C Patient Navigator – Catholic Charities Care Coordination Services

Guen Argott began volunteering at Catholic Charities Care Coordination Services, Project Safepoint in 2024, then began working as a Program Assistant moving into the Hep C program as the Hepatitis Patient Navigator. She has four years in recovery and uses her lived experience to connect and support all her participants.

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THANK YOU FOR JOINING US
AND SAFE TRAVELS HOME!

Proud to Support Harm Reduction Champions

We are honored to sponsor this conference and support the amazing work of harm reduction advocates. Your dedication to improving the lives of people who use drugs through harm reduction is inspiring, and we are honored to be a part of your journey.



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