

2026

Public Health Leaders Summit

Speaker Bios

Jill Burley, RN, BSN (She/Her)

Deputy Director of Public Health and Director of Patient Services, Livingston County Department of Health

Jill M. Burley, RN, BSN, serves as Deputy Director of Public Health and Director of Patient Services for the Livingston County Department of Health. With nearly 30 years of experience in public health, home care, hospice, and nursing leadership, she oversees public health programs, patient services, workforce planning, budgeting, and community partnerships. Jill has spent her entire public health career serving Livingston County, holding roles as Public Health Nurse, Supervising Public Health Nurse, and now Deputy Director. She earned an Associate Degree in Nursing from SUNY Alfred, a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from SUNY Brockport, and is a Registered Nurse licensed in New York State.



Cheryl Donald, MBA, MA, LMFT (She/Her)

Deputy Commissioner for Public Health, New York State Department of Health

Cheryl Donald, MBA, MA, LMFT, is Deputy Commissioner for Public Health at the New York State Department of Health. Overseeing the Office of Public Health, Ms. Donald brings more than 25 years of leadership experience spanning public health systems, behavioral health, and federal service. Prior to joining New York State, she retired from the Senior Executive Service at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, most recently serving as Director of the Office of Regional Operations within the Administration for Children and Families, where she advised senior leadership on state relations, cross-system strategy, and partnerships to improve outcomes for children and families nationwide. She oversaw a national network of ten regional offices and provided cross-regional leadership on programs such as TANF and Head Start, to inform federal policy and operations.

Ms. Donald previously served as Regional Administrator for the Health Resources and Services Administration's Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs, where she led operations and external engagement for Region 2 (New York) and served in an acting capacity for Region 4 (Atlanta). In these roles, she worked with federal, state, and community partners to strengthen public health care systems, expand access to quality primary care, and support the nation's health care safety net via programs such as FQHCs, Ryan White HIV/AIDS, Rural Health, Health Workforce and Maternal Health. Earlier in her career, she served Hofstra University in multiple leadership roles, including Assistant Dean of Academic Advisement and Director of the university-wide tutorial program. She is a licensed marriage and family therapist, Clinical Fellow and Approved Supervisor of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, and holds graduate degrees in healthcare administration and marriage and family therapy, along with a bachelor's degree in psychology. She is a 25-time marathoner who has completed the original six World Marathon Majors and is an RRCA-certified adult distance running coach.



Lawrence Eisenstein, MD, MPH, FACP (He/Him)

Vice President and Chief Public and Community Health Officer, Catholic Health

Lawrence Eisenstein, MD, MPH, FACP, is Vice President and Chief Public and Community Health Officer for Catholic Health on Long Island. Prior to joining Catholic Health in August of 2022, Dr. Eisenstein served as Commissioner of Health for the Nassau County Department of Health, Mineola, New York for more than 11 years. Dr. Eisenstein was appointed to the New York State Public Health and Health Planning Council in 2024. Dr. Eisenstein is Board Certified in Infectious Diseases through the American Board of Internal Medicine. Dr. Eisenstein also served as President, and served 9 total years as a Board of Directors member for the New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO.) Dr. Eisenstein completed an Internal Medicine Residency, Chief Residency, and Fellowship in Infectious Diseases at Winthrop University Hospital in Mineola, NY. Dr. Eisenstein began his Medical Education at Universidad Autonoma de Guadalajara before finishing it at New York Medical College, Valhalla, NY. He also earned his Master of Public Health degree from New York Medical College.



Molly Fleming, MPH (She/Her)

Local Health Department Liaison, NYSDOH Division of Public Health Infrastructure

Molly Fleming, MPH, is the Local Health Department Liaison for the Division of Public Health Infrastructure. In her role, Molly supports local health department Public Health Infrastructure Grant (PHIG) awards and related subcontracts. She is passionate about using data to strengthen public health practice and support effective, equitable decision-making, with experience spanning workforce development, applied research, and program improvement.

Molly joined the Division in February 2026. Prior to this she worked at the New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO), where she collaborated closely with local health departments across New York State to support training, capacity building, and workforce development initiatives. Molly also gained research experience at the University at Albany School of Public Health through her work on the Upstate KIDS Study and the Albany Infant and Mothers Study. She also contributed to a New York State Department of Health initiative aimed at improving colorectal cancer screening rates among Medicaid Managed Care enrollees.

Molly holds a Master of Public Health with a concentration in Epidemiology and a Bachelor of Science in Public Health from the University at Albany.



Susan Franko, PhD (She/Her)

Retired Healthcare Professional

Healthcare professional with a demonstrated history of working in hospitals, home care, and Public Health industries. Skilled in Risk Management, quality improvement, research, Public Health, and medical record review. Strong healthcare professional with a PhD in Public Health.



Stephen A. Jennings, MS (He/Him)

Director of Public Health, Jefferson County Public Health Service

Stephen (Steve) Jennings has been with the Jefferson County Public Health Service since 1995, serving in the department's administration for his entire tenure. He was appointed Director of the department in October 2023.

Steve has served on many community and state boards and councils. He is a past president of Hospice of Jefferson County and was appointed by Governor George Pataki to 2 terms on the New York State Public Health Council. Additionally, Steve has served the City of Watertown in several capacities, including Councilman (2014-2017) and mayoral appointments to the Fort Drum Joint Land Use Study Steering Committee, the city's Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative Steering Committee, and the City of Watertown Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. Steve is currently a City Council-appointed member of the City Ethics Board, serving a 6th term, and has been Chairman since 2023. Currently, Steve is Board Chairman of the North Country Prenatal Perinatal Council; Chairman of the Alliance for Better Communities to reduce community-wide substance use; Secretary of the Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization; a member of the New York State Oral Health Coalition steering committee – leading a 4-county (Jefferson, Oswego, Lewis and St. Lawrence) Keep the North Country Smiling dental health initiative, and President of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County's Board of Directors.

Steve received a Master of Science in Health Services Administration from Russell Sage College and a Bachelor of Art in in Political Science from the State University of New York at Albany.



Frank Kruppa, MPA, MPH (He/Him)

Assistant Vice President, Community Program Development and Partner Integration, Centralus Health

Frank Kruppa currently serves as Assistant Vice President, Community Program Development and Partner Integration for Centralus Health where he leads integration and growth of behavioral health services.

Mr. Kruppa served from 2011 until 2025 as the Public Health Director of the Tompkins County Health Department and added Mental Health Commissioner duties in 2015. Mr. Kruppa began his public health career in 2001 as an Environmental Specialist at the St. Lucie County Health Department in Florida. His career progressed through the ranks serving as a supervisor and Environmental Health Director until in 2008 he was appointed Administrator of the Okeechobee County Health Department in Florida.

Mr. Kruppa is a Past President of the New York State Association of County Health Officials, past Chair of the Tompkins County Community Foundation and a current Trustee of Tompkins Cortland Community College.

Mr. Kruppa has a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Central Florida, a Master of Public Health degree from Albany University, a Bachelor of Arts degree in Environmental Studies from Binghamton University and received an Honorary Doctor of Laws from Ithaca College in 2026.



James V. McDonald, MD, MPH (He/Him)

Commissioner of Health, New York State Department of Health

James V. McDonald MD, MPH (he, him, his) was appointed Acting Commissioner of Health January 1, 2023, and confirmed by the Senate June 9th, 2023. Prior to joining the New York State Department of Health in July of 2022, Dr. McDonald served at the Rhode Island Department of Health since 2012.

At the Rhode Island Department of Health, Dr. McDonald served in multiple roles including, Interim Director of Health, Chief Administrative Officer of the Board of Medical Licensure and Discipline, Medical Director for the COVID unit, as well as the Medical Director for Division of Health care quality and safety and the Drug Overdose prevention program. He was also a member of the Governor's task force on Preventing Overdose deaths. Dr. McDonald has faculty appointment at the UAlbany School of Public Health as well as Brown School of Public Health.

Dr. McDonald earned his MD from Loyola Stritch School of Medicine in Chicago, pediatric residency in the US Navy and his preventive medicine residency from the State University of New York. Dr. McDonald earned his MPH from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and his BS in Biology from Siena College.

Dr. McDonald is board certified in pediatrics as well as preventive medicine.

Dr. McDonald's diverse career includes Officership in the United States Navy, as well as private practice in rural areas where health care shortages existed. Dr. McDonald also served in the Indian Health Service in the Navajo Nation, serving as Medical Director of Outpatient Medicine in Chinle, Arizona.

Dr. McDonald was awarded the degree Doctor of Humane Letters from Siena College in May of 2024 for exemplary achievement, leadership and commitment to humanitarian ideals.



Keshana Owens-Cody, MS (She/Her)

Director of Division of Public Health Infrastructure, New York State Department of Health

Keshana Owens-Cody is a public health professional and educator known for her leadership in public health infrastructure, workforce development, and community engagement in New York State. Serving as the Director of the Division of Public Health Infrastructure for the New York State Department of Health, Keshana is dedicated to enhancing the capabilities and expertise of healthcare and public health professionals across the state. With a passion for equitable access to care and a commitment to fostering a diverse and skilled workforce, she spearheads initiatives aimed at empowering individuals and communities through education, training, and professional development opportunities.

Keshana brings extensive experience and expertise to her role, having previously held positions in healthcare administration and workforce development. Her strategic vision and innovative approaches have led to the implementation of programs that address critical workforce needs, improve healthcare service delivery, and promote health equity. Because of these experiences, Keshana brings real-life scenarios into the classroom for aspiring public health and health care professionals. In addition to her public health leadership, Keshana Owens-Cody is an educator at Hudson Valley Community College (HVCC), where she guides students in understanding holistic approaches to public health in the Community and Public Health Associate's degree, Microcredential and Certificate programs.

Outside of her professional endeavors, Keshana is deeply involved in community engagement and advocacy efforts. She actively collaborates with stakeholders to identify and address systemic barriers to healthcare access and quality, with a focus on underserved populations.

Keshana holds a Master of Science in Human Resources and Graduate Certificate in Health Professions Education from the University of Connecticut and she continues to pursue opportunities for lifelong learning and growth. Through her leadership, Keshana is making a significant impact on the healthcare landscape, driving positive change and empowering individuals to thrive in their careers and communities.



Meredith Patterson, MPH, CPH (She/Her)

Seniors Program Coordinator and Regional Office Liaison, NYSDOH Division of Public Health Infrastructure

Meredith R. Patterson, MPH, CPH serves as the Senior Program Coordinator and Regional Office Liaison within the NYSDOH Division of Public Health Infrastructure. In this capacity, she oversees strategic planning and monitoring of CDC Public Health Infrastructure Grant (PHIG) activities to support workforce sustainability in the state's regional offices. Meredith previously served as the Local Health Department Liaison in the Division of Public Health Infrastructure, managing the allocation and implementation of PHIG funding across New York's LHDs. With a professional background spanning academic health promotion, disease intervention, and community health, Meredith is dedicated to strengthening public health systems and local partnerships. She earned her MPH from Northeastern University and is Certified in Public Health (CPH).



Tyler Shaw, MHA (He/Him)

Public Health Director, Allegany County Department of Health



Daniel J. Stapleton, MBA (He/Him)

Professor, University at Buffalo

Former Public Health Director, Niagara County Department of Health

Daniel J. Stapleton served as Public Health Director with the Niagara County Department of Health for 19 years, and with the department for 29 years. He served on the NYSACHO Board of Directors for over a decade and is a past President of NYSACHO. Mr. Stapleton is a Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Social and Preventative Medicine of the University at Buffalo and Professor in the UB School of Public Health and Health Professions. He served as a Co- Chair and Board Member of the Western New York Public Health Alliance as well as a member of the Western Region Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Coalition during his tenure as Niagara County Public Health Director.

Mr. Stapleton received his MBA from UB in 1990 and is a lifelong resident of Niagara County. His background prior to joining the Niagara County Department of Health was as Administrator of freestanding medical centers and a radiation oncology practice; Mr. Stapleton was a licensed Radiologic Technologist and managed hospital and freestanding radiology imaging departments.



Jennie Sutcliffe, MSc (She/Her)

Commissioner, Tompkins County Whole Health Department

Jennie is Commissioner of Whole Health for Tompkins County, where she leads efforts to advance community health and well-being. She previously held senior leadership roles at the New York City Department of Health, including spearheading agency-wide strategic priorities and several leadership roles during the COVID-19 response. Her earlier work includes Affordable Care Act implementation in Illinois, both in Governor Pat Quinn's office and at the Shriver Center on Poverty Law.

Jennie serves on the boards of the Human Services Coalition and the Ithaca Board of Planning and Development. She holds a master's degree from the London School of Economics and a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. A Fulbright alumna who speaks fluent Italian, she spent several years living in Italy and Sicily. She lives in Ithaca with her partner and their twins and enjoys camping, hiking, and canoeing.



Mary Fran Wachunas, CPH (She/Her)

Special Project Executive, New York State Association of County Health Officials

Former Public Health Director, Rensselaer County Health Department

Mary Fran Wachunas is the Special Project Executive at the New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO) where she leads a rural-focused public health initiative funded by the New York State Health Foundation. This pilot program, encompassing 33 counties, empowers public health department leaders with hands-on skill-building, succession planning, and tools designed to strengthen infrastructure across all counties.

Mary Fran joined NYSACHO in 2025 after retiring as Public Health Director of the Rensselaer County Department of Health, where she served since 2006 and built a legacy over 29 years in various public health leadership roles. Her experience includes guiding her department through major public health emergencies like the H1N1 outbreak and the COVID-19 pandemic and co-chairing a countywide coalition to combat the opioid crisis alongside the County Sheriff.

She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Management and Marketing from Siena College and a Certificate in Public Health from the State University of New York at Albany. Mary Fran brings deep expertise, collaborative spirit, and a lifelong commitment to advancing the health and wellbeing of New Yorkers.



Eve Walter, PhD (She/Her)

Public Health Director, Ulster County



John Zachary (He/Him)

Senior Facilitator and Manager, Partnership for Public Service

John Zachary is a Senior Facilitator and Manager at the Partnership for Public Service. John designs and facilitates leadership programming and leads policy reform efforts around career leadership for the Partnership's Government for a New Era Initiative. Prior to the Partnership, John led organizational development and continuous improvement efforts in schools in California and Pennsylvania. John holds a BA in History from William & Mary and a MA in Policy, Organization, and Leadership from Stanford.