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## New leader: 'There's a real pride in the ... work'

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With 100 days officially under her belt, Nora OBrien-Suric has jumped in with both feet as president of the [Health Foundation for Western & Central New York](#).

She brought with her years of experience in philanthropy and issues concerning aging, including during her most recent post as senior program officer at the John A. Hartford Foundation in Manhattan.

At the \$112 million Health Foundation, she'll also focus on the other end of the life spectrum: children under 5 who live in poverty.

Both populations are considered extremely vulnerable so the foundation developed a family systems approach with a goal to help people stay healthy.

OBrien-Suric soon discovered that the nonprofit is recognized for a focus on building partnerships in the community with a bottom-up approach. That's evident in its Health Fellowship program, which identifies leaders with potential to have a broader impact, then helps them learn how to work collaboratively with other leaders at a grassroots level.

Though she's still new to the community, OBrien-Suric sees a willingness by leaders to collaborate.

"There's a real pride in the community and the work," she said. "This is a thriving, forward-moving community with a lot of potential. People are really nervous about health reform but they feel there's a lot of potential. I feel people energized around that."

She wants to build and deepen existing programs to ensure lasting impact, but that doesn't mean there won't be change.

"If something doesn't change, then it's stagnant," she said. "So with the changing health environment across the nation, we're going to look for opportunities to work with the community and those leaders in identifying where we might be most helpful."

She wants to begin an initiative designed for community-based organizations to develop advocacy strategies.



JIM COURTNEY

Nora OBrien-Suric says she looks forward to building on the programs developed under her predecessor, while adding new resources to build the local health sector.

"It's part of a sustainability approach for capacity building, helping community-based organizations gain their own fiscal sustainability. But it will also help organizations to find their voice and understand the importance of public education about their mission," she said.

"It's more of a deeper dive and a tool we're hoping to be able to provide to the community."