Health Leadership Fellows, Class of 2016-2018

Michael Ackerman Associate Director of Nursing, Niagara University

Michael Ackerman is the associate director of the School of Nursing at Niagara University.

Michael has a long history of leadership positions in a variety of healthcare settings, and has published numerous articles and is a sought after speaker in the United States. He also has had a productive research career. Michael has a passion for nursing and is driven by Niagara University's vincentian mission of helping those who are underserved.

He is a graduate of Niagara University, where he earned his Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Michael earned both his master's degree and Doctorate in Nursing Science from University at Buffalo. He also has a post master's certificate as an acute care nurse practitioner from the University of Rochester. When not working Michael enjoys numerous athletic and fitness activities with his wife Susan.

Inga Back
Program Coordinator, Oswego County Opportunities



Inga Back is a program coordinator at Oswego County Opportunities, where she oversees the reproductive health, cancer services and IMPACT programs.

Prior to her role with Oswego County Opportunities, Inga worked in public health for over 15 years mainly at the local level. She has extensive experience in the core functions of public health, serving in a number of leadership roles including acting director of public health in Oswego County in 2012. Inga completed her Master of Public Health degree from the University of Albany in 2014.

She has sought out numerous community service opportunities, including her current post of vice president of the Zonta Club of Oswego.

Denise Bienko-Paszkiewicz

Vice President, People, Inc.



Denise Paszkiewicz began her career in the public sector in 1987, and serves as vice president of People Inc., western New York's largest nonprofit human services organization, and executive director of the People Inc. Foundation. In addition to advising on governance matters, Denise has had operational responsibility for areas including administration, corporate compliance, legal services, program development, senior services, prevention services, marketing, government relations, community relations, fundraising and grant development. She has served on community boards including the WNY Planned Giving Consortium, Museum of disability History, Meals on Wheels and Leadership Buffalo.

A native of Buffalo, Denise's formal education includes a bachelor's degree in organizational management from Houghton College, and a Master of Science in Professional Leadership with an MBA capstone from St. Bonaventure University. She has also studied nonprofit management at Niagara County Community College, Empire State College, Canisius College Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership and the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University.

James Butcher Director of Primary Behavioral Health Care Integration, Lakeshore Behavioral Health



James Butcher is a graduate of the University at Buffalo School of Nursing. As a registered nurse, Jim spent his first 18 years at Roswell Park Cancer Center, and then relocated to North Carolina where he was employed at Duke University Medical Center. He continued his career working with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services as a public health epidemiologist performing syndromic surveillance. Jim has been Lakeshore Behavioral Health's ACT team program director in Chautauqua County, and with the SAMHSA grant he works to identify underserved populations in Buffalo and improving consumer outcomes.

Christina CainDirector, Herkimer County Public Health



Christina Cain is the director of Herkimer County Public Health, which provides programs ranging from core prevention activities and services to community education and assessment services. Prior to assuming this role, Christina served in the department as the lead poisoning prevention coordinator and childbirth educator. She has also worked as a genetic counselor focusing on prenatal counseling.

Christina received her bachelor's degree in biology from Rochester Institute of Technology, and in nursing from Binghamton University. She also received a master's degree in biological anthropology from University at Albany, and a master's degree in genetic counseling from Arcadia University.

Karen CarrollDirector of Education, Crown Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation



Throughout the last 30 years, Karen Carroll has dedicated her career to the study of gerontological nursing. As a gerontologist and a registered professional nurse, Karen has held positions from executive leadership to primary care nursing. Currently the director of education at Crown Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, she is responsible for the growth, development and capacity building of the staff, along with employee health.

As an expert in person directed care philosophies and practice, Karen previously led the Loretto Corporation, upstate's largest long term care organization, through a transformation process moving from a

medical model to the Green House Project model of care. In addition to being a Lean Six Sigma greenbelt, she is a certified Green House Project Educator, Eden Alternative Educator and Eden at Home educator. Karen is often asked to present at conferences on the topic of culture change and leading change. Because of her span and depth of practice, she has earned many accolades both at the local and state level.

In her spare time Karen enjoys boating on the Finger Lakes or exploring small towns across the United States.



Charlotte Crawford

Chief Executive Officer, Lake Plains Community Care Network



Charlotte Crawford has always been devoted to public health, serving as a nurse and paramedic for over 37 years. In her pursuit to spread knowledge of emergency and clinical protocol, Charlotte has been an educator in both volunteer and professional environments. She is committed to improving access to healthcare and health awareness within the community, and this passion lead her to her current place of employment at Lake Plains Community Care Network. After 15 years within the organization, Charlotte was appointed chief executive officer in July of 2015.

She holds master's degrees in both business and nursing from the University of Phoenix.

Kelly DickersonDirector of Community Initiatives, ARA Services



Kelly Dickerson is the director of community initiatives for Allegany Rehabilitation Associates in Wellsville. Kelly oversees the community-based behavioral and mental health programs including health homes, child supportive case management, children and adult crisis services and senior outreach. She also serves as the agency's point person on DSRIP efforts.

Kelly earned a master's degree in integrated marketing communications from St. Bonaventure University, and a bachelor of arts degree in journalism from Shippensburg University. She specializes in new program development and process improvement. Kelly was previously at HomeCare & Hospice, where she helped develop the first rural PACE in the state of New York.

Karen Hall Health Improvement Program Manager, P2 Collaborative



Karen Hall joined the P2 Collaborative in March of 2015 as the program manager for the Population Health Improvement program. Before joining the P2 team, Karen worked in the corporate sector as the employee health coordinator for U.S. Operations at Moog, Inc. Prior to Moog, she was the director of cancer control for the American Cancer Society Eastern Division, based in Amherst, NY.

Karen earned her Bachelor of Science in Public Health Education from Slippery Rock University, a Master of Science in Health Administration from D'Youville College and is currently pursuing her Doctorate in Health Administration from D'Youville College.

Betsy HarnedVice President of External Affairs, Planned Parenthood of Central and Western NY



Elizabeth B. Harned serves as vice president of external affairs for Planned Parenthood of Central and Western New York. She focuses her work on public affairs, communications, strategic initiatives, marketing and sex education.

Betsy is a 1998 graduate of Cornell University and a 2002 graduate, cum laude, of the University of Michigan Law School; she is admitted to practice law in New York State. Betsy currently serves on the Board of Ethics for the City of Buffalo, and is past-president of the Western New York Chapter of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York.

Shannon Holmes

Program Director, The Parkway Center



Shannon Holmes has been the program director of the Parkway Center for three years, where she develops health and wellness opportunities for older adults to remain active, engaged and involved.

Shannon is a graduate of the State University of New York at Oneonta, where she earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education with a minor in special education. In 2013, she participated in the Professional Pathways workshop with the Women's Employment and Resource Center. Shannon is a peer leader in the Chronic Disease Self-Management Education program through Oneida County's Office for the Aging and Continuing Care. She is a certified leader with Tufts University's Stay Young Strong Bones program, which is designed to address specific age-related problems.

Catherine James Chief Executive Officer, Alzheimer's Association of CNY



Catherine James is the chief executive officer of the Alzheimer's Association's CNY Chapter, which provides services to a 14-county area. Cathy joined the chapter in 1996, overseeing the operation of the Kirkpatrick Day Program and was appointed CEO in 2006. She is a longtime advocate for Alzheimer's, eldercare and adult day service issues, and she currently serves on the New York State Coordinating Council for Services Related to Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias.

Cathy received her bachelor's degree in social work from the University of New Hampshire and her Master's in Business Administration from New Hampshire College.

Melissa Jillson

Director, Liberty Resources, Inc.



Melissa Jillson is a licensed master social worker with 12 years of experience working in the field of human services. Melissa received her Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the State University of New York at Cortland, and her master's degree in social work from Syracuse University.

Melissa has worked at Liberty Resources, Inc. since 2004. In her role as director, she has developed and overseen various community-based residential services, including crisis stabilization and peer based services for individuals with complex behavioral health issues. Melissa is responsible for overseeing the operations and development of various housing programs serving individuals with mental health, substance abuse and chronic medical conditions.

Andrea JohnExercise Specialist Supervisor, Seneca Nation Health System



Andrea John is a member of the Seneca Nation of Indians, and resides on the Allegany Territory. Andrea supervises the Exercise Prescription program for the Seneca Nation Health System. While developing individual programs for patients, she plays an active role in her community. Andrea develops physical activity programs for youth, offers mindfulness and yoga classes for all ages, offers strength and balance classes for the older adult population and sits on various committees designed to improve the health of the Seneca people. She believes in the importance and necessity of respectful partnerships to improve all populations, communities and individuals.

Andrea graduated cum laude from the University at Buffalo with a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science.

Daphne Johnson

Chief Administrative Officer, Syracuse Community Health Center



Ms. Daphene Johnson is the chief administrative officer at the Syracuse Community Health Center, Inc. As the chief administrative officer, Daphene serves as the chief strategist and thought leader for the president and CEO. She has responsibility for a myriad of corporate development and strategic management functions including: strategic planning and new business development, collaborative partnership development, fund development, marketing, communications, public relations, and organizational assessment and development. Daphene is responsible for the identification, evaluation and implementation of new growth opportunities, strategic alliances and revenue streams essential for the continued sustainability and viability of Syracuse Community Health Center, Inc.

She earned a bachelor's degree in microbiology from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and a Master of Health Service Administration from the University of Memphis.

Kristin KightSenior Director, Business Development & Population Health, Kaleida Health



Kristin Knight is senior director for population health at Kaleida Health, and has worked in health care specializing in strategic planning, business development, health care management and data analysis. Previously, Kristin worked at Independent Health, Western New York Healthcare Association, as a health care consultant and as a regional health planner at the Health System Agency of Western New York.

She has served on numerous boards, including Leadership Buffalo, UNYTS, YWCA, Community Music School and the Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus. Kristin is a 1992 graduate of Leadership Buffalo, has a Master of Public Health degree from Yale University and a bachelor's degree from Brown University.

Hilary KirkChief Quality Officer, Neighborhood Health Center



Hilary Kirk is the chief quality officer at Neighborhood Health Center. Her work experience includes building organizational capacity, implementing quality improvement programs and population health initiatives with local and federal community health agencies.

Hilary received her undergraduate degree in biology from Wayne State University, and was also a presidential scholar. She received her master's degree from The University of Michigan School of Public Health in 2002.

Her interests in health care lie in restoring health equity to vulnerable communities and optimizing operational capacity to improve health outcomes.

A Detroit native, Hilary has now made Buffalo her home.

Chris KoenigPresident/ Chief Executive Officer, Niagara Lutheran Health System



Chris Koenig became Niagara Lutheran Health Systems president/CEO in April of 2016. Prior to accepting this position, Chris served as vice president of post-acute care for the Erie County Medical Center, where he was responsible for oversight of long-term care, sub-acute care, transitional care, palliative care, rehabilitation, ECMC's internal DSRIP relations and the Medical Rehabilitation Unit.

He earned his Master in Business Administration degree with a concentration in Finance and Health Care Administration from the University at Buffalo, and also has a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from the University at Buffalo. Chris serves as an adjunct professor for the School of Public Health and Health Professions at the University of Buffalo.

Meichle Latham

Director of School-Based Services, Catholic Charities of Buffalo



Meichle Latham values the opportunity to start and expand her 22-year human services career at Catholic Charities of Buffalo, where she is currently director of school-based services. Meichle chairs Catholic Charities' School Services Collaboration team and actively participates in multiple agency and community-facilitated committees, particularly those targeting quality holistic family well-being and safety to foster student educational success.

She obtained her bachelor's degrees in psychology and health and human services, and a master's degree in social work from the University at Buffalo. Meichle has served as an independent consultant with the Kenmore-Tonawanda School District's Family Support Center since 2008.

Julie Lulek
Nurse-Family Partnership Program Administrator, Catholic Health System



Julie Lulek is the program coordinator for Western New York Nurse-Family Partnership, an evidence-based community health program that supports and empowers women to change their families' lives for the better.

Over the last few years, Julie has managed several community initiatives in Buffalo that support women and children. Before returning to Buffalo, she lived in New York City where her work focused on HIV/STD prevention.

Julie received her bachelor's degree in biology from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and her Master in Public Health degree from Hunter College.

Sandra Macfarlane

System Director of Rehabilitation & Occupational Health, Upper Allegheny Health System



Sandy Macfarlane is the system director of rehabilitation and occupational health services at Upper Allegheny Health Systems. Sandy received her bachelor's degree in physical therapy from the University of Pittsburgh, and her doctorate degree from Daemen College.

She has been a long-time member of the American Physical Therapy Association, as well as a member of the Acute Care Section and the Academy of Geriatric Physical Therapy. Sandy is also active in both the New York and Pennsylvania Physical Therapy Associations, where she sits on the membership committee and Legislative Ambassador Committee respectively. She serves on the advisory boards for the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford and Bryant &Stratton College.

Candace MurrayChief Compliance Officer, Catholic Charities of Onondaga



Candace Murray has served as the chief compliance officer of Catholic Charities of Onondaga County and its affiliate, Toomey Residential and Community Services, since 2009. Candace strives to create a culture of compliance that is values-based, led by the top and employee-focused. She previously served as senior planner for Central New York Health Systems Agency and program evaluator for Liberty Resources, Inc.

Candace earned a bachelor's in psychology from Saint Mary's College of California, and her master's in social work from Syracuse University. She is a member of the Health Care Compliance Association and is certified in healthcare compliance. Candace currently serves on the board of directors for the YMCA of Greater Syracuse.

Originally from Oakland, CA, she currently resides in Camillus, NY with her husband and daughter.

Valerie Nowak Clinic Coordinator, Community Concern of WNY



Valerie Nowak is the behavioral health clinic coordinator at Community Concern of WNY. Valerie began working for the agency as a licensed mental health counselor in 2007. She has served as the co-coordinator of the Buffalo-Niagara Chapter of the NY Mental Health Association for the past two years.

Valerie graduated with a Master of Public Administration in Healthcare Administration from Hilbert College in May of 2016, where she was a member of the Kappa Gamma Pi Honor Society. She also received the Research Award for the healthcare administration program for her study on increasing utilization of mental health services through stigma reduction.

Kathryn PagliaroliDirector of Quality & Patient Safety, Oswego Hospital



Kathryn Pagliaroli has served as Oswego Hospital's director of quality and patient safety since 2013.

A registered professional nurse, Katie earned her master's degree in management from Keuka College in 2009, and her bachelor's degree in nursing from Roberts Wesleyan College in 2001.

She is a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives and the Oswego Sunrise Rotary Club. In 2013, Katie was recognized as a "Forty under 40" recipient by Oswego County Business magazine, which honored 40 individuals under the age of 40 who make a positive impact on Oswego County.

She resides in Oswego, New York.

Tracy Reed Operations/Program Director, Hearts and Hands



Tracy Reed is program director for Hearts and Hands. Tracy has a bachelor's degree in journalism from UMass Amherst, and earned a Master's in Communication and Leadership from Canisius College. She has over 15 years' experience in non-profit administration with expertise in resource development, volunteer management, program evaluation and marketing and communications. Tracy manages services for 950 care receivers by 350 volunteers throughout Erie and Niagara County. She is currently working with staff from the United Way and the University at Buffalo to measure the impact of Hearts and Hands on the quality of life for older and disabled Western New Yorkers.

She resides in Hamburg, NY with her husband and two daughters.

Judith ReillyServices Director, Center for Family Life and Recovery, Inc.



Judith Reilly is the services director for the Center for Family Life and Recovery, Inc. Judy's work is focused on building human and community capacity. Known as a fierce competitor, she is a talented mentor, coach and confidant. Judy is passionate about helping others find and use their voice to move initiatives forward, and building a stronger and more supportive community.

Judy has a Bachelor of Science in Education, Recreational Education and Outdoor Education, as well as a Master of Science in Recreation and Outdoor Education from the State University of New York at Cortland. She has been a Rotarian for over a decade. Judy is a bagpiper with the Mohawk Valley Frasers Pipe Band. Her faith guides her in her work and personal life, and is at the core of who she is.

Catherine Roberts

Senior Vice President, Community Action Organization of Erie County



Catherine Roberts is a proven leader in non-profit management, having held the role of senior vice president at the Community Action Organization of Erie County, Inc. for over eight years. Catherine oversees the day-to-day operations and program management functions of one of the largest social service agencies in all of western New York, serving over 36,000 individuals and families on an annual basis.

In 2015, she was awarded the New York State Community Action Association Leadership Award and was recognized for her commitment to the community by the city of Buffalo during Women's History Month. A former Business First Women of Influence honoree, Catherine serves as a board director for the Girl Scouts of WNY, and is

a member of the United Way of Buffalo & Erie County Poverty Coalition of WNY, NFTA Citizens Advisory Committee and WNED Community Advisory Board. Additionally, she is a proud and active member of the Junior League and the Buffalo Chapter of the Links, Inc.

Catherine received her bachelor's degree in business, management and economics from Empire State College.

Shannyn RyanDirector of Senior Services, The Salvation Army



Shannyn Ryan was named the director of senior services for the Salvation Army in Syracuse in October of 2015.

Prior to working for the Salvation Army, Shannyn worked for Crouse Hospital as a clinician, where she specialized in substance abuse treatment. She worked in the methadone clinic at Crouse Hospital for three years, treating individuals with a primary diagnosis of opiate addiction. Prior to this Shannyn had over fifteen years of experience in long-term care in several different capacities, with her last position being the director of social work for a local nursing home.

She has her master of social work from Syracuse University.

Kate SarataExecutive Director, The Service Collaborative of WNY, Inc.



Kate Sarata has been the executive director of The Service Collaborative of WNY since 2011. Kate joined the AmeriCorps VISTA in 2003, and has continued a life of service since. As executive director, Kate leads a staff of 19 and provides guidance and oversight to federal and state grants and national service participants.

Kate earned a bachelor's in political science from the College at Brockport, and a master's in higher education administration from the University at Buffalo. She is a Business First 40 Under 40 recipient, and is also a graduate of Leadership Buffalo and Leadership Niagara. Kate lives on Grand Island with her husband Ben and daughter Lili.

Sheri ScavoneExecutive Director, WNY Women's Foundation



Sheri Scavone is the executive director of the WNY Women's Foundation, an organization dedicated to removing barriers and creating opportunities for girls and women.

Sheri has over 30 years leading and growing organizations. She volunteers on the Board of SEFCU and GLYS WNY as well as numerous community committees.

Sheri has a degree in physical therapy from Russell Sage College, an executive master's in health systems administration from Rochester Institute of Technology and an advanced certificate in palliative care from The Sage Colleges.

She formerly served as director of cancer services for the NYS Department of Health/Centers for Disease Prevention and Control; president/CEO of Gilda's Club Capital Region; chief development officer of Bellevue Women's Hospital; vice president/chief operating officer of WNY Physical & Occupational Therapy and senior administrator of Surgical Oncology at Roswell Park Cancer Institute.

Lynn SheaEarly Childhood Program Director, Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center



Lynn Chavanne Shea is the director of the Early Childhood program at Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center. Lynn is an administrator and speech language pathologist, with over 25 years of experience working with special needs children and their families. She is also an adjunct professor at Canisius College, and a member of the American Speech and Hearing Association, AG Bell and Options Schools International.

Lynn has a bachelor's degree in communicative disorders, and holds a master's in speech language pathology and educational leadership from Canisius College and State University of New York at Geneseo.

During her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family, traveling and is an active member of the Kissing Bridge Ski Patrol.

May Shogan
Director of International Exchanges Department, International Institute of Buffalo



May Shogan joined the International Institute of Buffalo in 1989 as a professionally trained Arabic translator and interpreter. Since 1995, May has held several positions including interpreter and translator, domestic violence advocate, education coordinator, medical advocate, school liaison and employment assistant.

She is currently the director of the international visitors and education department, where she conducts cultural competency and diversity training for educators, students, service providers, health care providers and law enforcement. May also supervises the International Visitors program, which arranges professional itineraries and home stays for international delegations that come to Buffalo through the U.S. Department of State and Congress.

Rebecca Stevens

Director, Lee Gross Anthone Child Advocacy Center,



In June 2016, Rebecca Stevens became the director of the Lee Gross Anthone Child Advocacy Center, leading a multi-disciplinary treatment and investigative approach to child abuse cases. Prior to this current position, Rebecca held various positions in 15 years with Crisis Services providing direct service, community education and volunteer management. Most recently, her role of advocate program supervisor, provided daily oversight and supervision for the 24 hour services of Rape, Domestic Violence, and Elder Abuse Programs, and the New York State Domestic & Sexual Violence Hotline.

Rebecca's educational background includes a bachelor's and a master's in human services administration, both from Buffalo State.

Daniel StrauchChief Executive Officer, Olean Medical Group



Dan Strauch is the chief executive officer of Olean Medical Group. Dan has a bachelor's degree from The College of Wooster, and a Master of Health Administration degree from The Ohio State University.

He is certified as a medical practice executive, and has been active in the Medical Group Management Association. Dan serves on the boards of Southern Tier Health Care System, the Cattaraugus Region Community Foundation and is chairman of the Olean Branch YMCA.

Dan's wife, Carol, works at St. Bonaventure University. They live in Allegany and have two sons in their early 20's.

Daniel Szewc

Long Term Care Coordinator, Erie County Department of Senior Services



Daniel Szewc is the community planning coordinator for the Erie County Department of Senior Services. In his role Dan leads the service delivery teams within the department, and coordinates the efforts of the In-home Long Term Service and Supports Unit with the efforts of the Community Focused Wellness and Nutrition Unit.

He has held a number of positions throughout his 15 years in the department, providing him with experience serving seniors across the continuum of health and wellness.

Dan holds and bachelor's degree in psychology from the University at Buffalo and a Master of Business Administration from Medaille College.

Chantele Thompson

Director of Community Relations and Outreach, Oracle Charter School



Chantele Thompson serves as director of community relations and outreach at Oracle Charter School. A dedicated advocate for her community, Chantele is development director for the New Life Community Economic Development and minister at New Life Restoration Center. She is the founder and director of Eniola Sisters Mentoring Program.

Chantele holds a bachelor's in psychology from Canisius College as well as a Master of Education from Regent University. She is currently working towards her Master of Public Administration at Regent University.

In 2012, Chantele was honored as a WNY Distinguished 30 Under 30 Changemaker, which is an event presented by the organization Capital Change. The award recognizes young dynamic professionals in or from Western New York, who are excelling in their careers and who have demonstrated a level of impact in their field.

Christine Verni Lead Advanced Practice Provider, University Emergency Medicine Services



Christine Verni has been a board certified family nurse practitioner practicing in Emergency Medicine since 2008. Her appointments as advance practice provider training coordinator and emergency medicine research coordinator, in addition to her full time faculty role in the nursing department at D'Youville College, allow her to actively participate in the study and training of advanced practice nursing and the critical role it has in providing competent, cost-effective medical care to the Western New York community.

Chris received her bachelor, master and doctoral degrees from D'Youville College.

Andrea WanatDirector, Behavioral Health Projects, Millennium Collaborative Care



Andrea Wanat is the director of behavioral health for Millennium Collaborative Care, and is the former executive director of the Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse. Andrea has dedicated her 20-year career to the addictions field.

As a community leader, she has served as chair of the WNY Chemical Dependency Consortium, treasurer of United Way's Agency Executives Association, is a NYS Addiction Advisory Panel member and co-chair of the NYS Prevention Agenda's substance abuse committee.

Andrea holds a master's degree in community psychology and substance abuse counseling, has certificates in administrative and financial management and has a prevention professional credential and a group fitness certification.

Donna White

Director of Inpatient Rehabilitation Services & Occupational Therapy Supervisor, The Centers at St. Camillus



Donna White is an occupational therapist and is the director of inpatient rehab services at The Centers at St. Camillus, where she is responsible for providing operational oversight to therapists and therapy support services provided to sub-acute and continuing care rehabilitation patients.

Prior to her supervisory responsibilities, Donna worked in a variety of patient care settings at Upstate Medical University, Connections-Family Centered Therapies and St. Camillus. She earned her associate's degree in occupational therapy from Maria Regina College in 1986, followed by a Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy from Misericordia University in 1991.

Donna is a proud parent of her three sons Jacob, Daniel and Samuel.