

Health Leadership Fellows, Class of 2018-2020

Marnie Annese

Program Officer, Health Foundation for Western and Central New York



Marnie joined the Health Foundation of Central and Western New York in 2018 as a program officer. She brings more than 15 years of experience working with organizations serving youth, focused across Central New York.

Her passion is assisting community-based organizations in quality improvement. Prior to joining the Foundation, Marnie served as project coordinator for the Syracuse/Onondaga Youth Bureau where she directed a variety of projects, including Say Yes to Education Program Assessment Collaboration, the Youth Development Training Institute and the Onondaga County Runaway and Homeless Youth Advisory Committee.

Marnie has a master's degree in public health from the State University of New York Upstate Medical University. In her free time, she enjoys the opportunity to be outdoors cross country skiing, kayaking, cycling and hiking.

Tim Boling

Chief Executive Officer, Compeer International



Tim Boling is the chief executive officer of Compeer International, a mental health agency that has more than 52 affiliates in four countries and eight states.

He earned his bachelor's degree in business management from Buffalo State College. Tim is also a graduate of the Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership and the Harvard Business School Club of Buffalo for Non-profits, and has served on numerous boards in WNY.

Outside of his professional endeavors, Tim is a father of two boys.

Mary Carney

Population Health Coordinator, HealtheConnections



Mary Carney works with the population health improvement team at HealtheConnections, leading regional chronic disease prevention initiatives and coordinating grants focused on making health opportunities more inclusive of people with disabilities.

She has more than 15 years of experience working to improve public health. Mary previously worked at the Onondaga County Health Department in Syracuse, the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle and the New York Public Interest Research Group in Buffalo.

Mary earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from SUNY Geneseo and a master's in public health from New Mexico State University. She is originally from Utica, NY.

Noelle Carter

President and Chief Administrative Officer, Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Buffalo



Noelle Carter is the president and CAO of Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Buffalo (CCCS), a non-profit credit counseling agency providing financial education to consumers.

Since joining CCCS in 2008, Noelle has served in numerous roles, including the director of counseling. Her accomplishments range from creating and implementing the region's first student loan counseling program to leading the expansion of the agency's foreclosure prevention counseling program to management oversight of the agency's first VITA free tax prep program in Niagara County.

Noelle attended Canisius College and obtained her bachelor's of arts degree in psychology.

Leanna Cleveland

Rural Health Network Coordinator, Oswego County Opportunities



Leanna Cleveland is a rural health network coordinator at Oswego County Opportunities and has been with the agency for nine years. She has experience with case management, supervision, working with vulnerable populations and grant management.

Since appointed to her current position, Leanna has started to lead the RHNOC through a restructure that will enable the development of an integrated service delivery system in Oswego County. As a result of her collaboration between HealthConnections, administrator of the Regional Health Information Organization, and partner organizations of the RHNOC, a bi-directional referral platform for locally offered evidence-based programming has been developed and implemented.

Chuck Colston

Program Officer, The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation



Chuck Colston joined The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation in 2009 and is currently a program officer.

His previous career experience includes serving as a project manager at a community housing development agency. Chuck also serves on the board of Housing Opportunities Made Equal, a fair housing organization in Buffalo.

Chuck completed both his bachelor's degree in environmental design and master's in urban planning at the State University of New York at Buffalo. In his free time, Chuck enjoys playing basketball and traveling with his wife and two boys.

Paula Conti

Director of Clinical Transformation, Catholic Medical Partners



Paula Conti is the director of clinical transformation at Catholic Medical Partners, where she leads a team that provides transformation support to physician practices.

After beginning her health care career in Tampa, FL, Paula's 25 years of experience has spanned the areas of compliance, home health care, strategic planning, health information technology and clinical transformation.

Paula earned her bachelor's degree in business from the State University of New York at Buffalo. In 2013, she returned to her alma mater to obtain her master's in industrial engineering. Paula uses her love of problem solving to help improve the delivery of health care in WNY.

Tara Costello

Vice President of Behavioral Health Services, Upstate Cerebral Palsy



Tara Costello is the vice president of the behavioral health service division at Upstate Cerebral Palsy. She has been with the organization for four years.

In her role, Tara has administrative oversight for the community based behavioral health division, which includes OMH community residences, supported housing and treatment apartment programs, Article 31 outpatient mental health clinics and the homeless case management team.

Tara received her bachelor's of arts in psychology from Utica College in 1999. She has also obtained her Certified Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Credential (CASAC) and has pursued a master's in social work at the University at Albany.

Shoshone Dentice

Executive Director of Community Relations, The GreenFields Continuing Care Community



Shoshone Dentice is the executive director of community relations at GreenFields Continuing Care Community in Lancaster, NY.

In her role, she oversees business development, community partnerships, program development and community events. Shoshone also serves on the Trocaire College Russell J. Salvatore School of Hospitality Board of Advisors, the Western New York Long-Term Care Council and the Network in Aging Education Committee.

Shoshone holds a bachelor's of science in health services management and a master's in health services administration. In addition, she has earned an advanced certificate in clinical research, been published in *The Journal of Women's Health* and was recently selected to receive the 2018 Distinguished Young Alumni Award from D'Youville College.

M. DeAnna Eason

Executive Director, Housing Opportunities Made Equal, Inc.



M. DeAnna Eason is the executive director of Housing Opportunities Made Equal, Inc. (HOME), a civil rights agency that strives to ensure diversity and equal rights in housing for all people through advocacy, education and outreach.

Her career experience includes heading fair housing investigations for the NYS Attorney General's Office, the National Fair Housing Alliance and NYS Housing and Community Renewal.

DeAnna earned her bachelor's degree in psychology from the State University of New York at Buffalo and her master's in mental health counseling from Medaille College. She is an active member of Gethsemane Full Gospel Church, and enjoys traveling with her family and singing.

Abdirahman Farah

Community Educator and Organizer



Abdirahman Farah is a community educator, organizer and activist focusing on cultural sensitivity and access to quality health care improvement in the immigrant and refugee communities.

In Erie County, he helped initiate and awarded Refugee Health Assessment (RHA) New York State contracts for two FQHC health care centers. For his various community efforts, Abdirahman has been awarded the University at Buffalo’s CSTEP Outstanding Alumni GEM Award as well as the 2010 City of Buffalo Mayor’s 14th Annual Humanity Service Award.

Abdirahman holds a bachelor’s degree in pre-med psychology and international relations from the State University of New York at Buffalo and is working on his master’s in public administration at SUNY Buffalo State.

Ken Gholston

Director of Grants and Contracts, Cazenovia Recovery Systems



In his role as director of grants and contracts for Cazenovia Recovery Systems, Ken Gholston oversees the supported housing program, which provides assistance to homeless individuals with a substance use disorder.

Previously, Ken spent over a decade at Housing Opportunities Made Equal, managing an expansion of the Greater Buffalo Community Housing Center, a program dedicated to increasing housing opportunities for low-income residents of the region. He is also the current board chair of the Homeless Alliance of Western New York.

Ken holds a master’s degree in history from the State University of New York at Buffalo. He resides in North Buffalo with his family.

G. Joseph Gross

Associate Executive Director of Clinical Services and Consumer Directed Personal Services,



G. Joseph Gross is the associate executive director of clinical services and consumer directed personal services (CDPS) at AccessCNY (formerly Enable) in Syracuse, NY.

In his role, Joe oversees the outpatient clinic, featuring long-term therapies, as well as the CDPS home care program. He began his career at acute care hospitals in Ithaca and Syracuse.

Joe is a native of Baltimore, MD. He settled in Syracuse after completing a master's in public administration from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. Prior to that, he earned his bachelor's degree in biology from Earlham College in Richmond, IN.

Jacqueline Hall

Executive Director, Erie County Department of Social Services Family Independence



Jacqueline Hall, LMSW is the executive director for Erie County's Department of Social Services Family Independence. Her current responsibilities includes the Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Employment and Daycare Divisions.

Through her work, Jacqueline takes pride in delivering quality programs that meet the needs of diverse low-income populations. She resolves high-priority operating situations that involve the interpretation of departmental policies. Jacqueline also evaluates division programs resulting from state mandates or other planning initiatives.

Jacqueline holds a master's degree in social work from the State University of New York at Buffalo. In her personal life, she is a loving and devoted mother and wife.

Maya Hu-Morabito

Assistant Director, NYSTART



Maya Hu-Morabito is the assistant director of NYSTART, a crisis prevention and intervention program for individuals with developmental disabilities and coexisting mental or behavioral health concerns.

Her career began as a direct support professional, and she has since worked in the human services field for over a decade. Maya also sits on the Erie County Community Services Board. All of these experiences have given her a deep appreciation for the positive outcomes from people caring about other people.

To enhance her knowledge, Maya pursued her master's degree in disability studies through the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Lori Klivak

Director of Senior Services, InterFaith Works



Lori Klivak is the director of senior services at InterFaith Works, where she leads programming that addresses issues of isolation and loneliness in aging.

Through outreach, education and community building, she advocates for the needs of vulnerable older adults in Central New York so that people from diverse races, religions and life experiences may continue to age with dignity.

Lori has a PhD in cultural anthropology, along with 10 years of experience in international research, qualitative methodology, and education. Her research in Oaxaca, Mexico focused on community development, social inequality, identity and organized change.

Anna Lau

Director of Clinical Services, Planned Parenthood of Central & Western New York



Anna Lau is the director of clinical services for Planned Parenthood of Central & Western New York, which provides care at 10 health centers and a mobile outreach unit.

She is a women's health nurse practitioner and has worked for Planned Parenthood since 2010. Prior to that she worked for a small county health department in Florida.

Anna earned her bachelor's of science in nursing from McGill University in Montreal, and master's in nursing from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Kimberly Luce

Vice President of School-based Services, BestSelf Behavioral Health



Kimberly is the vice president of school-based services for BestSelf Behavioral Health. In her role, she oversees multiple school-based prevention and intervention programs aimed at improving social emotional skills, building protective factors and promoting success in home, school and community for children and their families.

Over the course of her 20-plus-year career, she has gained experience in social work, positive youth development and human service administration.

Kimberly earned her master's degree in human services administration at SUNY Buffalo State. She is a board member of the New York State Network for Youth Success and a National Afterschool Association

Leading with Emotional Intelligence Fellow.

Kexin Ma

Director of Federal Programs, Homeless Alliance of WNY



Kexin Ma is the director of federal programs at the Homeless Alliance of WNY. She oversees a database that records homeless services and client information, along with a \$12 million grant that funds all the homeless housing programs.

In her role, Kexin coordinates services among providers, funders and other partners for the goal of ending homelessness in Western New York. In 2015, she was honored at the Business First 30 Under 30 awards for her outstanding contributions to her profession and the community.

Kexin holds a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture from China Agriculture University and a master's in urban planning from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Merlin Marrain

Director of Health Services, Syracuse Model Neighborhood Facility



Merlin Marrain is the director of health services at Syracuse Model Neighborhood Facility, and has worked in health care for over 18 years, both locally and internationally.

She currently serves as an 1199 SEIU Union Delegate at Crouse Hospital. Her research thesis, "Coping Strategies Among Persons with Non-Communicable Chronic Diseases" was published in the American Journal of Epidemiology.

Merlin is a native of Trinidad and Tobago, a wife and mother of three children. She obtained her undergraduate degree from the University of the West Indies in human ecology, specializing in nutrition and dietetics. She also holds a master's degree in public health from Grand Canyon University.

Patricia M. McGrath

Supervising Attorney, Neighborhood Legal Services



Patricia M. McGrath is a supervising attorney for the family unit at Neighborhood Legal Services (NLS) in Buffalo and Niagara Falls.

A graduate of Boston College and Suffolk University Law School, Patricia has practiced in several different settings, including in-house corporate, private law firm and self-employed, before joining NLS. She has also has taught business law, ethics and integrative negotiation to employee groups and in college settings.

Patricia is a trained mediator, the current president of the Bar Association of Niagara County, and active in several other community organizations.

April Miles

Director of Clinical Services, East Hill Family Medical, Inc.



April Miles serves as director of clinical services for East Hill Family Medical, Inc., a federally qualified health center located in Auburn, NY that strives to offer exceptional medical and dental care to individuals living in Cayuga and surrounding counties.

With 20 years of experience in the health care industry, she has held positions in nursing, quality improvement and operations within long-term care, hospital and primary care settings.

April received her bachelor’s in health services administration with a minor in gerontology from Ithaca College, and went on to earn her master’s in health administration from Cornell University.

Steve Miller

Director, Buffalo Hearing & Speech Center



Steve Miller is the director of Buffalo Hearing & Speech Center and a licensed speech-language pathologist with 14 years of experience working in the field of human services.

In his current role, he is intimately involved in strategic planning, budgeting, operations and the oversight of contracted services with partner organizations throughout the community. He also works to cultivate continuous quality improvement of BHSC's specialized programs.

Steve received his bachelor's of science in communication disorders and sciences as well as his master's in speech-language pathology from the State University of New York at Fredonia.

Darren Penoyer

Senior Program Officer, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo



Darren Penoyer is a senior program officer at the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, where oversees several processes equating to over \$2.3 million in grant funding. He has been with the Foundation in various grant management positions since 2008.

Earlier in his career, he worked in the for-profit and non-profit sectors in healthcare, affordable housing and historic preservation.

Darren holds a bachelor's in mass communication/public relations from Mansfield University of Pennsylvania and a master's in student personnel administration from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Originally from Clearfield, PA, Darren relocated to Buffalo in 2001.

Michael Prutsman

Executive Director of the Council on Addiction Recovery Services



Michael Prutsman is currently the executive director of the Council on Addiction Recovery Services (CAREs), a non-profit organization based in Olean, NY that provides services in alcohol and substance abuse prevention, treatment and recovery. He joined CAREs in 1997.

Over the course of his career, Michael has worked in prevention, compliance, quality improvement, management and administration.

Michael holds a master's degree in labor and policy studies with a concentration in human resources management from Empire State College. He earned his bachelor's degree in history/secondary education from the State University of New York at Geneseo.

Molly Ranahan

Urban Planner and Evaluator, CCNY Inc



Molly Ranahan, PhD, is an urban planner and evaluator at CCNY Inc. Her role involves partnering with community-based organizations, behavioral health agencies and government agencies to lead program evaluations and quality improvement.

She has conducted community-based research in Western New York for ten years and actively collaborates with the Silver Pride Project, a peer group designed by LGBT seniors, and the Age Friendly Erie County initiative, a network of residents and organizations working to create an inclusive community.

Molly has earned three degrees at the State University of New York at Buffalo: bachelor's in environmental design, master's in urban planning, and PhD in urban planning and regional planning. She is now an adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at her alma mater.

Monica Richardson

Professional Development and Training Team Leader, Prevention Network



Monica Richardson is the professional development and training team leader for Prevention Network in Syracuse. She has spent her career helping children and families, with the past 10 years focused on prevention-based behavioral health services.

Majoring in psychology, Monica earned her bachelor’s degree from Xavier University of Louisiana, and then a master’s from Long Island University. She currently serves as vice president of the NYS Impaired Driver Directors’ Association and is a certified adult mental health first aid trainer.

Monica is passionate about equipping individuals with knowledge and skills necessary to remove barriers, which impede health, wellness and personal growth.

Bonnie Sloma

Senior Vice President, People Inc.



Bonnie Sloma is a senior vice president at People Inc., a not-for-profit health and human services agency providing programs and services to 12,500 seniors and individuals with special needs.

Prior to joining People Inc., Bonnie was the vice president of ambulatory and diagnostic services at Erie County Medical Center. She has also held the positions of vice president of Heritage Health Care Group, LLC and vice president of clinical services/DON at Our Lady of Peace Nursing Care Residence.

Bonnie graduated from Niagara University with a bachelor’s degree in nursing, and has served on the Niagara County Community College Board of Trustees since 2008.

Ellen Somers

Assistant Director, Syracuse Jewish Family Service



Ellen Somers, MA, LMHC, is the assistant director of Syracuse Jewish Family Service. She has worked with older adults and their family members for over 20 years in a variety of settings, including adult day programs, assisted living, skilled nursing care and in-home. Her areas of interest span cognitive health, mental health and holistic wellness.

Ellen has a master’s degree in clinical psychology from West Virginia University, a graduate certificate in gerontology from the University of Utah and is a NYS Licensed Mental Health Counselor.

Anne Spisiak

Executive Director, Cantalician Center



Anne Spisiak serves as the executive director of Cantalician Center in Western New York. She joined the agency in 2009 and has held her current role since 2015.

She began working with people with disabilities in 1986. Her career path has included the Model Transition Program at the University at Buffalo and The Arc, Erie. She enjoys working in the human service industry and is continually inspired by each person’s determination to succeed.

Ann studied psychology at the the State University of New York at Buffalo and graduated from the University at Buffalo School of Management’s Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership.

Diane Ward

Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, Herkimer County Public Health



Diane Ward is a registered nurse and the emergency preparedness coordinator for Herkimer County Public Health. In her current role she is working to reestablish the Herkimer County Local Emergency Planning Committee to ensure an all-hazards community approach to emergency planning and coordination.

During her public health career, she has been a case manager for home care patients, case manager in the prenatal care assistance program, immunization coordinator and communicable disease and TB program coordinator.

Diane earned her associate's degree from Mohawk Valley Community College. She is active in her community as a volunteer firefighter, currently holding the position of treasurer and lieutenant.

Danise C. Wilson

Executive Director, Erie Niagara AHEC



Danise C. Wilson, MPH is the executive director of Erie Niagara AHEC, a health workforce initiative focused on increasing the diversity of health professionals in underserved communities.

Through her personal and professional service, Danise has demonstrated a continued commitment to her family, community and profession. She has dedicated her life to promoting and creating educational and career opportunities for underrepresented populations.

Danise is a lifelong resident of Buffalo, NY. She attended Daemen College and the State University of New York at Buffalo School of Public Health and Health Professions for her undergraduate and graduate degrees. She is a busy wife and mother of five children, and an active participant in their education. Through advocating for her children, Danise has experienced first-hand the disparities faced by underrepresented and minority communities within the educational system.