

Rural Matters

Table of Contents

In this issue

[It's National Rural Health Day](#)
[Rural Health Award Recipients](#)
[Northern Broome CARES Celebrates National Rural Health Day](#)
[Healthy Living Challenge](#)
[Getting Outside Boosts Mood and Well-Being](#)
[Food & Health Network Thanks School Food Service Staff](#)
[Rideshare - One of the Most Undervalued Transportation Resources](#)
[Community Health Services Thanks Team and Partners](#)
[Rural Broome Counts Update](#)
[Rural Health Service Corps](#)
[News You Can Use](#)
[Giving Tuesday is December 1st](#)

It's National Rural Health Day



An estimated 57 million people - nearly one in five Americans - live in rural and frontier communities throughout the United States. These small towns, farming communities and frontier areas are wonderful places to live and work; they are places where neighbors know each other and work together. These communities also face unique healthcare needs including accessibility issues, a lack of healthcare providers, and the needs of an aging population suffering from a greater number of chronic conditions. Join us as we celebrate the 10th Anniversary of National Rural Health Day and highlight the ways we and others work to advance the health and well-being of rural people and communities.

We've announced our first annual Rural Health Awards. Please join us in honoring Dr. James Skiff, Diane Albrecht, Kathryn Connerton, and the Community Foundation for South Central New York.

Rural Health Award Recipients

2020 Rural Health Practitioner - Dr. James Skiff



Dr. James Skiff has been a rural primary care physician for the past 32 years. He attended medical school at The Albany College of Medicine and did his Internship and Residency at UHS Wilson Hospital. Dr. Skiff practiced medicine at UHS Candor Primary Care for many years before helping to build an active practice at UHS Newark Valley Primary Care, where he currently provides care. He is an active member of the Care Compass Network Primary Care Advisory Committee and has served on the

Rural Health Network Board of Directors through multiple terms over the past twenty years. Jack Salo, Rural Health Network Executive Director, said, *"Dr. Skiff has been our longest serving and most engaged rural health practitioner during that time. There are several qualities that have distinguished Dr. Skiff's board service, including his counsel and helpful questions as new programs have been considered and implemented. We extend our deep appreciation to Dr. Skiff for his many years of service to the residents of Tioga County and the Rural Health Network."*



2020 Rural Health Leader - Diane Albrecht

Diane Albrecht is a founding Board Member of the Network, serving on the Board of Directors from the Network's start in 1998 through 2006, including serving as Board President for two years. Since that time, Diane has continued to provide extraordinary leadership to improve the health and well-being of rural people and communities. She was the primary organizer and lead volunteer for Growing Health Conferences which were important to the development of many local and regional food & health initiatives, including Rural Health Network's Food & Health Network program, where Diane has served as a lead volunteer since its inception.

Diane was the lead researcher and co-author of the first Regional Food System Assessment for South Central NY in 2011. Through that process she mentored multiple AmeriCorps Members serving with the Rural Health Network. She followed up with a second Regional Food Assessment in 2012 and an update in

2014.
Most



recently, she suggested and then led an important effort to support the Rural Health Network Capital Campaign through a "Past Presidents and Board Member Challenge." Diane hosted a kickoff reception at our new 455 Court Street facility in October 2019. Through her efforts, more than \$13,000 has been raised or pledged in support of the Capital Campaign.

2020 Rural Health Partner - Kathryn Connerton



Since returning to Binghamton to serve as CEO of Ascension, Lourdes in 2014, Kathryn (Kathy) Connerton has been a tireless advocate for integrating the work of community organizations with healthcare providers to address the full range of health and health related needs of our most vulnerable residents. In both her capacity as CEO of Lourdes Hospital and Chair of the Care Compass Network Board of Directors, Ms. Connerton has consistently delivered the message that improved health outcomes cannot be achieved without partnership with community organizations to ensure that educational and economic opportunity, safe-affordable housing, access to nutritious food, transportation and other essential services are available to those in need.

Executive Director Jack Salo said, *"Kathy Connerton has been a true partner and pioneer in exploring what is possible when community organizations and healthcare providers work together to improve health. In a demonstration of partnership, Kathy supported Rural Health Network's Northern Broome CARES Program by providing affordable services of a Lourdes Nurse Navigator to support the health needs of older Northern Broome residents."*

2020 Rural Health Champion - Community Foundation for South Central New York



Exemplary philanthropic vision and practice is a deserving description of the Community Foundation for South Central New York. The foundation staff includes Diane Brown, Executive Director; Tina Barber, Program Officer; Darlene M. Cempa, Finance Director; and Stacy Mastrogiacomo, Administrative Assistant. Rural Health Network Executive Director Jack Salo said, *"In recognizing the Community Foundation of SCNY as our 2020 Rural Health Champion we extend our appreciation for the sensitivity that foundation policies and practices have for the limited capacity of small and rural organizations to prepare and complete grant funding applications. The consistent engagement of foundation staff in even the most remote and smallest communities in their service area demonstrates a deep commitment to rural needs."*

Constantly working to understand the unique needs of both rural and urban communities in their service area and responding with relevant and appropriate philanthropic support are trademarks of the Community Foundation for SCNY.

All four honorees are truly deserving of our gratitude for all that they do to advance the health and well-being of rural people and communities. Please join

us in expressing thanks for their contributions to rural health.



Northern Broome CARES Celebrates National Rural Health Day

Northern Broome CARES is celebrating National Rural Health Day in a big way today! Mindy Alexander, Community Health Worker, and Sue DiMascio, Committee Chairperson, have arranged for the gracious local restaurants in town to provide lunch to all the very deserving local health care providers in the Lisle & Triangle area. Binghamton University MSW Interns, Sarah Calerdone and Christina Bruno have been busy working with the Whitney Point School District to incorporate the students with some Rural Health Day coloring pages and writing projects as well. Community members were challenged to skip the sweets and opt for vegetables, to go for a walk, or volunteer in any capacity to make the community healthier. This is an opportunity for the community to celebrate the "Power of Rural" while bringing light to the unique healthcare related challenges that rural citizens face, while showcasing and addressing those challenges with community members.



Healthy Living Challenge

In honor of National Rural Health Day, we're encouraging everyone to adopt one or more new healthy habits. Over the next four weeks, we will share tips related to Lifestyle, Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Learning on our [Facebook](#) page. Set your notifications to "All Posts" if you want to be sure to see all the tips.

Healthy Challenge
November 19-December 17

RURAL HEALTH NETWORK
Serving South Central New York



LIFESTYLE	PRACTICE BREATHING EXERCISES	GET THE RECOMMENDED 6-8 HOURS OF SLEEP	EXPLORE A NEW HOBBY
EXERCISE	PRACTICE YOGA FOR 30 MINUTES	TAKE THE STAIRS INSTEAD OF THE ELEVATOR	WALK OR BIKE TO WORK
NUTRITION	TAKE HOMEMADE FOOD FOR LUNCH	REPLACE ONE SWEET SNACK WITH A PIECE OF FRUIT	LEARN HOW TO COOK WITH HEALTHIER INGREDIENTS
LEARNING	PLANT A TREE	LEARN COLD WEATHER GARDENING TIPS	TEACH YOUR KIDS HOW TO MAKE A MEAL

Getting Outside Boosts Mood & Well-Being

Ivo Kennedy, Community Health Education Intern

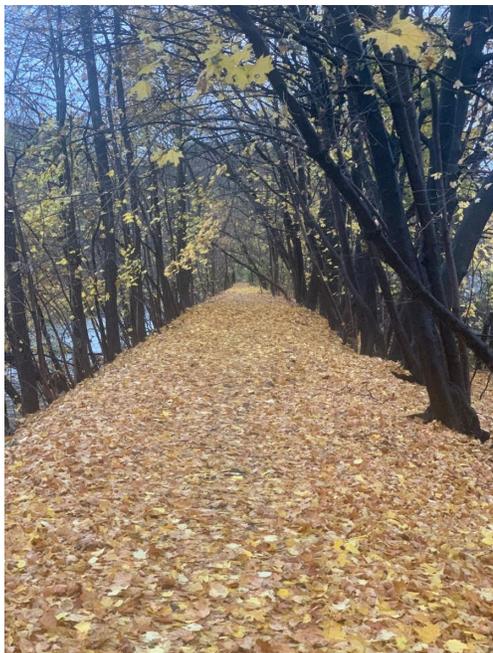


Photo Credit: Haley Rein Kresock, AmeriCorps Alum

As temperatures drop and winter weather rolls in, it may be tempting to hunker down inside and do our best impressions of a hibernating bear; however, this sedentary behavior won't keep us healthy. Emerging research cited by National Geographic, Harvard Health, and health departments across the country stress the importance of regular outdoor activity on maintaining physical and mental health.

Research published recently in the journal **'Nature'** suggests that spending at least 2 hours per week outside in natural settings significantly boosts mood and well-being. Getting outside gives us the chance to soak up whatever sunlight we can, stimulating vitamin D production and keeping the wintertime blues at bay. Another

study published by the Journal of Aging and Health indicates that regular

outdoor activity is associated with better sleep, lower rates of chronic joint pain and depression, and better self-ratings of overall wellbeing among elderly individuals. Research has even shown that regular exposure to cold ambient temperatures can reduce white fat - too much of which can lead to type 2 diabetes and obesity - and increase levels of healthier brown fat, which we actively burn to maintain body temperature.

Still not convinced? The [CDC](#) and many health departments across the country have encouraged responsible outdoor activity to mitigate the risk of transmitting wintertime flus and illnesses. Amidst the current pandemic, it might feel like staying indoors is your best chance at reducing transmission, but poorly ventilated indoor spaces are highly conducive to spreading disease. This winter, consider engaging in 'Friluftsliv', a commonly practiced lifestyle in Norway (and very impressive conversation starter) which translates to "open air living". Bundle up, leave the phone at home and get moving. Go for a walk in the park, build a snowman with your kids, or get into bird watching: chances are you'll feel less stressed and cooped up.

Our region has an abundance of opportunities for outdoor recreation. Visit this [outdoor resource dashboard](#) for ideas on where to visit next.



The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges for us all throughout the past year. This is particularly true for school food service staff who have continued offering meals to students and their families despite many new circumstances such as new health and safety protocols and changing school environments while ensuring their own wellbeing. As school districts navigate between in-person, hybrid, and fully remote instruction, school food service staff have continued to adapt and find ways to make and distribute meals to students throughout the community.

We thank them for their commitment to feeding young people during such a challenging time and hope you view [this short video](#) of our appreciation for the work they do!

Rideshare: One of the Most Undervalued Transportation Resources

Katie McDonald Blaine - Getthere Transportation to Employment Coordinator



Photo Credit: Katie McDonald Blaine

Rideshare simply means sharing rides in a motor vehicle with other individuals, and includes carpooling and vanpooling. Individuals utilizing rideshare are typically traveling to the same destination as the driver, who does not make a profit. Riders chip in for the cost of the trip: gas and parking or tolls, if needed. Rideshare participants may take turns driving and/or riding, but that isn't always the case. Many people that participant in rideshare do not own their own vehicle, are unable to drive, or live in a one vehicle household. However, individuals that live in a two vehicle household can also benefit from rideshare.

Rideshare saves money, builds community, and helps the environment. Many individuals are not able to afford the cost to own and maintain a vehicle. According to AAA, it costs on average \$773.50 per month or \$9,282 a year to own a vehicle. For those that own a vehicle, rideshare saves on the cost of gas and reduces the number of miles their vehicle accumulates.

Community is at the heart of rideshare. Ridesharing provides an opportunity to get to know fellow drivers and riders, which can help build and strengthen social support and ward off isolation and loneliness. Rideshare has the power to bring friends, neighbors, and strangers together in one vehicle. Previous relationships can be strengthened while new relationships are formed.

Ridesharing also helps our environment by getting single occupancy vehicles off of the road, which directly impacts greenhouse gas emission. Transportation is the largest producer of greenhouse gases with light duty vehicles, which emits about 4.6 metric tons of per year, topping all other modes of transportation.

Fortunately, considering the benefits, rideshare arrangements are fairly easy to organize and consist of determining the purpose of the car or vanpool, recruiting members, and setting guidelines. Creative ways to incorporate rideshare into your life include transportation to a job, kid's events, and the grocery store, mall or shopping center.

Getthere's Transportation to Employment Program (TEP) is working to promote rideshare in south central New York. TEP utilizes rideshare as a means to remove transportation as a barrier to employment so that individuals are able to obtain and maintain a stable, long-term job.

TEP promotes and encourages rideshare in the voucher program, which provides short-term transportation assistance to individuals unable to afford the

initial cost of transportation to work by providing fuel cards that cover the cost of gas. In addition, TEP owns commuter vehicles for the purpose of vanpooling, which that are able to transport employee's to-and-from work as an alternative form of transportation.

Many TEP participants have benefitted from rideshare, typically in the form of a carpool. Carpooling with co-workers allowed one individual assigned to be at work earlier than the first BC Transit bus made its rounds to keep his job. While he was able to take the bus home initially, when mandatory overtime was assigned he was able to catch a ride with a different co-worker. This individual has now been employed for well over 90 days with a long-term, stable job, which would not have been possible without two different carpool arrangements. Even during a pandemic, it is possible to establish safe rideshare arrangements.



1-855-373-4040

Community Health Services Thanks our Team and Partners

Pamela Guth - Director of Community Health Services

As Rural Health Network celebrates National Rural Health Day, our Community Health Services Program acknowledges the outstanding innovative efforts of our Community Health Workers.

Their collective 2020 impact on the health and well-being of Delaware and Broome County residents during a pandemic is greatly appreciated! In 2020, Rural Health Network received funding support from Care Compass Network NYS DSRIP Medicaid Redesign and NYS Health Foundation for our Community Health Workers (CHW) to serve Medicaid or Medicare members respectively.

Community Health Workers strive to support clients in reducing avoidable emergency utilizations, hospital readmissions, or increasing time between episodes of high cost care. Depending upon the assigned target population and corresponding care site, from January to October 2020 CHW interventions included:

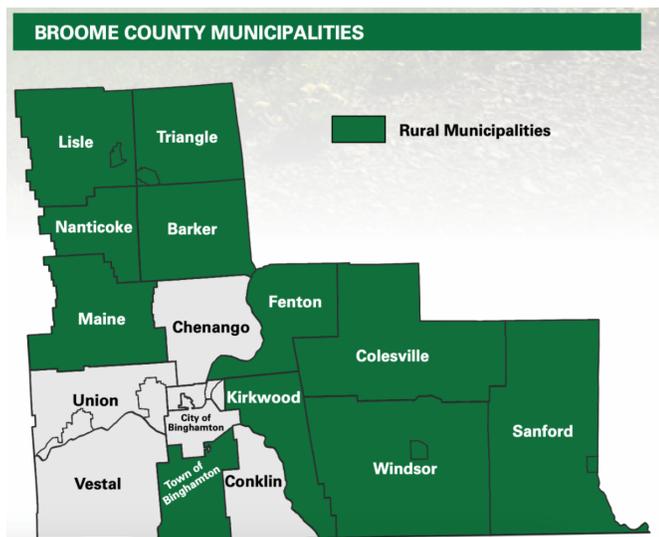
- Social Determinants of Health screening and referral to appropriate clinical and nonclinical services
- Transportation arrangements for follow up clinical appointments and access to: prescriptions, food, housing, and public benefits
- Fruit and Vegetable Prescription enrollment to improve cardiovascular health, blood sugar levels, and BMI.
- Insignia Health Patient Activation Measure Survey to assess client's knowledge, skill and confidence to be their own health advocate. Evidence based Coaching for Activation tools used for person-centered care planning with standardized approach to goal setting and action steps.
- Health coaching education and advocacy following Care Compass Network Clinical Guidelines established for Hospital Care Transitions and Patient Community Navigation Projects

- Eric Coleman evidence based model of 30 day care transition from hospital to home (bedside visit, home visit post discharge, follow up phone calls at 7/14/21 days post discharge and a written summary to the client's primary care physician at 30 days after discharge).
- Home Visit to review patient care plans or hospital discharge plan instructions, medication list adherence, symptoms, and chronic disease self- management skills
- Follow up calls with Medicaid Health Homes or Medicare Managed Care Plans: enrollers, customer service staff, or long term care managers
- Weekly case conferencing with care collaboration team members

During 2020, our team worked directly with more than 315 clients and continues to support 58 clients post project. We are thankful to those who help fund this work and to our healthcare partners, particularly Lourdes Primary Care Clinic at 303 Main Street in Binghamton and UHS Delaware Valley Hospital in Walton.

Rural Broome Counts Update

Emma Nalin - Social Determinants of Health Project Coordinator



This Fall, Rural Health Network interns Cindy Courtney and Max Goldfarb completed a limited update of the 2015 Rural Broome Counts assessment, which described demographic trends and quality of life measures in Broome County's eleven rural municipalities. The update uses data from the American Community Survey 2014-2018. In addition, the team documented some of the

ways that rural communities have changed and adapted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the [2015 report](#):

- Rural Broome continues to age, with the population age 65 and older growing from about 16% to 19%.
- Uninsured rates under age 65 dropped from 14% to just 4%.
- The number of facilities providing primary care, mental health care, and dental care all decreased - a worrying trend for rural health care access.
- While unemployment in Rural Broome decreased between 2015 and 2018, we know that there has been record unemployment across America in 2020. Data on COVID-19's economic impact on Rural Broome is not yet available.

Changes documented during COVID-19 include:

- Senior Centers closed their facilities and moved to a meals-to-go model.
- Local restaurants provided free meals to school-aged children.
- Health care facilities increased their remote and telehealth services.

- Community organizations such as libraries adopted new measures to continue operations, including the quarantine of borrowed materials.

Future plans for the Rural Broome Counts report include adding data from the 2020 Census, documenting the full impact of the pandemic, exploring other measures of community life such as Civic Participation and Tourism, and updating the supplemental materials on Housing, Household Budgets, and Transportation.

Rural Health Service Corps

Since 2007 our Rural Health Service Corps Program has enrolled 441 AmeriCorps and VISTA national service members to provide programming or capacity building assistance through more than 46 host sites in our region. If you know someone interested in national service opportunities, share our [current openings](#) or contact [Haley Desilet](#).



News You Can Use

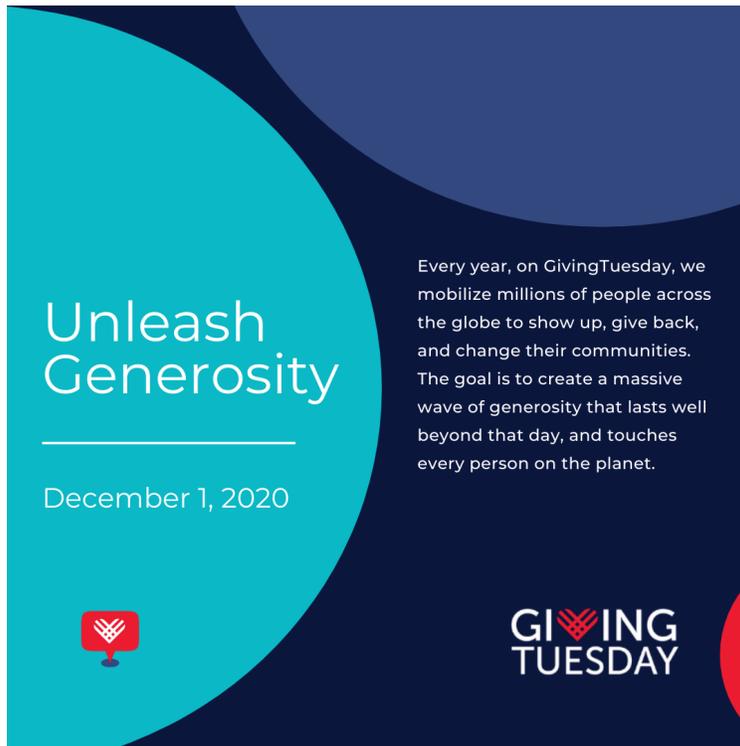
HRSA Releases 2019-2020 Report on Health Equity

The Health Resources and Services Administration, through the agency's Office of Health Equity, has released the [HRSA 2019-2020 Health Equity Report: Special Feature on Housing and Health Inequalities](#). The report will help HRSA and others build upon the agency's mission to improve health outcomes and address health disparities through access to quality services, a skilled health workforce and innovative, high-value programs. We were especially interested in Chapter 10 presenting rural-urban health disparities.

Expanding Project ECHO in New York State

Originated at the University of New Mexico in 2003, Project ECHO increases access to specialty treatment for patients in rural and underserved areas by providing frontline physicians with the knowledge and support they need to manage patients with complex conditions. New York State Health Foundation funding helped establish the first Project ECHO clinic in New York State in 2014—since then, the model has experienced unprecedented growth and gained many partners along the way. This [issue brief](#) explores outcomes and lessons learned from a series of grants that NYSHealth awarded to support Project ECHO's expansion throughout the State.

Giving Tuesday



We invite you to support our work at Rural Health Network. Consider becoming a monthly recurring donor. By scheduling your donation over time, you can fit your gift into your budget more easily and support us each month. Visit our [donation form](#) or contact [Cindy Martin](#) to discuss gift options.

Advancing the health and well-being of rural people and communities.

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Rural Health Network of South Central New York,
455 Court Street, Binghamton, NY 13904

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