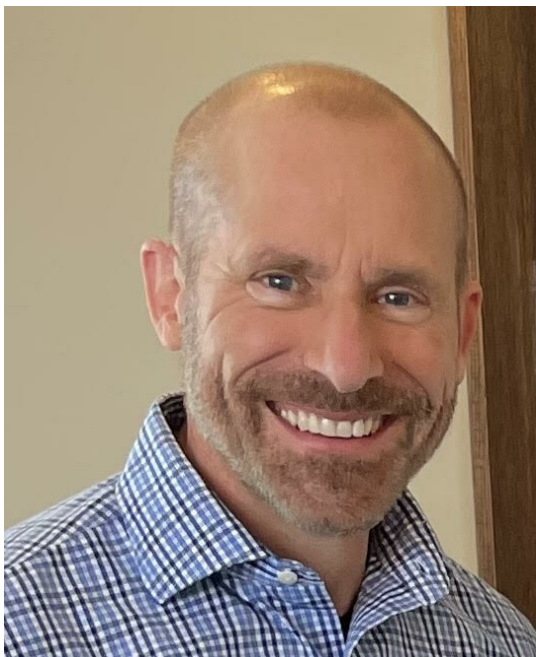


## *Rural Matters December 2021*

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### **Message from Mark Bordeau**



With the end of 2021 approaching, it is a good time to reflect on some important events of this year at the Rural Health Network. The Capital Campaign was a great success, made possible by generous gifts from our donors. The campaign funds allowed for the remodeling of our office space and the creation of a state-of-the-art Learning Center at the Rural Health Network. In 2022, we will have a formal ribbon cutting ceremony to dedicate the Learning Center in honor of John (Jack) Salo. As the past Executive Director for 17 years, Jack's passion and leadership were vital to the advancement of the health and well-being of rural people and communities in our region. We are hopeful that the John C. Salo Learning Center will become a hub for educational opportunities for our staff as well as our community partners.

This month we also celebrate and express our thanks to four board members as they end their terms on the Board of Directors of the Rural Health Network.

Lenore Boris has been on the Board of Directors since 2015. During her term she was on multiple committees including executive, finance, & development. Lenore was our Board President from 2017 to 2020. Lenore was an extraordinary leader and advocate for the Rural Health Network, leading us through a very successful capital campaign as the board president and former chair of the development committee. Lenore was the 2021 recipient of the Rural Health Leader Award.

Tamie Reed has been a member of the Board since 2016. Tamie was co-chair of the governance committee, vice president from 2018 to 2020, and served on the executive and finance committees. Tamie worked to better integrate Getthere and Getthere resources into the Otsego County service mix to better serve Otsego Seniors.

Beth Saroney Paro served on the Board from 2016 to 2021. Most recently, Beth served on the governance committee. She has been a steadfast advocate for Getthere and transportation services, having served on the Getthere Advisory Committee throughout her time on the Board. Beth has reached out to state and national elected officials to advocate for public policies that address rural health issues. Beth has also been serving on the DEI work group for the Rural Health Network.

Sandra Sanzo served on the Board from 2016 to 2021. Sandi served as co-chair of the Governance Committee and has been a steadfast member of the Executive Committee while serving as secretary of the board. Rural Health Network benefited greatly from Sandi's expertise in governmental services and Medicare.

On behalf of the entire Rural Health community I would like to thank all of our outgoing board members for their vision, leadership and advocacy on behalf of the Rural Health Network. We would not be who we are today without you.

Also in this month's issue we will reflect on this past year here at the Rural Health Network. On behalf of the Rural Health Network, I want to thank all of our donors, foundations, community partners and governmental funders who have supported the important work we have done over the past year at the Rural Health Network. Wishing everyone a wonderful and safe holiday season.

Mark Bordeau  
Executive Director

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## 2021 Highlights

2021 was a year of many changes during which Rural Health Network of SCNY continued to advance the health and well-being of rural people and communities. Here are a few highlights. We look forward to sharing more later this spring through our 2021 Impact Report.

### Food & Health Network

- Launched NY Thursdays in 11 DCMO BOCES school districts, bringing the total districts participating in Farm to School to 26 across five counties.
- Over 300 individuals and families with chronic health conditions received prescriptions for local produce from their healthcare providers and our FVRx program.
- Hosted the first two parts of a four part webinar series "A Fresh Outlook on Rural Food Retail."

### Community Health Services & Education

- Community Health Workers provided service to 248 unique individuals as of early December.
- Northern Broome CARES enrolled 66 new clients this year.
- We implemented the first year of our Summer Home Improvement program, providing minor home repairs for 16 Northern Broome homeowners and completing a community garden project.
- Community Health Education introduced a workforce development training series that includes Social Determinants of Health, Rural Cultural Competency, and Health Literacy.
- Two staff became certified to offer Mental Health First Aid.

### Getthere

- The Getthere Call Center handled 4,720 cases in 2021, the highest number per year yet.
- 1,019 individuals were provided assistance in covering the cost of transportation to healthcare or other essential appointments.
- The Transportation to Employment program secured an Appalachian Regional Commission grant supporting expansion of the program to a six-county area.

### Rural Health Service Corps

- 47 AmeriCorps members provided 21,619 hours of service through programs at 13 host sites.
- We were one of two programs in New York selected to pilot a Public Health Corps program.

We are grateful for the many partners, funders, and donors who make our work possible. If you would like to support our work as we move into 2022, please consider a donation.

[Donate](#)

## Full-Time AmeriCorps Positions Available

Full-time AmeriCorps positions are still available with the Southern Tier AIDS Program, Office for Aging, Steuben County Public Defender's Office, Food and Health Network, Tioga Opportunities, Schuyler County Coalition on Underage Drinking and Drugs, and Rural Health Network of South Central New York. AmeriCorps State and National positions offer a \$16,000 living allowance/stipend and \$6,345 Education Award (to be used on qualified education expenses), and require 1700 hours of service throughout a one year period. Members are eligible for free health insurance, child care assistance, and college loan forbearance.



For more information about this position or other AmeriCorps positions available with Rural Health Service Corps, please visit our [website](#) or contact Haley Desilet at [hdesilet@rhscny.org](mailto:hdesilet@rhscny.org).



Getthere Mobility Transportation Advocates assist callers with a wide array of transportation needs to ensure that callers can get to healthcare appointments or other essential services.

Getthere Mobility Transportation Advocate (MTA) Roz DeRensis revels in connecting people to food. "Food insecurity has always been a passion of mine. I just want folks to know that we can help them. There aren't a lot of options for rural people."

Transportation can often stand in the way of families getting to food security organizations and pantries across Getthere's five county service region, particularly those not served by public transit. COVID has complicated access to food and created additional barriers.

Individuals and families that were once able to pick up a food box on their own have been restricted if a member of the household is in isolation or quarantine.

Roz is a huge advocate and has spread the word about Getthere's food delivery service as a member of the Chenango Area Recovery Team (CART), the Norwich School Board, and the UHS Chenango Memorial Hospital Auxiliary Club. Getthere staff has coordinated food boxes with a number of organizations including Roots and Wings, Windsor Human Development and Broome County Catholic Charities, among others. Getthere was able to provide 98 people with food-related assistance in 2020 and has helped 59 people so far in 2021.



Roz reflected that “people are so thankful.” Getthere is thankful for Roz and the rest of our staff that go out of their way to help individuals and families every day.

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## Northern Broome CARES "Christmas for Seniors"



Mindy Alexander, Community Health Worker with our Northern Broome CARES program, shows just some of the gifts that have been donated to help us ensure that seniors in Northern Broome County have a gift during the holidays.

The project is a collaboration of Rural Health Network employees and board members, Advisory Committee members of Northern Broome CARES, Broome County Office for the Aging employees, community members, Visions Federal Credit Union Contact Center, and the Whitney Point School District who purchased gifts that range from personal care items to gift cards. There are a number of handmade items like blankets and shawls, handmade cards, holiday candy and snacks for all. These gifts will be packaged up beautifully and distributed to many seniors in the Northern Broome County area that are a part of the Northern Broome CARES program. It's important to our program that everyone receives a gift this holiday season and to let them know how important they are to our community.

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## LiveOn New York Resources

Pamela Guth, Director of Community Health Services, has been participating in monthly virtual aging services meetings convened by LiveOn NY. On December 15, the meeting focused on the Fair Pay for Homecare Campaign that merges the worlds of home care for people aging in place in our communities with individuals receiving assistance due to services eligibility for intellectual or developmental disabilities. This includes their caregivers and family support systems.

Fair Pay for Homecare Campaign key contacts: Bobbie Sackman and Zahara Zahav,

both part of the [NY Caring Majority](#), joined the LiveOn NY monthly advocacy meeting for aging services providers. Several resources were shared:

**Contact information:**

- Bobbie Sackman: [bobbiesackman6@gmail.com](mailto:bobbiesackman6@gmail.com)
- Zahara Zahav: [zahara@jfrej.org](mailto:zahara@jfrej.org)
- [I Can't Find Homecare Incident Report](#): Allows New Yorkers to log issues with finding homecare, and sends these stories to legislators. There is also a toll free hotline for those who prefer to call: 845-901-1382.
- Fair Pay for Homecare Campaign [video](#). This is a powerful short public service announcement, please view it!
- [City & State Article](#) about 40 Offices for the Aging across NY who sent [this letter](#) to Governor Hochul re: the Fair Pay for Home Care Act
- I Can't Find Homecare [Toolkit](#)
- [Op-ed Writing Support](#)

Pamela states, "My forty year career has focused on quality of life for all across the lifespan (womb to tomb) and this movement is the right thing to do to improve the health, well being and economic stability of those who provide a priceless service to our most vulnerable populations. Please invest some time and energy in exploring these resources and taking action from your own community and lived experiences."

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## Articles and Resources of Interest

### National Family Caregiver Resources

Across the nation, state health programs depend on caregivers who provide critical support to help relatives, friends, and neighbors age in place while contributing **about \$470 billion in unpaid health care services** each year. To better support family caregivers, Congress passed the **Recognize, Assist, Include, Support, and Engage (RAISE) Family Caregivers Act** in 2018, which established the Family Caregiving Advisory Council tasked with creating the country's first national Family Caregiver Strategy. [Learn More](#).

### NY State Vaccine Hub Open at former Davis College, Johnson City

Governor Kathy Hochul has announced the opening of a new mass vaccination site at the former Davis College - Robb Activities Center on Riverside Drive in Johnson City. The site will be operational from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. COVID-19 tests will be conducted on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Vaccinations will be conducted on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. The site will be closed on Sunday. Vaccinations at the site will be available by appointment and walk-ins. People ages 5 and up will be served. Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson vaccinations will be available for first, second and booster doses. New sites are also opening in Delaware and Cortland counties. [Schedule Appointments](#).

### Yellow Dot Kits Available

Yellow Dot is a free program designed to help first responders provide life-saving medical attention during that first "golden hour" after a crash or other emergency. A Yellow Dot in the driver's-side rear window of your vehicle will alert first responders that vital medical information is stored in the glove compartment. The New York State Sheriffs' Association has distributed over 2 million Yellow Dots in New York State so far. [Request a free kit](#).

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*Happy Holidays*



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