

Rural Matters June 2022

Welcome to Rural Health Network

Three people joined our Community Health Services team in the last month. Please join us in welcoming Denise Blackwell, Stacy Sbarra, and Rebecca Moon.



Denise Blackwell, Community Health Worker

Hello, I relocated from New York City to Binghamton, NY, seven years ago for a better quality of life. I have worked in the human services field for 15 years. I worked in many organizations including the Osborne Association for the formerly incarcerated, the NYC shelter system, and Columbia University in the Social Intervention Project conducting research in early criminal justice, and lastly, Health Homes during the grassroots stages. For the past two years, I've worked on the COVID-19 Contact Tracing Initiative as a Case Investigator. I also bring five years of experience as a Health Homes Coordinator linking individuals to health care, housing, and social services. I enjoy helping people improve their quality of life. Rural Health Network assists underserved communities with

access to quality health care and so much more. I am proud to be a part of a team that works hand in hand with all ethnicities and cultural backgrounds regardless of their financial situation. Rural Health Network is an excellent fit for me because I have found a balance between work and my lifestyle that I appreciate.

Stacy Sbarra, Community Health Worker II

I graduated from Binghamton University with a Bachelor's of Science, majoring in Human Development. I have almost 20 years of experience in the Care Management field, providing support and advocacy to children and families in our community. I've worked in a variety of care management settings such as; group homes, after school programs, Head Start programs, Medicaid Health Homes and hospital care management. I enjoy spending time outdoors with my sons, traveling and making memories. I have a "shorkie" named Oscar who has definitely become the king of the house! I love to paint and read in my spare time.



Rebecca Moon, AmeriCorps Member

Hello, my name is Rebecca Moon and I am originally from Tuxedo Park, New York. I am a recent graduate of SUNY Geneseo, and a future Nurse. I am excited to be a part of the Rural Health Network as an AmeriCorps member. Service



has always been close to my heart, starting from a young age as a Girl Scout and now continuing my journey to the Northern Broome CARES Program at Rural Health Network and hopefully from here into the Intensive Care Unit in the Nursing field. In my spare time I enjoy drawing and painting.



AmeriCorps Positions Available with Seven Valleys Health Coalition

As part of Rural Health Service Corps Public Health AmeriCorps (PHA) program, two members will be serving at [Seven Valleys Health Coalition](#) (SVHC) as **Project Assistants**. These members will provide support to SVHC on both their food systems and community health education efforts focused on addressing Cortland County's priority areas of preventing chronic disease, promoting well-being and preventing mental and substance use disorders, and preventing communicable diseases. The strongest focus will be on food systems work including but not limited to: participation in the Cortland Food Project (CFP) food policy council; supporting efforts towards addressing hunger and healthy, local foods access such as the Seven Valleys Food Rescue, Farm to School and Produce Prescription programs; assisting the CFP steering and subcommittees with a special focus on the Hunger Coalition and the developing Storytelling program; supporting efforts to meet the goals of Cortland's Local Foods, Local Places action plan; and other health education initiatives. The members will serve for approximately 30 hours/week in a hybrid work environment including remote and in-person service at the Seven Valleys Health Coalition office in Cortland.

Like all PHA members, the SVHC Project Assistants will participate in [Cornell's Public Health Essentials Training](#) (a \$3,600 value), in addition to being given a living allowance (\$15,000) and education award (\$4,441.50). This is a great opportunity for individuals hoping to break into the field of public health or gain more practical, hands-on experience. Rural Health Service Corps is partnering with many organizations to bring a variety of positions to different geographic areas, such as Binghamton, Whitney Point, Olean, Auburn, Bath, and Cortland.

To learn more about the Project Assistant positions and many others, please visit our [website](#).



Rural Health Network is pleased to announce that Nick



Cecconi has been promoted to Getthere Director. Nick was hired as the Broome-Tioga Mobility Management Project Coordinator in 2011 overseeing a small team at our Call Center, then based at United Way of Broome County. Since that time, Nick has been an integral part of Getthere's growth and he has most recently been the Getthere Assistant Director. His keen understanding of mobility management and knowledge of transportation resources, coupled with his desire to see Getthere, its clients, and partners thrive, make him an excellent choice to step into this position.

Nick looks forward to guiding Getthere to deliver high quality service to our clients in order to help remove transportation as a barrier to health care and employment.

June is Pride Month - Understanding LGBTQ+ Health Barriers

An estimated 2.9-3.8 million LGBTQ+ people call rural America home. While stereotypes portray LGBTQ+ people living in cities, many LGBTQ+ people choose to live and thrive in rural communities. Rural life has many benefits, but it can also come with unique barriers. Many rural communities have the unfortunate marker of being hospital shortage areas or mental health and healthcare provider shortage areas.

In addition to facing provider shortages, rural LGBTQ+ people have the added burden of facing medical discrimination based on their sexuality or gender identity. According to a 2014 [report](#) by the National Women's Law Center, 8% of LGB individuals and nearly 27% of transgender individuals report being outright denied care based on their gender identity or sexual orientation. A 2020 [survey](#) from the Center for American Progress found that 15% of LGBTQ+ people reported postponing or avoiding medical treatment due to discrimination. Discrimination is a driver of poorer health and mental health outcomes. While that may be a grim fact to acknowledge, it also means that health outcomes for millions of Americans could be improved by reducing stigma.

Steps organizations can take to improve the health of rural LGBTQ+ people:

- Utilize cultural humility trainings that include gender and sexuality
- Learn the history of LGBTQIA+ experiences and discrimination in your field
- Evaluate programs and services for their inclusivity of LGBTQIA+ people
- Display visible signs of allyship in office spaces, on fliers, and social media
- Advocate for rural LGBTQ+ people in community task forces, forums, and other spheres of influence

PRIDE MONTH

UNDERSTANDING LGBTQIA+ HEALTH BARRIERS



An estimated
3+ MILLION
Rural Americans are
part of the LGBTQIA+
community

1 IN 4

LGBTQIA+ people
report being in poor
health



LGBTQ+ populations
report **HIGHER RATES**
OF **CHRONIC ILLNESS**
and **DISABILITY** than
non-LGBTQ+ people

LGBTQ+ people report
higher rates of
MEDICAL
DISCRIMINATION than
non-LGBTQ+ people,
with transgender
people reporting the
highest rates



Barriers to care are
amplified in rural
communities with
fewer providers spread
across farther
distances

Sources: LGBTQ+ People's Health and Experiences Accessing Care, Kaiser Family Foundation
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health, Office of Disease Prevention and Health
Promotion
Where We Call Home: LGBT People in Rural America, Movement Advancement Project

**RURAL HEALTH
NETWORK**
Serving South Central New York



Our Farm to School staff has been busy the last few months as they continue to grow

the relationships with all 23 of the SCNY School Garden Grantees. Many of the schools have already put their funds to use and purchased supplies to support their school garden program. Funded supplies have included vegetable and herb seed packets, youth sized garden tools, rain collection barrels, materials for raised beds, berry bushes, hydroponic grow kits, soil, mulch, compost containers, and much more! Not only does this funding support hands-on learning for thousands of students throughout the Southern Tier, but it also has supported many local garden centers through the schools' purchases. This program has had insurmountable benefits and our team looks forward to funding another round of School Garden Grants next Spring.



Top Row: African Road Elementary, Vestal; Candor Elementary; Pine City Elementary, Elmira
 Middle Row: Pine City Elementary, Elmira; West Middle School, Binghamton
 Bottom Row: Oxford Academy; Apalachin Elementary; Afton Middle/High School

Northern Broome CARES is delivering more services than ever before. We've developed new relationships, strengthened ones already in place, increased our ability to collect client data, converted that data into action, and streamlined access to the array of Rural Health Network services.

Below is a review of our program achievements for the first half of 2022:

- Built a framework for combining the Produce Prescription Program (PRx) and the VINES farm share distribution at Whitney Point United Methodist Church to deliver fresh vegetables to our most vulnerable clients at no cost
- Modified the weekly taxi schedule from Mike's Taxi to allow our users the opportunity to get to the Northern Broome Senior Center for events, programming, nursing blood pressure checks, and lunch on Fridays
- Increased capacity to offer evidence-based education such as Walk With Ease, Chronic Disease Self Management Program, and Mental Health First Aid
- Helped our clients stretch their budgets further by offering touchless pickup service at major grocers like Aldi, Weis, and Walmart
- Developed a new relationship with Visions Federal Credit Union which offers volunteers for special events such as our Senior Holiday Drive
- Strengthened our relationship with the St. Patrick's Food Pantry to better address food security issues for Northern Broome County
- Secured additional funding to implement Year 2 of the Summer Home Repair Project which addresses exterior safety concerns for homeowners, driving home our mission of "aging in place"

We continue to look for unique opportunities to better serve our rural community and close service gaps inherent with being far removed from the urban core.

News and Resources

Addressing Trauma and Community Grief

The New York State Commission on National and Community Service and New York State Office of Mental Health shared [this presentation](#) that includes a variety of resources to assist organizations in addressing trauma and community grief.

2022 Community Star Nominations are Open

The National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health is accepting nominations for their annual Community Stars Recognition Program in conjunction with National Rural Health Day (November 17th). [Learn More](#)

Aspen Institute Open Field Session on Sustainable Growth

This [blog post](#) explores the topic of sustainable growth by asking "what does it take to steward the land and grow rural prosperity?"

American Society on Aging - Generations Today

The ASA May/June 2022 issue of [Generations Today](#) explores the topics of Housing, Homelessness and Hunger among older adults.

Resources to Help Families During the Infant Formula Shortage

The US Department of Health & Human Services has [resources](#) available for families who need formula during the infant formula shortage.

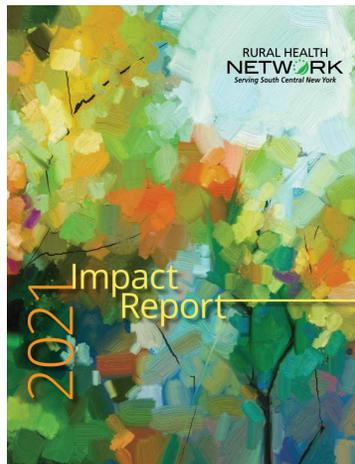
Join our Monthly Giving Society

Have you ever considered supporting Rural Health Network on a monthly basis? Scheduling a monthly gift can help you fit charitable giving into your budget and provide Rural Health Network with sustainable gifts over time. It's easy to schedule a recurring gift and you can change or cancel the recurring donation at any time. Click the donate button below and under "Frequency", select "Monthly". For questions or technical assistance, contact [Cindy Martin](#), Director of Resource Development, at 607-692-7669,

ext. 203.

DONATE

We're pleased to share our [2021 Impact Report](#).



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