

# CONNECTIONS

*Your Connection to the  
Alliance for Positive Health*

Inside:  
**PRIDE Month!**  
**National Testing Day**  
**Harm Reduction**  
**Staff Milestones**  
**& more!**





## FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### ***B. Kim Atkins***

Dear Friends,

**The Alliance attended and participated in 15 Pride events from the Canadian border to Hudson!**

As I now reflect on the events we attended and the hundreds of people we met, there are two things that stand out above all else. First – our team is amazing! They didn't just show up for our clients, they were there with smiles on their faces and compassion in their hearts.

Second – there is so much work to be done! Everywhere we went, we found people who need our help. From HIV testing to being able to find care, housing, social opportunities, and anti-stigma education, there is a true need in our communities. In response, our team is already rolling out one new educational opportunity for providers! More details follow and we'll be keeping you posted as things move along.

There was another very important day in June – National HIV Testing Day on June 27. We had testing locations open for expanded hours in Albany, Schenectady, and Glens Falls and participated in another testing event in Hudson. We are grateful to WTEN in Albany for the story they aired about our work and the need for testing. [Click here to see the story.](#)

While the HIV/AIDS epidemic always has been and will continue to be our primary focus, because of those we help, we also have the responsibility to provide wrap-around care for the entire individual. That means programs for aging with HIV, living with HIV while incarcerated, nutrition education, assistance with housing, food, insurance, transportation, and so much more.

For several years we have offered Narcan training, syringe exchange, and a Suboxone clinic from our office in Plattsburgh. Recently, this program expanded, and we are now offering services from our locations in Schenectady, Hudson, Glens Falls, and Albany. This community needs help and we're striving to meet them where they are.

The past few months have also included a very successful 20th Anniversary Dining Out For Life event on April 27. Several third-party fundraisers have also been conducted and I'm grateful for what this shows in terms of support for our programs.

As always, none of this happens without our donors, Board of Directors, team members, and volunteers. Thank you for showing up as we strive to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Sincerely,

B. Kim Atkins, Executive Director  
Alliance for Positive Health



# Know the skin you're in

Summer is upon us and we are once again reminded of the impacts infections place on our daily lives. COVID-19 and MPOX showed us how we must stay vigilant as a community during times of crisis. The Alliance For Positive Health has been focusing on providing our clients and the greater community with awareness, education, and referrals to vaccination clinics throughout Northeastern New York.

During June, we worked closely with our local county health offices to link people to preventative care and education. This included all the 15 Pride events we attended throughout Northeastern NY.

We know that those living with immune-compromising conditions, such as HIV/AIDS, pregnant women, children under 8 years old, and the MSM (men who have sex with men) community have the greatest reason to stay aware and take preventative steps to stay protected.

Together with the New York State Department of Health, we are committed to making sure everyone has access to life-saving treatment and



prevention—everyone. The NYS DOH campaign, “It Takes Two” focuses on the importance of vaccination—it’s free, effective, and easy. Two doses, taken within 4 weeks. For more details on MPOX, including the nearest vaccination clinics, please visit us at [bit.ly/mpoxnyny](https://bit.ly/mpoxnyny).

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John Coppola  
PRESIDENT

Joan Hayner  
VICE PRESIDENT

Terri Conrad Regan  
TREASURER

Lawrence T. Waite, Ph.D.  
SECRETARY

Kandis Backus, PharmD, MS, AAHIVP • Sharon J. Butler • John Coppola • Joan Hayner • Yvette Kelly • Keira O'Brien • Eric Simonds, CCIM • Robert A. Stout Jr., Esq • Lawrence T. Waite, Ph.D. • Joe Yetto

## ALLIANCE LEADERSHIP

B. Kim Atkins  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Rita Cox  
INTERIM DIRECTOR OF MARKETING  
& COMMUNICATION

Quinn Lee  
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAM SERVICES

Diana Aguglia  
DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Susan Friedman  
DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Joseph Peterson  
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE &  
ADMINISTRATION

### **How long have you worked at the Alliance?**

9 years. I started as a Health Homes case manager and now I am Assistant Director of Program Services.

### **What about the work appeals to you?**

The opportunity to help people. I am able to help staff be the best they can be so they provide quality customer service to our members.

### **What does a typical day at work entail?**

People laugh when we say there are no typical days in client services, but it really is true. We are always on a 30 day deadline so I am always following up with Program Managers, and there is always contact with clients. I am currently helping our Hudson HH team while they train new staff so I have a caseload of 7 people.

### **What do you enjoy about working at the Alliance?**

It feels like family. I have a healthy work/home life balance because of the hybrid schedule that is offered. Employees are important to this agency, and that is important to me.

### **What do you find the most challenging?**

HH is sometimes affected by decisions made by entities outside of our control. Currently, we are pushing back on proposed budget cuts by Dept. of Health so a lot of advocacy for this program is going on right now. So far things are looking positive that we will not have the cuts that were proposed.

### **What is your proudest moment at the Alliance?**

When I proposed a re-structure of the HH program that allowed for promotions from within. I was given 1 year to prove the changes and it was a success! We were able to allow care managers to gain managerial experience so that when there was a PM vacancy we could choose from the team instead of looking outside.

### **What advice would you give someone considering**

### **working at the Alliance?**

You are a huge part of how your time will be here. If you are dedicated to the mission of the agency, you will find yourself a part of a family.

### **What is your hidden talent?**

LOL! My hidden talent is not so hidden. I have a talent for communication and bringing people together. I am also good at cutting hair!

### **Where did you grow up?**

I was born in The Bahamas. My mom is Bahamian and my dad Jamaican. I moved to Jamaica from age 3 so I consider myself Jamaican. How did I end up in Upstate NY? Ha!  
I came here for love.

### **What is your favorite thing to do?**

Being with family. I am part of a large family and when we get together it's the most beautiful thing.

### **What is something about yourself that people would be surprised to learn?**

One thing that people would not know about me is that I saved a life from near drowning.



# National Testing Day 2023



**TAKE THE TEST**  
-&-  
**TAKE THE NEXT STEP**

June 27th was National HIV Testing Day. Here in Northeastern New York HIV still exists, a fact highlighted by the positive test results we saw during our local events. It is imperative that we make sure our community knows that testing is always free, non-judgmental, and confidential. More importantly, we connect people to life saving and affirming care!

We provide HIV, STI, and Hepatitis-C testing at our offices in Albany and Schenectady, as well as with our mobile testing van which we take to areas where people have no other accessibility to testing and anywhere we get the opportunity to test in our communities.

The day's theme this year was "Take The Test & Take The Next Step." Our goal was to make it easier for people to know their HIV status and be linked to the care and services they need including prevention, treatment, and services. We offered greatly expanded testing availability in Albany, Schenectady, and Glens Falls. We also held a pop-up testing clinic with our friends at Hope & Healing Recovery Wellness Center in Hudson Falls, NY.



**Above:** AFPH staff member, Richard Ham, showing off the Mobile Testing Van at one of our June testing events

**At Left:** Heather Mattison and Kim Kelley at the Hope & Healing Wellness Recovery Center testing event

For upcoming testing days or for more information on our HIV Prevention programs, please visit: [518Testing.com](http://518Testing.com)

## PRIDE WRAP-UP

*Randy Viele, Assistant Director of Program Services*

Our goal as Pride month began was to ensure that the Alliance and our programs were visible and engaged throughout the region. That meant we had to show up at events, become substantial supporters of the events, showcase two new grants that address disparities and inequalities within the LGBTQ+ community, and meet people where they are. That's exactly what we did! 15 pride events from Malone and Plattsburgh to Hudson.

We took the mobile testing van to test for HIV, STIs, and HCV and we ran MPOX clinics in areas where people may not regularly have access to services. No other agency has the ability to offer this scope of services in one stop! We engaged potential volunteers to help manage our gardens in Glens Falls and Plattsburgh. We made new connections that will result in new, meaningful services for our clients throughout our service area.

But most importantly, we showed up to listen and survey. We wanted to turn these events into opportunities to learn what challenges our clients are facing and what services we can offer to help. And we wanted to connect with other community partners. It's truly hard to quantify how much happened! Here are just a few examples:



- ✘ We all know stigma remains an issue, but it is something that we have to help address. The best thing we can do to impact care for our clients is to address the stigmas still prevalent in the medical community. We've already built the program and are rolling it out as I'm writing!
- ✘ Transportation. Time and time again we heard that finding transportation to medical appointments is an issue, especially in communities with smaller populations. One example is that there are literally zero Uber drivers in Schoharie County.
- ✘ We found three specialized therapists working in the LGBTQ+ community in the North Country that we didn't know before.
- ✘ Social Opportunities. Because of the stigmas our clients face, social opportunities where they can be together in a safe environment hold a special

significance. We heard time and time again that this is needed and we all know how important social connections are to health and wellbeing.

- ✘ We found a new business in Plattsburgh that will be providing a regular social event for our clients.

We also heard many, many thank-you's. For offering non-judgmental, confidential, and free services. For showing up and meeting people where they are. For listening. For providing access to the care they couldn't find anywhere else.

If there were just one message I could share with you, it is that we are needed. What our clients need now looks a little different than it did 20 years ago, but HIV is still impacting them and creating real issues in other parts of their lives.



# HARM REDUCTION SERVICES

*Gabrielle Draper, Program Manager*



We sat down with Gabrielle Draper, Program Manager of Harm Reduction Services to talk about the recent expansion of our Harm Reduction services into the Albany area.

## **What should people know about it?**

Our Harm Reduction program has expanded into the Capital Region, allowing us to provide much-needed Harm Reduction Services in Albany, Schenectady, and Saratoga counties. This includes a fully operational Syringe Exchange Program out of our Albany office at 927 Broadway. The Syringe Exchange Program, Project Exchange, is a free and anonymous program that provides a safe option for people to obtain free, sterile needles and supplies. Walk-in hours are Mondays and Fridays 10:00 am – 4:00 pm, and Tuesday–Thursday by appointment. However, we also operate by special arrangements, which means we can deliver your supplies right to you in the community.

## **How do people benefit from this expansion program?**

We offer a variety of services including sterile needles and supplies, Harm Reduction counseling, HIV/HCV testing and screening, Narcan training and kits, and referrals to health care. We also provide education and training throughout the community to dismantle the stigma regarding people who use drugs. If you or someone you know is struggling with addiction, we can help you stay safe.

## **Is the Capital Region the only new addition to the program?**

The Capital Region expansion builds on our already existing Harm Reduction program servicing Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Warren, Hamilton, and Washington counties. We also offer a Buprenorphine bridge clinic through our Plattsburgh location, that provides telemedicine services to clients right here in the Capital Region. Call us at 518-944-4558 to get enrolled today!





# Development Updates



On Thursday, April 27th we celebrated our 20th Annual Dining Out For Life® and raised more than \$35,000! This fan-favorite event featured 24 restaurant locations from Plattsburgh to Hudson with thousands of hungry diners. We are so very thankful for our wonderful team of Ambassador Volunteers who donated their time to help make this a truly amazing event!



## Top Fundraising Ambassadors

1. Jennifer Colletti & Dan Lester - \$2,715
2. Jeremy Bond - \$1,920
3. John Coppola - \$1,248

## Top Fundraising Restaurants

1. Copper Crow - \$3,600
2. Nicole's Restaurant - \$3,023
3. Innovo Kitchen - \$1,612



## It's almost time for the Columbia-Greene Garden Party!

This year's event will be held at the home of Do-Hee Kim and Josh Bary in Athens. Their working garden supplies vegetables that are sought after throughout the area! There will be something for everyone – nature lovers, foodies, gardeners, farm-to-table fans, or those looking for something fun to do Labor Day weekend.

**Saturday, Sept. 2, 2023**

For details and tickets go to [CGGardenParty.com](http://CGGardenParty.com)



June was filled with fun, Pride, and most importantly generosity! Local Hudson organizer John Schobel of the Hudson Valley Bears donated all admission ticket sales to their annual Pride event—Poke-The-Bear on June 3rd.

**They raised an outstanding \$2,000 that evening!**

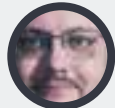
We cannot thank the Hudson Valley Bear community enough for their ongoing support!

# Staff Milestones April–June 2023

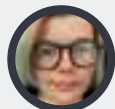
## Welcome New Staff Members!\*



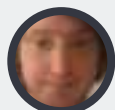
**Jennifer Ansong** (She/Her), Public Health Specialist, *Albany*



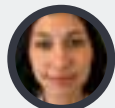
**Devin Averill** (He/Him), Care Manager PAWH, *Plattsburgh*



**Pickering Curran** (They/He), Client Support Specialist, *Schenectady*



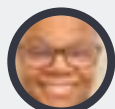
**Kiernan Fischer** (He/Him), Community Health Specialist, *Plattsburgh*



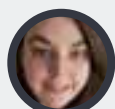
**Lillie Gazeryan** (She/Her), HH Care Coordinator Assistant, *Albany*



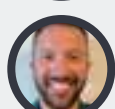
**Rich Ham** (He/Him), Public Health Specialist, *Schenectady*



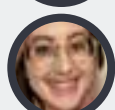
**Cherise James** (She/Her), Transportation Specialist, *Albany*



**Nikita Marshall** (She/Her), Community Linkage Specialist, *Plattsburgh*



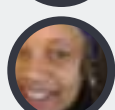
**Ryan Molfetta** (He/Him), Nutrition Program Specialist, *Albany*



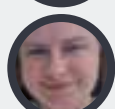
**Cassidy Reed** (She/Her), Front Desk Receptionist, *Albany*



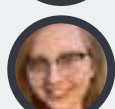
**Brenna Rustick** (She/Her), Linkage Specialist, *Albany*



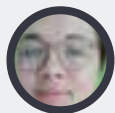
**Kimberlyn Taylor** (She/Her), Care Coordinator, *Albany*



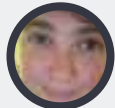
**Camryn Verdi** (She/They), Housing Client Support Specialist, *Albany*



**Abigail Viertel** (She/Her), Public Support Specialist, *Albany*



**Jay Vitoulis** (He/They), Public Health Support Specialist, *Schenectady*



**Chelsea Welch** (She/Her), Community Support Specialist PAWH, *Glens Falls/Albany*

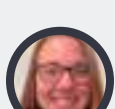


**Kimberly White** (She/Her), HH Care Coordinator, *Plattsburgh*

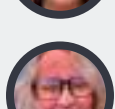
## Congratulate Promotions & Transfers!\*



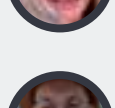
**Greyson Allen** (He/Him) Corrections Health Specialist, *Plattsburgh*



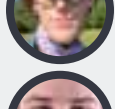
**Vanessa Cappon** (She/Her), Assistant Director of Program Services, Harm Reduction & Corrections



**Bridgid Murnane** (She/Her), Program Manager Corrections Health Initiative, *Plattsburgh*

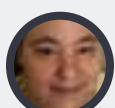


**Aurora Powell** (They/Them), Client Support Specialist/ Health Educator, *Albany*



**Jim Schadt** (He/Him), Criminal Justice Operations Specialist, *Albany*

## Cheer Red Ribbon Winners!\*



**Andrea LaSalle** (She/Her), Care Coordinator, *Plattsburgh*

*“That was the most comfortable I’ve ever felt trying to get help”*

*– New Client after intake session*

\* Through June 30, 2023

## Celebrate Anniversaries! (April-June)

### 14 YEARS

**Lois Warner** (She/Her), Program Manager, *Schenectady*

### 9 YEARS

**Mary Morelock** (She/Her), Assistant Director of Program Services, *Albany*

### 8 YEARS

**Timmy Martin** (He/Him), Case Manager, *Albany*

### 6 YEARS

**Christiana Booker** (She/Her), Data Entry Specialist, *Albany*

**Kristin Beattie** (She/Her), Program Manager, *Albany*

### 5 YEARS

**Tracey Lynn Fish** (She/Her), Care Coordinator, *Glens Falls*

### 4 YEARS

**Kris Holmes** (She/Her), Harm Reduction Specialist, *Albany*

**Carrie Sue Coryer** (She/Her), Program Manager, *Plattsburgh*

**Joe Peterson** (He/Him), Director of Finance and Administration, *Albany*

### 3 YEARS

**Olivia Clare Ash** (She/Her), Program Manager, *Albany*

### 2 YEARS

**Grace Fay** (She/Her), Housing Retention Specialist, *Albany*

**Sue Friedman** (She/Her), Director of Human Resources, *Albany*

**Courtney Garry** (She/Her), Nutrition Health Educator, *Albany*

**Hanna Delucia** (She/Her), Program Manager Corrections Health Initiative, *Albany*

**Quinn Lee** (She/Her), Director of Program Services HH, *Albany*

### 1 YEAR

**Marissa Goddard** (She/Her), Development Associate, *Albany*

**Kimberly McCormick** (She/Her), Care Coordinator, *Glens Falls*

**Ashley Rock** (She/Her), In Facility Linkage Specialist, *Plattsburgh*

**Tamara McLean** (She/Her), Health Homes Program Assistant, *Albany*

**Dayana Longo Reyes** (She/Her), Care Coordinator Bilingual, *Glens Falls*

**Melanie Dutra** (She/Her), Care Coordinator, *Schenectady*

**Alyssa Lewoc** (She/Her), Program Manager, *Albany*

**Gedalia Nunez** (She/Her), Care Coordinator, *Albany*

**“This place has been my life saver! I really love the people who run this organization! They have the biggest hearts!”**

**- Jennifer H**

# Upcoming Dates

View the Alliance Event Calendar at [allianceforpositivehealth.org/testing-calendar/](http://allianceforpositivehealth.org/testing-calendar/)



- 4<sup>th</sup>**  
Independence Day
- 11<sup>th</sup>**  
Community NARCAN Training, Plattsburgh
- 13<sup>th</sup>**  
NARCAN Training, Plattsburgh
- 20<sup>th</sup>**  
HIV & Hepatitis-C Testing at Franklin County Dept. of Health, Malone
- 21<sup>st</sup>**  
Zero HIV Stigma Day
- 28<sup>th</sup>**  
World Hepatitis Day

- 15<sup>th</sup>**  
Community NARCAN Training, Plattsburgh
- 31<sup>st</sup>**  
International Overdose Awareness Day

- Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month*
- 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
Columbia-Greene Garden Party, Athens
- 5<sup>th</sup>**  
Community NARCAN Training, Plattsburgh
- 14<sup>th</sup>**  
NARCAN Training, Plattsburgh
- 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>**  
NYS Overdose Awareness Days
- 18<sup>th</sup>**  
National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day
- 23<sup>rd</sup>**  
Bisexual Visibility Day
- 25<sup>th</sup>**  
Rosh Hashanah
- 27<sup>th</sup>**  
National Gay Men's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

*“Thank you so much for taking the time to talk to me today. I was feeling so lost and it means a lot just to have someone to talk to who understands.”*

*- New Client after intake session*



[allianceforpositivehealth.org](http://allianceforpositivehealth.org)



If we made an error, you would like to be added or removed from our email list, or have ideas for future articles, please contact our Development Department at 518.434.4686 or [development@alliancefph.org](mailto:development@alliancefph.org).

ALBANY  
927 Broadway, Albany, NY 12207  
518.434.4686

GLENS FALLS  
13 Chester St, Glens Falls, NY 12801  
518.743.0703

HUDSON  
160 Fairview Ave, Hudson, NY 12534  
518.828.3624

PLATTSBURGH  
202 Cornelia St, Plattsburgh, NY 12901  
518.563.2437

SCHENECTADY  
155 Erie Blvd, Schenectady, NY 12305  
518.346.9272