

Welcome, Deborah Salguerio!

We are pleased to announce that Deborah Salguerio, MSW, joined us in March, serving in her new roles as the Associate Executive Director for the New York Care Coordination Program (NYCCP) and Chief Operating Officer for [Health Homes of Upstate New York \(HHUNY\)](#). Deborah brings with her a 25-year career with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) where she served in a variety of leadership roles including: Chief Consultant for Care Management and Social Work, Medical Center Director, Chief of Social Work and Director of Home Based Primary Care. We sat down with Deborah and asked her to share a little about her background, her vision for HHUNY, what makes HHUNY unique, and how HHUNY impacts service outcomes for its members.

How has your VA experience influenced your vision for HHUNY?

One of the hallmarks of the VA Healthcare System is its focus on treating “the whole person” including physical and mental health, as well as recognizing the role that social determinants of health play in the lives of Veterans. In addition to healthcare, the VA has invested significant resources in homeless programs, supported housing, support for Veterans engaged with the justice system, home based services and vocational rehabilitation/supported employment. These resources have been key to supporting returning service members and their families.

Health Home Programs have a similar approach to addressing the needs of our most vulnerable populations. Care Coordination is at the heart of Health Homes. The New York Care Coordination Program began some 17 years ago with a focus on ensuring that there is coordination of the often-complex array of services and supports that individuals with significant behavioral health and and/or chronic health conditions need to improve and maintain their health and wellness. Our goal for HHUNY is to support the Care Managers across our network in achieving the level of excellence in care coordination that our members need and deserve. Through the five Lead Health Homes for which we provide administrative support, we provide extensive training and education for Care Managers, guidance in implementing state policy, audit and quality oversight, referral processing, marketing and billing for Care Management agencies. We offer a high level of support for care managers across Upstate New York and beyond, so they can do their best quality work. While I am new to Health Homes, the focus on vulnerable populations, care coordination and addressing social determinants of health are very familiar.

While working at the VA, I was fortunate to have experience not only on the policy/administration side, but also as a front-line service provider and Medical Center Director. Having both perspectives is very helpful because while I understand the need for state and national policies to advance practice, I also have a sensitivity to how those policies are actually implemented in everyday practice. I anticipate that HHUNY will further progress and support policy decisions, and be the driving force for the standardization of high quality practice.

What makes HHUNY unique?

The healthcare system is fragmented, and we are in a position to bring all the pieces together. HHUNY supports five health homes. Four serve adults (Huther Doyle, Circare, Best Self and Chautauqua County Department of Mental Hygiene), and cover 22 counties throughout Western and Central New York, the Finger Lakes and the Southern Tier. One serves children (Children’s Health Homes of Upstate New York)

and spans 54 counties. The Adult network includes more than 60 care management agencies and nearly 1,000 Care Managers. NYCCP has a long history of bringing different groups together, and HHUNY will continue to build on this cohesion among health homes, care management agencies, home and community based services, and managed care companies.

How has HHUNY impacted service utilization for individuals in health homes?

We are monitoring data outcomes, and they indicate that high quality health home care management can help reduce the need for acute care services. There has been a nearly 30% drop in emergency department visits and inpatient hospital stays among members since the program's inception in 2012. These outcomes are a result of ensuring that care is focused at the appropriate level. Not only does this mean cost savings, but more importantly, this is a quality of life indicator for members.

How can I learn more about these programs?

There are both [HHUNY](#) and [CHHUNY](#) websites with information about how health homes support consumers, as well as the network of providers. Contact us at (855) 613-7659 or askhhuny@hhuny.org.