Care Managers Change Lives

Have you ever found yourself in a rough spot, overwhelmed by healthcare and other costs and unable to dig yourself out of the hole? Would you like someone to help you? Maybe we can.

Here are two examples of how ACR Health Care Managers were able to use community resources to turn lives around.

Allyson Ryan of Utica has been given a new lease on life through ACR Health Care Management Services. She has been hooked on substances since she was 14 years old and her mother made whiskey sours, leaving leftovers in the blender for her children to drink. Allyson and her brother would also get an old guy in the neighborhood to buy them beer or peppermint schnapps. “We were drinking to get drunk, whenever the opportunity arose,” said Allyson, who is now in recovery from opioid and alcohol abuse.

This time Allyson is using Vivitrol, a monthly injection that keeps her opioid craving at bay for thirty days at a time. She is volunteering with ACR Health as a Peer engaging with people who face the same struggles. “I have peace of mind right now, and I love Melinda (Care Manager Melinda Peck). She is a breath of fresh air.”

Nancy Brown of Skaneateles, was in the “lowest, darkest place” when she met Care Management Supervisor Linda Munson. Nancy’s divorce tumbled her from middle class to dead end. When her 14-year old son opted to live with his dad, her alimony and child support ended at the same time, and she lost the mental strength to carry on. “My whole world flipped and I honestly thought I wouldn’t be able to get back up this time.”

“Nancy needed a hand up, not a hand out,” said Ms. Munson. “She had already located available resources, but was behind in her rent and falling more in arrears each day.” Linda identified new FEMA relocation funds that Nancy was qualified for and added “emergency client needs” fundraised money from ACR Health to bridge the gap. With a place to stay established, Nancy has been able to find a good job where she is now working toward a management position. “Linda came and sat and listened, and from that, good things are once again happening in my life. My life has changed and I am grateful for all of your help.”

**Nancy Brown** and Care Management Supervisor, Linda Munson

**Care Management Services at ACR Health**

Qualified individuals with chronic health conditions can now receive help from ACR Health’s Care Management team to coordinate all primary, acute, behavioral health, and long-term services and other supports to treat the whole person.

ACR Health services are offered to anyone without discrimination based on age, race, creed, color, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, political affiliation, marital status or handicapped status or mode of transmission. You will be treated with dignity and respect. Your information is confidential and services are provided in strict accordance with state and federal laws. You will receive services in a reasonable and timely manner.
Happy 2018!

Last year was filled with opportunities for ACR Health to make life better and healthier for residents in our nine counties of New York and we’re working diligently to keep programming strong in 2018 as well.

During the 2016-2017 fiscal year we helped 16,622 people through one-to-one services, outreach, and education programs in the areas of Emergency Services, Medical Clinic, Health Homes, Food Pantry, Youth Programs, HIV/STD/HEP C testing, as well as extensive Prevention Services. I’m pleased to share four examples of the lives we’ve touched.

Amy’s path to heroin addiction started with an injury and a legitimate prescription for a pain reliever. She was barreling toward a tragic end when she came to ACR Health’s Drug User Health Hub, which offers acute medical care, clean needles, medication assisted treatment, and other essential services for substance users. Overdose is now the leading cause of death for Americans under 50.

Anthony is now in treatment and thriving with the help of ACR Health. We are committed to ending the AIDS epidemic. We will do this by increasing HIV testing, connecting HIV positive clients with treatment, and by expanding access to PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis), a once daily pill that is 99% effective at preventing the transmission of HIV.

ACR Health’s Q Center provides comprehensive programming for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning (LGBTQ) youth, and young adults and their families. Q Center programming seeks to promote equality, celebrate diversity, and create a safer, more accepting and inclusive community for all.

Most of the people we serve live in poverty. Demirous was 23 years old and homeless; with no job and no hope. “I had no place to turn, and then you helped me get a place of my own.” Like other clients, Demirous was capable of becoming self-sufficient, given a helping hand.

These stories and many others are contained in ACR Health’s 2018 Calendar, which is also our 2016-2017 Annual Report. If you haven’t received our calendar and would like one, email us at events@ACRHealth.org or call 800.475.2430 and we will mail you one.
ACR Health’s Expanded Care Management opportunities are part of New York’s Health Home program which aims to provide access to services to help bring down healthcare costs statewide. “When people don’t have a primary care physician services, they go to emergency departments for their care,” said ACR Health Director of Care Coordination, Casi Dowsland. “Emergency care is expensive and lacks follow-up. People need to be linked to comprehensive health services in order to sustain their health, and that is what our Care Managers do.”

ACR Health Care Managers work one-to-one to identify needs and link qualified individuals with services. Care Management Services include: comprehensive care management; care coordination; health promotion; comprehensive transitional care and follow-up; patient and family support, and referral to community and social support services.

**Eligibility Requirements**
You may be eligible if you have

- Medicaid, Medicaid/Medicare
- Be age 18 or older
- Have one single qualifying condition; HIV/AIDS or Serious Mental Illness; or
- Have two or more chronic health conditions: chronic conditions include, but are not limited to, mental illness, substance abuse, asthma, diabetes, heart disease, HIV/AIDS, a BMI over 25.

ACR Health has walk-in hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 627 West Genesee Street in Syracuse. For services through ACR Health’s nine counties, call 800.475.2430 or email CareManagement@ACRHealth.org to find out more.

**New York City Party to Benefit the Q Center**

For the past three years, ACR Health has reached out to donors in New York City to support the Q Centers in Syracuse, Utica, and Watertown in Upstate New York. Downstate investment serves the interests of both locales, because New York City is a magnet for Upstate youth who, lacking of a safe space and thinking they have no options, flock downstate. They leave the only support system they have in hopes of finding a safe space, only to be turned away at already filled LGBTQ shelters and sent home at New York City’s expense.

“Our goal is to build a keen realization of the connection between Upstate and Downstate and create stronger partnerships for a more progressive New York State for all LGBTQ youth,” said Murtaugh.

Donor and Friend of ACR Health, Jeff Kalpak, left, shared his expertise and networking to connect us with MasterCard who generously sponsored the Q Center Giving Party at Midoma Salon at 545 8th Avenue on October 2 to support ACR Health’s three Q Centers that serve LGBTQ youth across more than 10,000 square miles. Jeff is photographed alongside ACR Health Executive Director, Wil Murtaugh.

“Our friends at Mastercard strongly support diversity and I am so pleased that they played a part in making our event a success,” said Kalpak.

Many thanks to:
The First Frost Walk/Run held at Thompson Park Zoo and Conservancy on Sunday, October 15, 2017, celebrated 18 years of fundraising to support ACR Health’s important work in the North Country. Since 2000, the First Frost Walk/Run has brought in more than $500,000 in mainstay funding for extensive youth initiatives and has helped position ACR Health as a state leader in youth education. First Frost proceeds are applied to address community-wide challenges of HIV/AIDS, Addiction, LGBTQ inequality, and Poverty. ACR Health’s HIV/AIDS efforts are part of New York’s aggressive blueprint to End AIDS by 2020, which are proving highly successful. Statistics from 2015 show a 79% decrease in new HIV cases in New York over the past 25 years.

“I am humbled by the knowledge of all the favorable, life-changing consequences the First Frost Walk/Run has brought to Northern New York. I anticipate the day, not too far off now, when we can declare the End of the AIDS Epidemic in New York,” said Wil Murtaugh, Executive Director of ACR Health.

ACR Health would like to thank our event supporters:

Walker Sponsors: Carthage Federal Savings & Loan, Page Fitness Athletic Club; Friend Sponsors: Sam’s Club and Fidelis Care; Media Sponsors: 7 News, 790 WTNY, Fox 28, Magic 103.1, and Border 106.7.
December 1, 2017 was World AIDS Day, an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against AIDS; show their support for those living with HIV; and to remember those who have died. ACR Health’s World AIDS Day events were an opportunity to update the public about compelling evidence that AIDS, the incurable and deadly disease, can be contained.

There are three important steps to ending AIDS:

- Identifying those with HIV who remain undiagnosed: ACR Health has greatly expanded HIV testing, up 545% in 2017 compared to 2012.
- Linking HIV+ persons to health care and getting them on anti-HIV medication: 71% of HIV positive individuals in Central New York are virally suppressed, compared to 67% elsewhere in New York
- Providing access to Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) a daily pill that prevents HIV transmission.

“PrEP is the game changer,” said ACR Health Executive Director, Wil Murtaugh. “We now have a daily pill that prevents HIV transmission. It’s 99% effective and it’s the real key to ending the epidemic.”

Since 2014, ACR Health has trained thousands of people how to administer Narcan, the opioid overdose rescue drug; and handed out “kits” free of charge to everyone trained. Now, in a policy shift, the state is trying to get Narcan (known also by its generic name naloxone) into the hands of those most likely to encounter a drug overdose and make Narcan more widely and easily available through the N-CAP program.

“Very often the drug reached its expiration date without ever being used for overdose rescue,” said Overdose Prevention Coordinator Kevin Donovan. “The state is trying to use resources in a more effective way.”

Now, when Donovan trains members of the general public, he hands them a card telling them how to get Narcan from a pharmacy. And, instead of providing Narcan kits to everyone at a company, he recommends placing the kits at strategic locations throughout the building.

For individuals who are themselves at risk for overdose or their family members or friends who receive training through ACR Health, the Narcan kits are supplied. Those individuals may also acquire Narcan in pharmacies without bringing in a prescription. Narcan is available in more than 2,000 pharmacies throughout New York State through the N-CAP program.

ACR Health offers Narcan training free of charge to all interested parties. We make sure that everyone we train will be able to get a kit if needed. To book a training: Narcan@ACRHealth.org.
ACR Health’s Women’s Program was recently renewed for five years, receiving an HIV, STD, HCV (hepatitis C) Prevention and Related Services Grant for Women with a Focus on Women of Color through November 2022. This grant allows ACR Health to continue to serve women throughout our nine-county service area.

Tracie Adams, Maile Casey, and Johnna Wiley bring a wealth of experience to the program and are committed to ending the epidemic of HIV in their communities. Each year they will work with a minimum of 300 women, helping them learn their HIV status, and sharing strategies for staying HIV free.

One of the women they have helped is Syracuse resident, Dawn Kohler.

Dawn needed a safe place to rebuild her shattered confidence and sense of wellbeing. She divorced four years ago and, because she truly hates being alone, quickly entered a relationship with a man who was sometimes physically - and nearly always emotionally - abusive to her. She believed his promises: left her job and moved out of state with him; a decision that she regretted almost immediately. When she returned home to Central New York her job had been filled and her adult children refused to have anything to do with her until she “got rid of that guy.”

Dawn was briefly homeless and was spiraling out of control when her aunt took her to ACR Health’s Women’s Support Group, part of the Women’s Program. The group is a safe place to go where she can feel comfortable – even while crying, which Dawn says she is doing too much of these days. “They welcomed me with open arms and did everything possible to make me feel better.”

Participation in the Women’s Program has forced Dawn to focus on her future.

“My dream is to be stable again, financially and emotionally. I want to have my family back. I want to believe in myself again.”

Women’s Program results for the fiscal year July 1, 2016–June 30, 2017

- 313 Women Tested for HIV
- 76 Women Engaged in groups
- 55 Engaged in Linkage and Navigation (Care Management)
- 425 Unduplicated women served

To learn more about the Women’s Program, call 800.475.2430 or email Woman@ACRHealth.org
Rachel P. Mitchell, class of 2018 at Syracuse University’s Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, has been awarded the $500 Eddie “Future Greatness” award for the Fall of 2017. Founded by Cindy Seymour, Laura Serway, and Paul Mahalick, this award supports and promotes higher education and is dedicated to helping youth with the desire and ambition to succeed. Among other accomplishments, Rachel serves as President of her sorority and is a graphic designer for Students Advocating for Sexual Safety & Empowerment.

“Accepting the Eddie Fund is simply an honor. As an LGBT student at Syracuse University, from a low-income background I have not shared all of the same opportunities as my peers,” said Rachel.

“This fund is allowing me to pursue a dream of mine, to study abroad, that without the Eddie Fund would not be possible for me. I am forever grateful to the Q Center at ACR Health for this award and opportunity.”

The Eddie Fund award is available to all LGBTQ youth and their allies, 16-26, who are registered in an accredited post secondary institution. Four awards are given each year. All applicants must identify as LGBTQ or an ally, and be between the ages of 16-26 years of age.

Interested? To apply for an Eddie Fund Award: ACRHealth.org/youth.

To donate to the Eddie Fund: ACRHealth.org/youth/eddie

ACR Health suffered a great loss when Prevention Health Advocate Dawn Marie Peck, 34, passed away at her Clinton home on October 24, 2017. Dawn was cultured, bilingual, a citizen of the world, and an invaluable asset to clients of ACR Health.

Dawn, who put others’ well-being before hers, worked in positions that she related to and felt strongly about. Before her Substance Use Advocate role at ACR Health, she was a Child Victim Advocate with the Neighborhood Center. She was also actively a mentor for struggling students at Donovan Middle School. On her days off she would take them to the movies, hiking or other activities to show them that they mattered.

Dawn was an absolutely reliable worker who put her heart and soul into her work with clients. Her selflessness was both a blessing and a curse as it helped so many of her clients, yet she strained herself at times. She would be the first person to skip a lunch break to be sure her client’s needs were met as soon as possible.

Dawn inspires us to be more understanding of others, to be quick to compliment people, to express our love and gratitude and, if we see someone struggling, we won’t assume that there is another person helping, we will be like Dawn and...BE that person.

Janae Velardi, Community Prevention Coordinator
ACR Health offers its services to anyone without discrimination based on age, race, creed, color, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, political affiliation, marital status, handicapped status, or mode of transmission.

ACR Health is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, February 8, 2018
BBQ for Change
Eat, drink, and give back. Beginning at 5:00 p.m., Limp Lizard-Western Lights will donate a portion of your bill to ACR Health to benefit Sled for RED. Bring a group and make a difference!

Saturday, February 10, 2018
8th Annual Sled for RED
Cardboard Sledding Derby, Tubing and Food & Drink Sampling at Four Seasons Golf and Ski Center, beginning at 4:00 p.m. Sip and cast your vote for CNY’s Best Wintry Drink and visit the Bells Brewery Ice Bar!

Sunday, February 18, 2018
BLOWOUT2018 SUPERHEROES AND VILLAINS
Fantasy Hair Show at the Landmark Theatre in downtown Syracuse; doors open at 3:00 p.m. Professional hair and makeup artists create fantasy hairstyles and send their models strutting across the main stage. Be a VIP and enjoy preferred seating and a reception following the show.

Saturday, April 28, 2018
20th Annual Hike for Life **NEW LOCATION**
Join us on our exciting new course at SUNY Polytechnic Institute in Rome, featuring fun festivities. Come celebrate the 20th Annual Hike for Life. All proceeds support ACR Health’s mission to create healthy communities by opening doors for those fighting AIDS, Addiction, Poverty, and LGBTQ Inequality.

Invest in your community.
Get involved today!
ACRHealth.org/Events • 315.475.2430

Q CENTERS FOR LGBTQ YOUTH
Resources throughout Central, Northern, and Mohawk Valley regions. For information call 800.475.2430 or email QCenter@ACRHealth.org
Group times listed ACRHealth.org/youth

TESTING SERVICES
HIV, gonorrhea, chlamydia, syphilis, and Hepatitis C. Testing@ACRHealth.org

NARCAN TRAINING
Monthly trainings at ACR Health offices. Appointments: Narcan@ACRHealth.org

SYRINGE EXCHANGES
• Syracuse: 637 West Genesee Street and Outreach Van at corner of Dudley & Fitch Street
• Utica: 287 Genesee Street
• Watertown: 135 Franklin Street
SEP@ACRHealth.org

DRUG USER HEALTH CLINIC - SYRACUSE
Provides onsite access to acute medical care, medication assisted therapy, and linkage to additional medical resources.

HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAMS
Health insurance enrollment and advocacy. Navigator@ACRHealth.org

GET INVOLVED. JOIN THE TEAM.
For more information on all programs or if you wish to unsubscribe from the newsletter: information@ACRHealth.org or 800.475.2430
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