NARCAN: One Year Update

Last April ACR Health embarked on a new path to save lives, one that sparked questions and controversy because it involved saving the lives of individuals who use drugs: we became licensed by the state to train individuals how to use Narcan, a life-saving prescription drug that can reverse heroin or other opioid overdoses within minutes. Our timing could not have been better.

On Friday April 18, 2014, the same day that Dr. Laura Martin was scheduled to train ACR Health staff from all nine counties on the proper administration of Narcan, Syracuse police reported five heroin overdoses in the previous 24 hours. Dispensing Narcan was indeed a vital, life-saving service, reinforced by headlines.

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The New York State Department of Health has made Narcan training a priority because deaths from overdoses are now the leading cause of injury-related death in the United States, with 43,982 deaths occurring in 2013. In recent years, a crackdown to make it harder for people to get prescription opioid painkillers like highly-addictive Oxycontin, Hydrocodone, and Vicodin created a growing market for heroin, which proved to be easy to access and cheaper to buy than prescription drugs.

The crackdown was successful in that the number of overdoses from prescription painkillers leveled off, according to the CDC, while the rate for deaths involving heroin has almost tripled since 2010. The number of overdoses from heroin rose 39% in one year (2012-2013).

That is the underlying reason for ACR Health’s emphasis on Narcan training. In 2014 we set an ambitious goal to train 500 people in our first year of distributing Narcan.

“I am so proud of ACR Health and our volunteers for pulling together to surpass this milestone,” said Erin Bortel, ACR Health Prevention Director. “I feel confident that we have done everything possible to meet this critical health need in our communities.” We really have no way of knowing how many lives have been saved through our efforts, but eight community members have reported back to us that they used Narcan and successfully reversed an overdose.

“...deaths from overdoses are now the leading cause of injury-related death in the United States, with 43,982 deaths occurring in 2013...”
Youths Advocate for Change in Albany

A large delegation of 90 youth, parents, advisors, and staff represented ACR Health in Albany on April 28 for Equality and Justice Day. Their agenda was GENDA – the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act, which has passed the New York State Assembly seven consecutive times, and has never been brought up for a vote in the State Senate. ACR Health youth set their sights on powerful State Senator John DeFrancisco from Syracuse, hoping to persuade him of the fairness and value of GENDA protection. The senator did not schedule meetings this year. A small group of youth and staff actively searched for Mr. DeFrancisco but to no avail.

Nine youth from the Q Center, Watertown, and Utica participated in a Transgender Youth panel discussion. There were stories of bullying; bathroom issues, but also stories where schools were able to be successful with their trans-students. One of the nine was Chris Seymour, an eighteen year old senior transboy and the President of Watertown High School’s GSA (Gay Straight Alliance), who provided this first person account of his day in Albany.

“I attended Equality and Justice Day in Albany with my school’s GSA and SADD/TATF (Students Against Destructive Decisions/Teen AIDS Task Force). My appearance with the Youth Transgender panel gave me the chance to hear from other transgender students about their high school experience, making me feel not so alone as others had experienced things very similar to what I have experienced and also making me feel lucky to have had people I could trust and confide in; one of these being my GSA advisor Mrs. Wayte.

“I had the chance to speak to Assembly-member Mrs. Addie Russell who was extremely open and accepting of not just the legislation we were trying to give exposure to, but also our personal stories as to why these things such as GENDA, getting rid of conversion therapy, and legalizing gestational carrier agreements (surrogacy) is important. When I brought to Assemblywoman Russell’s attention New York’s law on surrogacy, she had no idea it was illegal.

“This is why Equality and Justice Day is so important; we need to show the government in New York that these things are important to us. It serves as a safe and accepting environment for teens and adults of all ages, gender identities, and sexual orientation to gather and voice their opinions as to why LGBT rights are important.”

Chris Seymour

Our Mission...
The Mission of ACR Health is three-fold:

- To provide support services to those who are living with chronic diseases, including HIV/AIDS.
- To prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV.
- To promote sexual literacy and improved medical outcomes.
It is important to get Narcan into the right hands and ACR Health is well-positioned to do that, engaging with the injection drug population through its Syringe Exchange Program (SEP). This public health initiative, designed to decrease the incidence of HIV and Hepatitis C infection among injection drug users, has also allowed us to establish relationships of trust with the 1,300 registered participants who receive new syringes and safer injection supplies from SEP.

Through us, they can receive referrals for treatment, if they so choose, and also be trained in the use of Narcan. They have direct access to individuals who may be at risk of overdose. “Narcan has been criticized for being a ‘Band-Aid solution.’ The fact remains that without this lifesaving intervention, people who experience an overdose have no option of regaining control over their lives,” said ACR Director of Prevention, Erin Bortel. Most overdoses are not instantaneous and the majority of them are witnessed by others.

Many overdose fatalities are preventable, especially if witnesses have had appropriate training and are prepared to respond in a safe and effective manner. If an individual is overdosing on a drug other than an opioid, Narcan does not hurt them.

ACR Health provides free overdose prevention trainings to community members and other providers by appointment. Participants walk out of the training with an Overdose Prevention Rescue Kit and the resources they need to save the life of someone experiencing an overdose from heroin and other prescription opiates.

To sign up for training email: Narcan@ACRHealth.org. For more information on how to access Opioid Overdose Prevention training and the other services described, call 800.475.2430 or visit the ACR Health website at www.acrhealth.org.

Funding youth programs in the Mohawk Valley for 17 years

The 17th Annual AIDS Hike for Life on April 25 at Hamilton College showcased the prospect that New York’s “Bending the Curve” policy could bring about the end of AIDS by 2020. If successful, the state’s three-pronged campaign to increase testing, bring HIV positive people into care, and treat at-risk individuals with a daily pill to prevent infection would reduce HIV rates to manageable levels within five years.

The 17th Annual AIDS Hike for Life would not have been possible without our Sponsor, Empower Federal Credit Union plus sponsors Aureus Specialty Pharmacy, Garro Drugs, The Hartford, Berkshire Bank Foundation, Faxon-St. Luke’s Healthcare, McDonalds, Walmart, Northern Safety, Oneida Savings Bank, BNY Mellon-Prism, Carbone Auto Group, and Catskill Spring Water. Our Media Sponsors are KISS FM 97.9 and 105.5, BUG Country 99.7 and 101.1, WUTQ 100.7, and News Channel 2 WKTV. In-Kind Sponsors are Bon Appétit Management, Hannaford Bros. Co., and Saranac. Special thanks to Hamilton College Class of 2015!
paint the town red!
help acr health #endaids

you are cordially invited to clinton square in the heart of downtown syracuse on may 26 at 10:00 a.m. to help acr health “paint the town red” and to kick off the statewide end aids by 2020 campaign.

acr health’s annual “paint the town red” campaign has brought wide awareness to aids and to the lifelong health complications caused by this incurable disease. hiv infections are decreasing here because of prevention programs like the safety first syringe exchange and condom education and distribution.

now new york’s “bending the curve” policy ventures to bring about the end of aids by 2020. if successful, the three-pronged campaign to: 1) increase testing, 2) bring hiv positive people into care, and 3) treat at-risk individuals with a daily pill to prevent infection will help reduce hiv rates to manageable levels within five years. hiv/aids will become an uncommon disease – still serious, but treatable and very rare.

“We have always worked toward a world without AIDS,” said acr health development director carrie portzline-large, “acr health is putting in extra effort to bring that message home.”

from may 26th, when we paint a red stripe down salina street, to june 7th at the aids walk/run, acr health will remind central new york every day to join the fight. together we will #endaids by 2020.”

central new york businesses paint the town red

in celebration of 95 years in business, the paint the town red campaign, and the 23rd annual aids walk/run, syracuse chocolate maker michael speach will donate 5% of his profits to acr health for the entire month of june.

“Acr health is a great organization that does more for this community than you can ever imagine. it’s here for the people who need them most.”

speach says that starting with his great-grandfather 95 years ago, speach family candy shoppe has supported their community. it’s one of the sweet pleasures of life.

Michael first learned about acr health back at onondaga community college. “when I was in college I lost a friend to aids. it was just devastating. here you are, young, making plans, your whole life in front of you and his life was over.”

speach is one of several businesses supporting acr health during our “paint the town red” campaign. interested in joining the fight to #endaids by supporting acr health? email events@acrch health.org or call 475.2430 – and thanks!
Jennifer Cook, Assistant Director of Support Services-Ancillary Services, has a Master of Public Health from the University of Albany School of Public Health. She oversees ACR Health’s comprehensive ancillary services: Housing Supportive Services, Behavioral Health Education and Engagement, Employment Initiative, and Nutrition Health Education. “ACR Health has more than 30 years experience in connecting people with the services needed to stabilize their lives,” said Cook. “Stable housing, for example, is a key to maintaining overall health outcomes.”

Steve Wood, Assistant Director of Support Services-Insurance Programs, holds a Bachelor of Science degree from SUNY Empire State College. Steve’s team implements multiple programs that provide insurance for all individuals as well as the Managed Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, Community Health Advocates, and Facilitated Enrollment for Disabled, Aged, and Blind.

“I believe that Health Insurance is not a privilege, but a right for all,” said Wood. “The staff I work with strive to meet every client with respect and dignity.”

Jennifer Sullivan Rost, Assistant Director of Support Services-Care Management, holds a Master of Social Work from Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service. She oversees Care Management services for “Health Homes” Medicaid-eligible individuals with two or more chronic conditions. “ACR Health Care Managers help keep our consumers on track with their health appointments and regimens,” said Rost. “This keeps them out of emergency rooms and reduces the overall cost of healthcare.”

The Assistant Directors report to Jeanette O’Connor-Shanley, Director of Support Services for ACR Health. O’Connor-Shanley oversees Ancillary Services, Care Management, and Insurance Services for nearly 25,000 consumers in ACR’s six offices in Cayuga, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, and St. Lawrence counties. “Our expanding mission and a diversifying caseload make it imperative to have top-notch supervisors who can carry the ACR Health reputation for quality services to the growing number of individuals entrusted to our care.”

What are you doing the first Sunday in June?

The AIDS Walk/Run has raised $2.5 Million since 1993. All of the money raised has stayed in Central New York to support youth programs and emergency client needs. Think! Live! Give! … Local! Register your team for the 23rd Annual AIDS Walk/Run today!
To make way for a growing number of supportive services and programs, ACR Health has moved some of the Ancillary Services Programs to 835 West Genesee Street, just two blocks west of ACR Health Headquarters at 627 West Genesee Street.

Office space for Ancillary Services houses 12 ACR Health employees.

These services include:

- **Housing Support Services** assists eligible participants to a variety of services including; locating safe and affordable housing, advocating with landlords, developing health and independent living skills, applying for financial assistance, and in some cases rental subsidies for those who are eligible.

- **Employment Initiative** which helps eligible participants get and keep a job by completing new resumes, practicing job interview techniques, mastering the soft skills that employers are looking for, and focusing on the skills needed for employment.

- **Nutrition Health Education and Food and Meal Services** which offer health-enhancing nutritional education sessions for individuals and groups, and food assistance through pantry bags and food vouchers. Educates eligible participants on a variety of nutritional and skill building topics.

The offices at 835 West Genesee Street originally opened last fall to house Health Insurance Navigator services. Those services have since expanded as well to include:

- **Managed Long Term Care Ombudsman Program** which advocates for older adults and persons with disabilities who live in nursing homes, assisted living and other licensed adult care homes.

- **Navigator for LGBT Enrollment**: ACR Health has an enrollment specialist to make sure that LGBT individuals and their spouses have the same opportunities for affordable health coverage as others.

- **Community Health Advocates** to provide one-on-one consultation with people in need of assistance and information in navigating New York’s healthcare systems and services.

- **Facilitated Enrollment for Disabled, Aged, and Blind** provides critical access to health services for low-income disabled, aged, and blind persons through Medicaid enrollment.

ACR Health Navigator Health Insurance services at 835 East Genesee, two blocks west of ACR Headquarters.
What do you Bring to the Table?

With the addition of a brand new kitchen at the Q Center comes a new initiative: The Sit Down Dinner Initiative to be exact! This family experience is for youth, volunteers, and guest chefs to come together to share the preparing, the cooking and of course, the enjoying of a meal...together! “Guest Chefs” volunteer to come with the fixings for dinner, from salad to dessert, teaching youth some of their favorite recipes. If the youth don’t want to cook, there is always something to do from setting the table, coming up with a creative centerpiece, collecting cell phones (no phones at the table!) and everyone cleans up!

Dinner takes place during a support group where everyone shares their highs, lows, hopes, and dreams and like any other dinner table, you never know where the conversation will end up. “The meal is what brings us to the same table and little by little we find we stay there, talking a little longer every night.” said Maureen Harrington O’Neill, Q Center Development Director. “The rule is everyone helps, everyone shares and most importantly everyone matters. Our youth have gone from not knowing how to core a head of lettuce to making up their own recipes.” Next month’s highlights are cake decorating and a home cooked Somali meal! Chefs have included Mark MacBain (vegetarian lasagna), Brian Goldblatt (pulled pork and a delicious Rainbow Cake) and our own Elizabeth Wright and Stephanie Smith, community members, volunteers, and even donors who want an additional, creative way to give. Food brings people together and at the end of the meal, everyone gets to know someone a little bit better. “It was great to meet everyone there. We were so happy to be a part of the group for the night, we hope to come back soon” said chefs Ira and Jeanne Klein, who came and shared a traditional Italian meal…and yes, there was enough sauce left for another meal the next day!

If you are interested in being a guest chef, sharing a family recipe, or just know how to make a mean mac and cheese, contact us at events@acrhealth.org, we would love to invite you to the dinner table!

Ira and Jeanne Klein made their special pasta sauce.

Sauce

**Ingredients:**
- Oil (same oil used to fry meat)
- 1/2 cup or more of finely
- Chopped garlic
- 1 large onion
- 1 can tomato paste
- Water
- 4-29 oz cans of tomato puree, tomato sauce, or crushed tomatoes (use any combination you’d like)
- Salt and pepper
- Basil
- Parsley
- Garlic powder
- Garlic salt
- 1 tsp of sugar

**Directions:**
Put garlic in onions in oil and sauté until lightly browned.
Add tomato paste and one can of water, let this cook on a low for 10-15 minutes, but **STIR FREQUENTLY** on a low to medium flame.
Add 29 oz cans of sauces. Add spices to taste.
Add sugar (to remove bitterness from sauce)
Let the sauce cook on low for one hour. Then add all the meat and let cook for 3-4 more hours. You have to stir the sauce every 15 minutes to keep it from burning to the bottom of the pot.
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.

Follow us on:  

May 30, 2015  
**Volley for Dough**  
Volleyball tournament, Cheap Seats Sports Bar  
6 Hillside Avenue, Oswego. Call Margi: 343.4676

June 7, 2015  
**23rd Annual AIDS Walk/Run**  
10:00 a.m. 5K fundraising walk, 10K timed run at Beaver Lake Nature Center. AIDSwalkCNY.com

June 12, 2015  
**Boilermaker**  
15K road race, Utica. Get a bib for the sold-out Boilermaker by signing up at crowdrise.com/acrhealth and committing to fundraise $500 or more. For more information, email events@ACRHealth.org

August 30, 2015  
**Bubble Blast Run** - The official race of the great New York State Fair!  
9:30 a.m. Navigate a fun, bubbly course through the state fairgrounds. Register at BubbleBlastRun.com. Registration includes admission to the State Fair for the day and a Bubble Blast t-shirt with paid entry.

October 4, 2015  
**BlowOut Fantasy Hair Show** - Vegas!  
3:00 p.m. Bruce M. Wright Memorial Conference Center  
1291 Faichney Drive, Watertown. events@ACRHealth.org

October 18, 2015  
**16th Annual First Frost AIDS Walk/Run**  
1:00 p.m. Thompson Park Zoo and Conservatory, Watertown  
envents@ACRHealth.org

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**COMMUNITY EDUCATION FORUMS**

Forums provide HIV education to community members and those interested in becoming volunteers. Events are held monthly in Syracuse and Utica. Call 800.475.2430 to sign up.

**LGBTQ YOUTH SUPPORT GROUPS**

ACR Health has numerous support group meetings in Syracuse, Utica, Watertown, and the Mohawk Valley. Participants are grouped by ages from 8-26.

[The Q Center for a full listing]

**Syracuse youth group meetings are at the Q Center, 617 West Genesee Street**  
Information: 315.701.2431 or qcenter@ACRHealth.org

**Mohawk Valley LGBTQ Youth Groups**  
Information: 315.701.2422

**Utica LGBTQ Youth Groups**  
Information: 315.701.2422 or glbtqyouth@ACRHealth.org

**Watertown Area Gay Youth**  
Information: 315.386.4493 x 151

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information@ACRHealth.org or 800.475.2430.