ACR Health Deputy Executive Director, Wil Murtaugh, was one of a select group of executives chosen from AIDS Service Organizations around the country to participate in a high intensity management training course at UCLA Anderson School of Management/Johnson & Johnson Health Care Executive Program.

Wil was accompanied to the July conference by Vice Chair of ACR Health Board of Directors, Andrew London. The program convened health care executives from AIDS Service Organizations and Federally Qualified Health Centers from 20 different states in an intensive 11-day executive management training program focusing on the changing healthcare environment.

The conference faculty were nationally recognized leaders in their fields of medicine, research, government, finance, operations, and business. The topics we covered are essential if agencies like ACR Health are to operate efficiently and successfully as the world of health care evolves.

We attended classes twelve hours each day on such topics as Transitioning to Management, Operations Management, Marketing, Monitoring and Evaluation, the Patient Experience, Medical Informatics, Health Economics, Making the Business Case, Finance, Strategic Restructuring, Partnerships and Collaborations, Negotiations, and Leading and Managing Change, External Environment, and Strategy for implementing our Community Health Improvement Project (CHIP).

The 11 days were nonstop; the wisdom and experience I gained is invaluable. These skills and knowledge gained will help ACR Health today and in the future navigate the changing healthcare environment.

The conference gave me a sense of context that I didn’t have before. Being able to compare the work at ACR Health with that of other agencies around the country made me appreciate the immense amount of effort and resources that New York State invests in HIV/AIDS. No other state compares to ours, and many other states do very little to prevent the spread of HIV or provide services for those affected by it.

There are some states that do not invest state resources in the fight against AIDS, using only federal money that Ryan White Legislation offers. At ACR Health, those basic services are bolstered by programs like housing, nutrition, employment services, and behavioral health. Several states refuse to accept Medicaid funding as part of the Affordable Care Act and offer no insurance for the uninsured and poor. At ACR Health we can enroll people in health insurance in about 20 to 40 minutes.

My main undertaking at the Health Care Executive Program was to develop a Community Health Improvement Project. Andrew and I worked on a plan to strengthen ACR Health’s current process for newly hired staff. ACR Health will go from a 3-5 hour orientation to a multiple day comprehensive orientation and on-boarding process. The CHIP will bring new hires up to speed on what they need to know to hit the ground ready to perform.

A conference highlight for me was making connections with other Health Care Executives from around the country, which will be a valuable resource for ACR Health.

Continued on Page 3
When people gather around a table they share much more than food. They build the foundations of community together. This was the idea behind the creation of the No-Hitch Luncheon, founded in October 1991 by Rex Lobdell, when ACR Health was known as AIDS Task Force of Central New York. No-Hitch’s mission from the beginning was to provide a space for those affected by HIV/AIDS to meet and commiserate over a common meal. No-Hitch wasn’t just a communal forum or a cookout; it was a family in every sense of the word. Twenty-four years our dedicated volunteers continue to serve healthy, savory lunches twice a month to those affected by chronic illness. The same familial spirit persists as the team strives to meet the challenge of caring for a growing community.

For the past 15 years Marietta Rowe has served as leader of the No-Hitch Luncheon, enthusiastically and dependably setting a well prepared meal before dozens of hungry people two times a month. Now, Marietta plans to move to South Dakota, and ACR Health is looking to fill some big shoes at the No-Hitch Luncheon.

Marietta is more than a volunteer; she is an institution! She has planned menus, bought food, transported supplies, organized volunteer tasks, cooked, cleaned, and arranged the set-up and take-down of the dining room. In spite of the stress that comes with being in the kitchen, Marietta consistently sets a high bar for excellence. She makes her team members and her guests feel appreciated and valued. A taste of one of her signature desserts is divine. “When I first started, fixing the No-Hitch Luncheon was a chore,” said Marietta Rowe. “But the luncheon has turned into one of the highlights of my life. I enjoy the day and have the opportunity to meet some of the most real people I know.”

Are you looking for another way to give back to your community? Want to show off your gastronomic prowess? Come join our No-Hitch Luncheon family! We are looking for culinary leaders who are dependable, hard-working, pro-active, creative, goal oriented, adaptable, inclusive, and able to budget, just like Marietta.

For more information, contact Mary Doody at the Volunteer Dept at: 315-475-2430 ext. 601 or volunteer@ACRHealth.org.
Thank you, Outback Steakhouse of Clay!

ACR Health wants to publicly thank Outback Steakhouse of Clay for generously hosting the $500 Club Party for people raising $500 or more at the 23rd Annual AIDS Walk/Run, held June 7 at Beaver Lake Nature Center. The party is ACR Health’s way to say thank you to the 70 outstanding donors who joined hundreds of others to raise more than $150,000. We use this money to equip youth at risk for unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases – including HIV, and alcohol and substance abuse with information and skills needed to make healthy choices throughout their lives, and for emergency client needs.

Without important partners like Outback Steakhouse of Clay, ACR Health would not be able to attract needed donations. They treated our donors like royalty and gave them the best of the menu – all free of charge. Outback Steakhouse Clay’s generosity makes us look good as we thank the donors who worked so hard for us.

Carrie Portzline-Large
Development Director

I feel most fortunate to be doing HIV/AIDS work in New York State. New York has a plan to End AIDS by 2020. No other state is even talking about that. New York is investing millions of dollars to End AIDS, and ACR Health is implementing the plan that will make it happen!

Wil Muntauagh

Special thanks to the Outback Steakhouse Crew pictured here: Dark Markham, Nicole Ricker, Debbie Carter, Sarah McCauley, Donald McKinney and Outback Steakhouse Clay, for your public spirit.
“It would be impossible for us to offer equivalent opportunities without this gift from The David Bohnett Foundation.” The Q Center Open House also features a new and improved professional style kitchen, with major funding from Laci’s Tapas Bar owners Laura Serway and Cindy Seymour; Gail Hamner and M. Daniel Bingham, and Olum’s Appliances.

The Q Center’s computers have been replaced with eight new all-in-one Apple iMac Intel Core computers, preinstalled wireless capability, a graphics package, cameras, Microsoft Small Business software, and a Lexmark Color Laser Printer, along with additional equipment, all valued at $28,000.

Since the original David Bohnett CyberCenter was installed eight years ago, it has contributed significantly to the success of young people through tutoring, educational, and afterschool programs. “The CyberCenter expands opportunities and horizons for Q Center youth,” said ACR Youth Services Director, Marissa Rice.

Visitors met ACR Health’s Youth Services Division staff, the Q Center event committee and dozens of volunteers to learn about expanded services such as Care Management for LGBTQ youth, transportation, and new support groups, in addition to traditional core leadership, advocacy, sexual health and safety programming.

An estimated 300 youth take part in Q Center programming at the center and throughout the community each year.

“ACR Health is fully committed to providing a top notch facility where youth can be themselves, be accepted, and graduate out of our care into successful lives,” said ACR Health Deputy Executive Director, Wil Murtaugh. “The Q Center is really a community effort, with funding coming from the United Way, Onondaga County, and New York State; but much of our funding comes from donors who want to see good things happen for LGBTQ youth.”
55-year-old John was in serious need of health insurance when he met with ACR Health Navigator Emily Williams in April. He was working as an adjunct faculty member for two online colleges based in Illinois and California. He had been uninsured for 15 years.

In early March he suffered severe pain, nausea, and vomiting. He was admitted to the hospital and underwent surgery to remove an infected gall bladder. During surgery, it was discovered that he also had pancreatitis. Within a couple of weeks he recovered from surgery and returned to work.

On March 29th, John was in the middle of teaching an online podcast when he suffered a stroke. His motor skills, physical, and verbal capabilities remained in good condition, but he was now unable to work. With more than $100,000 in medical debt, he came to ACR Health for help.

“He had all proper documentation from paystubs, emails with employers, social security card, and driver’s license, so this should have been a straightforward enrollment,” said Emily Williams. However John’s case turned into a snarl of bureaucratic runaround from employers to government database conflicts, and the insurance application stayed partially complete for two months. During that time the client was unable to see a doctor or obtain prescriptions.

Emily stuck with it, expending many long hours of effort, and by mid-June John had qualified for Medicaid.

“That’s a very important designation, because Medicaid will cover medical costs incurred in the three months prior to application. What we don’t yet have is a final Medicaid retroactive takeover of the costs.”

At this point, the client is grateful that he is finally insured and getting the medication he needs as well as primary and specialty care. He is panicky about his previous medical bills, especially when he gets a call from debt collectors.

Emily contacts the Marketplace every day seeking resolution. She feels confident this will all work out. All the paperwork is accurate and in place, and she is going to stay on the case.
ACR Health’s Criminal Justice Initiative (CJI) works individually with inmates to develop transitional plans for health care, risk reduction, and services upon release from prison, and conducts peer education groups for those housed in eight New York State Department of Corrections facilities in the Watertown and Elmira HUBS.

One such individual had been incarcerated for a couple years; learned of our services and requested help to make sure he would be able to return to his previous providers upon his release. ACR Health Prevention Health Advocates Drew Pearson and Elizabeth Wright discovered that the inmate had been discriminated against on several levels, none of which they could really do much about. They were able to talk with him about his concerns and kept him optimistic about his upcoming release.

Despite stating that his name was incorrect when he was given official identification, it was not rectified. This kind of thing could have denied him needed services upon release.

Drew and Elizabeth were able to take him on as a client, and he was able to sign releases for necessary information with both names. This allowed them to prove his eligibility for further services: transportation once he arrived in NYC to be taken to a shelter; Medicaid was put in place, prescriptions for his medications, etc. He felt confident that his release from the Dept. of Corrections would be a positive one. “Working with incarcerated individuals takes some finesse, as they are not accustomed to trusting people at their word. With time and continuous effort, that trust becomes vital to the relationship. And word of mouth, in prison, is better than any Presidential Campaign!” said Elizabeth.

Although there were many obstacles in his way, this client was able to look beyond them and see the bigger picture. This is only a brief moment in working with this particular client, and others like him. It shows how difficult it can be to obtain and provide the most basic services for inmates so they can have a successful re-entry into society. “Many times, authorities think that breaking someone down in order to rebuild them will help them to work in society,” said Drew. “Most times, that process leads to a further broken individual...stripped of their dignity and humanity.”

Without his consent, his name had been changed on all his medical records. The “new” name given to him by prison officials reflected a more derogatory reference towards his personal identification as MSM (men who have sex with men). This is the name he would be referred to whenever he was called out publicly, in need of services, or in attendance in groups or classes.

Thankfully, this client was afforded the opportunity to change not only his behaviors, but his outlook on his life. He was grateful to get connected to the CJI Program and Drew and Elizabeth said they were honored to be a part of the positive start to his bright future.
Safety First Outreach – and all that jazz

At ACR Health, we like to think we originated the term “neighborhood outreach” with our Safety First Outreach projects that brought sexual health and safety education into city neighborhoods. That’s why our prevention programs are an excellent fit to sponsor and participate in the acclaimed JAZZ IN THE CITY Neighborhood Outreach Concert Series this summer in Syracuse.

CNY Jazz Central wants to “reconnect urban residents to their culture, bring diverse groups from the suburbs and the neighborhoods together, and provide educational and cultural benefits to youth and residents.” Minority small businesses were invited to vend at no cost, and community service groups, like ACR Health got a chance to “meet people where they’re at.”

ACR Health outreach crews set up shop at all four concerts, which were held at four different spots around the city. “While we swayed to the rhythm of the music, we also engaged with lots of people about staying safe from HIV and other STDs,” said Nicole Gibson, Senior Prevention Health Advocate. “It’s important to ‘meet people where they’re at,’ and jazz provides great background music for a frank, informative talk.”

August 20, North Salina Street, Syracuse - JAZZ IN THE CITY provided the perfect opportunity for Safety First Outreach teams to reach into new neighborhoods. Pictured: Tyler Gilyard, of ACR Health’s Syringe Exchange Program, Nicole Gibson, ACR Health’s Women’s Program, Julia Bieniek, ACR Health Support Services Care Manager, and Peer-volunteer, Shawn Pope.

In the Mohawk Valley...
ACR Health moves to Genesee Street

ACR Health has relocated its Mohawk Valley headquarters to 287 Genesee Street at the corner of Genesee and Dakin Streets in Utica. The space is much larger, conveniently located on a bus route, with expanded space for ACR Health’s stand-alone programs.

The increased number of employees and consumers served made the move a must. “In the past 18 months we have opened the Q2, established a Syringe Exchange Program, and greatly expanded the number of people we see for Care Management services through Health Homes,” said Mohawk Valley Regional Manager Nicole Deveny. “The additional space gives us state-of-the-art office space and some much-needed breathing room.”

Only the address has changed. Telephone numbers for ACR Health remain the same: 793.0661 OR 800.475.2430.
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

**September 10, 2015 - Thursday**
**Couch to 5K in 5 Weeks – Orientation**
6:00 – 7:30 p.m. at Mustard Seed
Get in shape in time for the First Frost AIDS Walk/Run. Weekly cross training, nutrition, and group runs presented by Page Fitness.
To register call **Page Fitness** 786-8032 or TinyURL.com/C25K2015

**September 20, 2015 - Sunday**
**Summer’s Over What a Drag**
Drag Show with Amber Skyy and special line-up, featuring Nikki Fenmore.
$10 includes crudites and champagne bar. Buy tickets at ACRHealth.org.
5:00 p.m. Paddock Club, 1 Public Square, Watertown.

**October 18, 2015 - Sunday**
**16th Annual First Frost AIDS Walk/Run 5K**
1:00 p.m. Thompson Park Zoo, and Conservatory, Watertown. Sign up as an individual or a team. AIDSwalkCNY.com. Together we can #endAIDS.

**December 1, 2015 - Tuesday**
**World AIDS Day**
Remembrance service at 7:30 a.m. at LeMoyne College’s Panasci Chapel.

**December 2015**
**Holiday Angels**
Join us as we brighten the holiday season for those affected by chronic diseases (including HIV/AIDS) by providing needed items as gifts for ACR Health clients. Call 800.475.2430 for more information.

**Marketing Opportunities Available**
ACR Health has numerous fundraising and educational events in nine New York counties: Cayuga, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, and St. Lawrence. Sponsorship of ACR Health’s special events offers a marketing opportunity guaranteed to introduce thousands of area residents to your business all while publicizing your support of a good cause. Call Carrie Portzline-Large at 800.475.2430 or email events@ACRHealth.org to learn more.

**Build a Strong Neighborhood**
Want to host a giving party at your house and donate the proceeds to ACR Health? We can help you! Contact us today at 800.475.2430 or events@ACRHealth.org.

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 programs for LGBTQ youth, including 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 Group in Little Falls**
Information: 315. 793.0661 ext. 133 or glbtqyouth@ACRHealth.org

**Utica: The Q2 LBGTQ Youth Groups**
Information: 315.793.0661 ext. 133 or glbtqyouth@ACRHealth.org

**Watertown: Qubed LGBTQ Youth Group**
Information: 315.785.8222 ext. 377

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