Creating an Age-Friendly Plan for the NYS Master Plan for Aging

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Speaker Biographies

Bob Blancato, MPA is the National Coordinator of the bipartisan 3000-member Elder Justice Coalition. He is the President of Matz, Blancato and Associates, located in Washington, D.C. He also serves as the Executive Director of the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs and the National Coordinator of the Defeat Malnutrition Today coalition. Bob has long been recognized as a national advocate with policy expertise on behalf of older adults. Bob’s prior work history includes 17 years as a staffer in Congress and an appointment by President Clinton to be the Executive Director of the 1995 White House Conference on Aging, one of four he has participated in. He is a member of the Senior Executive Service. As a volunteer, he currently serves on the National Board of AARP and the board of the National Hispanic Council on Aging. In 2019, Bob began a four-year term on the National Advisory Committee on Rural Health and Human Services, appointed by HHS Secretary Azar. Bob holds a BA from Georgetown University and an MPA from American University. Bob has won numerous awards for advocacy, most recently the American Society for Aging’s ASA Hall of Fame Award in March 2020.

Jane Carmody, DNP, MBA, RN, FAAN is a Senior Program Officer at The John A. Hartford Foundation, a national private foundation dedicated to improving the care of older adults. As Senior Program Officer, Dr. Carmody works with Foundation leadership and staff to guide and support grant-funded initiatives in the United States in three priority areas: Age-Friendly Health Systems, Family Caregiving, and Serious Illness and End of Life. Her portfolio of grants include programs to create age-friendly public health systems, strengthen community-based services for older adults, disseminate dementia care programs and resources, and further develop and promote standards and best practices in emergency, surgical, and home-based hospital care of older adults.

Lori Frank, PhD is Senior Vice President for Research, Policy, and Programs with the New York Academy of Medicine. Her work is focused on incorporating community perspectives in health research and policy to advance health equity. She is Past President of the International Society for Quality of Life Research, a professional society devoted to health outcomes assessment, and she serves on the Board of the Personalized Medicine Coalition and on the Medical, Scientific, and Memory Screening Advisory Board of the Alzheimer's Foundation of America. She is an Affiliated Adjunct Scientist with the RAND Corporation, where she worked.
prior to joining NYAM. She completed her Health and Aging Policy Fellowship through the Congressional Fellowship Program and prior to that she founded and served as Program Director, Evaluation and Analysis, at the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI). She has held research and teaching positions with Georgetown University Department of Psychiatry, the National Institute on Aging, Medimmune LLC/AstraZeneca, and the Veteran’s Administration. She completed postdoctoral training in Mental Health Services Research with the VA Health Services Research and Development program. Her PhD is in Human Development/Gerontology from the Pennsylvania State University and her MA is in Biopsychology from the Johns Hopkins University.

Terry Fulmer, PhD, RN, FAAN, is President of The John A. Hartford Foundation in New York City, a foundation dedicated to improving the care of older adults. She serves as the chief strategist for the Foundation and her vision for better care of older adults is catalyzing the Age-Friendly Health Systems social movement. She is an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine and served on the independent Coronavirus Commission for Safety and Quality in Nursing Homes. She previously served as Distinguished Professor and Dean of Health Sciences at Northeastern University and Founding Dean of the New York University College of Nursing. Dr. Fulmer is nationally and internationally recognized as a leading expert in geriatrics and is also known for conceptualization and development of the national NICHE program and research on the topic of elder abuse and neglect. She is the first nurse to have served on the board of the American Geriatrics Society. She is also the first nurse to have served as President of the Gerontological Society of America, which awarded her the 2019 Donald P. Kent Award for exemplifying the highest standards for professional leadership in the field of aging.

Adam Herbst, Esq. is Special Advisor to the New York State Health Commissioner on Aging and LTC. In this position, Adam Herbst is responsible for advising on long-term care matters, including the future of service delivery, oversight of regulated providers, needs of caregivers, strategies for cost growth reduction, and overall connection with the health care system. Mr. Herbst is a seasoned health care professional with extensive knowledge of public health, hospitals and long term care policy and programs. He has worked on issues related to housing, education and economic development, and has trial experience in both federal and state courts. He is a frequent speaker on health care access and is an adjunct professor at Columbia University’s Mailman School, New York Medical College and New York Law School. He teaches on health policy and bioethics.
Elana Kieffer, MBA is the Director of NYAM’s Center for Healthy Aging. She has nearly 15 years of experience working in a wide range of older adult services, with a focus on project management, program development, and sales and marketing. Prior to her time at the Academy, Elana worked at The New Jewish Home and at MJHS Hospice and Palliative Care. She also worked in affordable and market-rate senior housing for two Boston-based organizations, The Community Builders and Hebrew SeniorLife. Elana has an MBA in nonprofit management with a concentration in aging services from the Heller School at Brandeis University.

Kristen McManus is the Associate State Director of Advocacy for AARP New York. After spending six years as a staff member in the State Assembly, Ms. McManus joined AARP to focus her efforts on housing, livability, consumer protection, and financial security issues impacting older New Yorkers. In addition to her advocacy work, Ms. McManus served as the consumer representative on the state’s Out-of-Network Reimbursement Rate Workgroup, as well as the workgroup on Principle Based Reserving for Life Insurers.

Nora OBrien-Suric, Ph.D., became the president of the Health Foundation for Western and Central New York in 2017. She has over 20 years of experience in philanthropy; with The John A. Hartford Foundation and The Brookdale Foundation. Both foundations provide funding nationally to support services that enhance the quality of life and healthcare for older adults and their caregivers. Earlier in her career, Dr. OBrien-Suric worked with community-based organizations focused on services to older adults, including the New York City Department for the Aging and the Institute on Law and Rights for Older Adults. Dr. OBrien-Suric established the position of Director of National and Internal Partnership at the International Longevity Centre Global Alliance; and served as the vice chair of the United Nations NGO Committee on Ageing, which provided consultation to the development of the United Nations International Plan on Action on Ageing in 2002. Dr. OBrien-Suric holds a doctoral degree in social welfare from Hunter College School of Social Work, a master’s degree in gerontology from the California State University at Dominguez Hills, and a certificate in geriatric mental health counseling from the University of Southern California Davis School.

Greg Olsen, MSW, is Director of the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA). In this role, he is responsible for the administration of federal and state funded programs that assist more than 4.6 million older adults and 4 million informal caregivers across New York State. Working with public and private partners at the state and local level, Greg is leading the effort to rebrand what aging in New York looks like. Some of his key accomplishments over more than two decades in the field of aging include starting Livable New York in 2005, the pre-curser to age-friendly communities; helping New York State receive AARP/WHO designation as the first age friendly state in 2017; implementing a grant program to expand age-friendly communities across the state; developing a business acumen project to help the aging services network partner with health systems to expand
access to home and community services; leading New York State in the expansion of Enhanced Multidisciplinary Teams to address elder abuse and neglect; testing a variety of innovative projects supporting aging in place, combating social isolation, meeting the needs of older adults and their families; and much more. Prior to joining NYSOFA, Greg served as chief of staff and legislative and policy director for Assemblyman Steve Englebright, former chair of the Assembly Standing Committee on Aging. Before that, he was executive director of the New York State Alliance for Retired Americans, a union supported organization representing hundreds of thousands of union retirees. He also served as executive director of the New York State Coalition for the Aging. He received his master’s degree in social work with a specialty in gerontology from Syracuse University’s Maxwell School.

Judith A. Salerno, MD, MS, is President of The New York Academy of Medicine and is leading its strategic vision to advance health equity. Dr. Salerno is a physician executive and one of the nation’s pre-eminent leaders in health and healthcare. Prior to coming to NYAM, she served as President and CEO of Susan G. Komen™, the world’s largest breast cancer organization. She also served as the Leonard D. Schaeffer Executive Officer of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, Deputy Director of the National Institute on Aging at the National Institutes of Health, and Chief Consultant for Geriatrics and Extended Care for the U.S. Veterans Health Administration. Dr. Salerno is board-certified in internal medicine and holds an MD degree from Harvard Medical School and a Master of Science in Health Policy from the Harvard School of Public Health. She was elected as a member of the National Academy of Medicine in 2018 and was elected as a Fellow of The New York Academy of Medicine in 2017.

Jameela Yusuff, MD, MPH, MSHCDL, FACP, is Associate Professor of Medicine and joined University Hospital of Brooklyn as Chief Medical Officer in April 2021. She began working with the STAR Health Center (SHC) in 2006 and subsequently served as its Medical Director until April 2021. Dr. Yusuff remains an Attending Physician at the SHC. She is a graduate of Mt. Sinai School of Medicine and is board certified in internal medicine and infectious disease. In 2012 she received a Master of Public Health from SUNY Downstate's School of Public Health. In 2013, she was awarded with the distinction of being a Fellow of the American College of Physicians. In 2020, Dr. Yusuff earned a Master of Science in Healthcare Delivery Leadership from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mt. Sinai, and received an Achievement Award for Best Capstone Project. Dr. Yusuff received a Jetblue Healthcare Heroes Award resulting from staff nominations, and she received an Award for Excellence from SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University based on patient nominations. Dr. Yusuff is also on the National Quality Forum's Opioid and Behavioral Health Committee and the SUNY Downstate Chair of Faculty Professional Policy Appointment and Promotions Committee.