

New York StateWide Senior Action Council, Inc.

ULSTER COUNTY UPDATE

Ulster County Chapter President: Claire O'Brien; Email: claireaob@yahoo.com; Phone: 908-442-0142



Claire O'Brien, President
Ulster County Chapter

Dear Members and Friends:

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season. 2019 was the Ulster County Chapter of NY StateWide Senior Action Council's second year in

"business." I want to thank all of you for your contributions

to our chapter and hope you will continue to enjoy participation in StateWide. We stayed true to our mission of educating and advocating for seniors in Ulster County and beyond.

1 We had several meetings & covered issues such as Financial Fraud of the Elderly, Legislative Issues relevant to seniors, the New York Health Act and the major challenge of the home care worker shortage in our state. We are not alone as this is a national issue.

2 We hosted several screenings of the CARE Documentary around the county and one of our members is participating in gathering data from former, active and interested Home Health Care Aides to have concrete information from those that are doing the work, who have done the work or are interested in doing the hard work that Health Care workers perform.

3 We participated in "Grass Roots Day" in Albany and besides being with hundreds of liked minded people, we met with our local representatives or their staff and even had the pleasure of meeting and talking with Senator May who heads the NY State Senate Committee on

Aging. We are fortunate to have one of our members, Kelly McMullen, participating on Senator May's Advisory Council.

4 We had meetings with Senator Jen Metzger, Rep. Antonio Delgado's staff and the newly elected County Executive, Pat Ryan. All meetings were



Mary Ann Hildebrandt, Claire O'Brien,
Helen Edelstein & Senator Jen Metzger

very positive and we felt we had strong support from each of these elected officials.

5 We had members testify at NY State Assembly and Senate Public Hearings on the NY Health Act as well.



Kelly McMullen, a member of NY StateWide's Ulster County Chapter testifies before the Joint Assembly and Senate Health Committees in support of the NY Health Act.

6 Dr. Sadia Hussain from the Institute For Family Health presented a power point presentation on Senior Health Issues.

For more information call 800-333-4374 or visit our website at www.nysenior.org

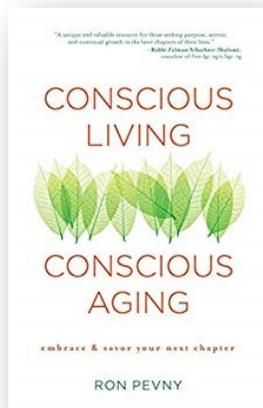
Letter from the President (cont.)

7 On a lighter note, we had our first chapter **Mix and Mingle** which we feel was a great success. Besides members, we had County Executive Pat Ryan, Senator Jen Metzger and Kingston Mayor Steve Noble attend our event. The Evergreen Chorus, an award winning acapella group, entertained for those attending. They were spectacular. We hope to make the Mix and Mingle an annual event keeping in mind weather and avoiding dark evening hours.



The Evergreen Chorus

8 We wanted to mention a group we are forming that will focus on issues related to elder-hood. If you are interested in participating please e-mail: claireaob@yahoo.com -or- Helen Edelstein at he1218@live.com. We will be using a book titled "Conscious Living/ Conscious Aging" by Ron Pevny as our guide into this group adventure. This isn't a book club per say, but we feel this book is a great way to get started in our discussions. It is an outstanding piece of work on examining this next or present stage of one's life in order to make it as rich and rewarding as possible. The book is available in paperback on Amazon and at local book stores. We suggest you buy the book as you'll want to underline and take notes.



It's certainly going to be a challenging year for our country with the upcoming Presidential Election and the awesome efforts needed to complete as accurately as possible the 2020 census.

Special thanks to our newsletter team: Martha Steuding, MaryAnn Hildebrandt, Kelly McMullen and Helen Edelstein

Thank you so much for all you do,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Claire L. O'Brien".

Claire L. O'Brien,
Ulster County Chapter President

RECOMMENDED SENIOR READING

Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters

In The End by Atul Gawande

The Age of Dignity: Preparing For The Elder

Boom In A Changing America by Ai-jen



Senior Advocacy



As many of you know we have asked you to complete surveys about your interests in topics for presentations & meetings. By tailoring our presentations and meetings in this way, we increase participation of current members and cultivate interest in those who are considering joining - at least that is our hope.

We believe also that **it is important to provide you information about the federal and state legislative priorities of NY StateWide Senior Action Council** because, at any given time, a legislative priority can become active - that is to say, there is active consideration of the topic at either state or federal levels. This gives members the opportunity to advocate for the bill, so that the outcome would be favorable to achieving a StateWide priority. In this way, you use your power as a voter to have your opinion heard and to sway the actions of elected representatives in directions you support.

Another way to accomplish StateWide priorities can be via your direct action.

While not all the problems facing seniors and their families can be positively impacted with direct and personal efforts, many can.

StateWide members have had personal experience in getting involved at this level and can tell you that it can be deeply meaningful and rewarding. We are talking about direct and personal efforts targeting a situation that we know can be made better. It feels really good to accomplish even the smallest of goals for

others and our efforts can demonstrate new paths for improving the situation more generally. Here are a few examples:

Be a Benefits Ambassador: There are many qualifying seniors who are not signed up for the Medicare Savings Programs. This is tragic because the income levels for qualifying are low, so it stands to reason that the savings would be valuable to the people who could benefit from Medicare premium relief. If we had members who were interested in learning about the savings program and who were willing to reach out to seniors with information on the enrollment process, we could improve the situation locally.



Florence Staats, Karen Miller, Martha Steuding, Helen Edelstein working on Chapter priorities

Be an advisor to hospitals and other systems of health care with regard to patient care. Hospital systems are required to have committees which focus on the patient experience with an eye toward improving that experi-

ence. We would love to have StateWide members be a part of those kinds of health care quality improvement efforts. This involvement would inform our membership as well. These examples represent opportunities for your direct action and personal efforts. We can help you understand what these are, can help you with getting connected and can support your efforts in positively impacting outcomes. In future newsletters and meetings, we will be sharing the Statewide priorities with an eye toward members interests in local advocacy as well as direct involvement solutions.

2019 StateWide Convention

2019 CONVENTION

Members of the Ulster County Chapter (Claire, Helen, Martha, Mary Ann, Kelly) attended StateWide's 2019 Convention in Saratoga in October. The theme of this year's convention was Let's Get Social: Social Media, Social Justice Social Security. An array of speakers presented on issues including:

- Avoiding Senior Scams
- Aging Services
- Improving Patient Care
- Protecting Patient Rights
- Using Social Media



Senator Rachel May



Assemblyman Harry Bronson

Senator Rachel May, the Chair of the NYS Senate Aging Committee and Assemblyman Harry Bronson, Chair of the NYS Assembly Aging Committee provided updates on the work of their committees. On the final day of the convention, the Public Policy Committee presented StateWide's legislative priorities for the coming year.

During a break between presentations, Ulster Chapter members hosted a booth providing conventioners with information on the NY Health Act and asking conventioners to contribute their thoughts on "What Medicare Means to Me." Our team had the opportunity to meet and talk to StateWide members and advocates from across the State to hear their views on Medicare and the NY Health Act.



L to R: Mary Ann Hildebrandt, Helen Edelstein, Kelly McMullen, Martha Steuding, Claire O'Brien



The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) is looking for volunteers to prevent, detect and report fraud in their communities. Call our Fraud Helpline at **800-333-4374** for more information.

MEMBER DISCOUNT

NY StateWide members receive a discount on the Annual Convention Registration Fee.



NY STATEWIDE SENIOR ACTION COUNCIL

Annual Convention *October 13-15, 2020*

Holiday Inn, Saratoga Springs, New York

2019 StateWide Convention

AWARDS DINNER

A highlight of the 2019 Convention was the Award's Dinner. Claire O' Brien and Helen Edelstein had the honor of presenting the Robert E. O'Donnell Memorial Award to our own Kelly McMullen in recognition of her work in promoting and developing the NY StateWide Senior Action Council. Kelly was nominated for the Robert E. O'Donnell Memorial Award by Chapter President, Claire O'Brien.

Kelly is a community activist and committed advocate. She is a founding member of the Ulster Chapter of StateWide, a member of StateWide's Public Policy Committee, a member of Senator May's Committee on Aging's Advisory Council, an advocate with the NY Caring Majority and the former Director of the Ulster County Office for the Aging. As Director of the OFA, Kelly created a vision and developed initiatives to strengthen the services and supports offered to seniors and their families.

During her tenure, she introduced NY StateWide Senior Action Council to Ulster County. In 2016, she convened a group of advocates & community leaders with the goal of learning more about the work of StateWide; this group would become the founding members of the Ulster County Chapter.



Claire O'Brien presenting the Robert E. O'Donnell Memorial Award to Kelly McMullen.

In her retirement, Kelly continues to be an active member of StateWide bringing her energy, enthusiasm and expertise to issues impacting Seniors. She is a dynamic advocate for the NY Health Act and has been instrumental in having long term care included in the bill. In addition, she works tirelessly to educate the community, advocate with elected officials and create collaborations to address the critical home care worker shortage.

The Executive Team and its membership congratulate Kelly on being the recipient of the 2019 Robert E. O'Donnell Memorial Award.



Ulster County Board Member Mary Ann Hildebrandt, Executive Director Maria Alvarez, Kelly McMullen, Board President Mario Henry

SMP REMINDER

UNKNOWN NUMBERS



**IF YOU DON'T
KNOW IT,
DON'T
ANSWER IT**

#SMP

StateWide Membership

YES! I want to join/renew my NY StateWide Senior Action Council Membership.

If there is an asterisk () on your envelope address label, your 2020 dues have not yet been received.

Check box:

- Individual Membership \$ 20/year
 Couple Membership \$ 25/year
 Lifetime Membership \$ 150/individual
 Lifetime Membership \$ 200/couple
 Organization Membership \$ 75/year

Check box:

- New Member
 Renewal
 Contribution \$ _____
 Rose Kryzak Legacy Fund \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

County _____ Affiliated Organization _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

You can contact us at **518-436-1006**. Please make your check payable to: **NY StateWide Senior Action Council** Send this form to: **NY StateWide Senior Action Council, 275 State Street, Albany, NY 12210**
All dues and contributions are tax deductible.

STATE BUDGET BRIEFING CALLS

1. Briefing on Aging Issues in the State Budget
Thursday, JAN. 30th, 10 AM
2. Briefing on Medicaid and other (non-Aging specific) issues in the State Budget
Thursday, FEB. 20th, 10 AM

Call in numbers.

712-832-8330

OR

218-339-7800

Access code 4715203#

PATIENT ADVOCATES PROGRAM TELEPHONE TEACH INS

Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2020

Time: 10:00 am - 11:00 am

Topic: How to Plan for a Funeral & Know Your Rights

Speaker: Elvira Hoffman, former President of the Funeral Consumer's Alliance of Long Island & NYC, Inc.

Call in number: 712-832-8330 –or– 218-339-7800;

Access code: 4715203#

Our next Teach-ins:

- February 18: Community Health Centers Helping Medically Underserved Areas of NYS.
- March 24, Code Blue Report: NY Hospitals Poor Performance by the NY Public Interest Research Grp.
- April 21, Empowering New York Consumers in an Era of Hospital Consolidation.

For more information call 800-333-4374 or visit our website at www.nysenior.org