

Speakers and Bios



Ray Babowicz is Director of Communications, Government Relations, and Marketing at the Community Health Center of the North Country (CHCNC) where he is tasked with Strategic Partnership Development to improve population health in the areas CHCNC serves.

He holds a Bachelor of Science in Telecommunication Management from Syracuse University, and was trained as a Phlebotomy Technician at Frederick Community College.

He has a private pilot license.

Ray sits on a number of Community Based Organizations' Boards that deal directly with healthcare and the social determinants of health. He is also active with Chambers of Commerce activities in both Gouverneur and Ogdensburg because he believes that if a community is not economically vibrant, the residents will not achieve optimal health. He also is involved in American and Canadian cross border collaboration amongst our respective community health centers.



Mary T. Bassett is the Director of the FXB Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University, as well as the FXB Professor of the Practice of Health and Human Rights at the Harvard School of Public Health. With more than 30 years of experience in public health, Dr. Mary Travis Bassett has dedicated her career to advancing health equity. Prior to her directorship at the FXB Center, Dr. Bassett served for four years as commissioner of Health for New York City. As commissioner,

she worked to ensure that every New York City neighborhood supported the health of its residents, with the goal of closing gaps in population health across the city.

Originally from New York City, Dr. Bassett lived in Zimbabwe for nearly 20 years. Previously, she was the Program Director for the African Health Initiative and the Child Well-being Program at the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. She received her B.A. in History and Science from Harvard University and her M.D. from Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons. She served her medical residency at Harlem Hospital Center, and has a master's degree in Public Health from the University of Washington, where she was a Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholar.

Speakers and Bios



Charles Bell is Programs Director for the advocacy division of Consumer Reports. He works closely with CR advocates in California, New York, Texas, and Washington, D.C. on a wide range of consumer policy issues, including healthcare restructuring, financial services, energy, telecommunications, & the environment. He also engages in direct advocacy in the north-eastern states on CR's priority campaign issues, and works to develop grants, organizational collaborations, and events.

He also manages the Colston E. Warne Program, which provides financial & technical support for U.S. & international consumer organizations.



Hon. Harry Bronson was first elected to the New York State Assembly in November 2010. The 138th District includes parts of the City of Rochester and the suburban and rural towns of Henrietta and Chili. Harry's passion for social justice, equality and fairness has defined his public service, legal and business careers.

Having grown up on a farm with 11 siblings, Mr. Bronson's parents taught him the importance of family, hard work and community service. Those early lessons have had a lifelong

impact and, having come from very modest means, Harry learned the value of public education. After earning an undergraduate degree in Public Justice from SUNY Oswego, Mr. Bronson attended the University of Buffalo, where he earned a Juris Doctor. He has always stood with workers and the labor community and fought for workers' rights. As the chair of the Assembly Committee on Aging, he is working to advance legislation aimed at protecting the quality of life, health, safety and independence of aging New Yorkers. He is committed to ensuring older New Yorkers in our communities are able to enjoy a high quality of life as they age.

As a member of the LGBTQ community, he is committed to equality for all people. His work embraces and promotes the simple principle that all human beings have dignity and that no matter who you are, what you look like, who you love or where you come from, we all deserve full equality and the opportunity to succeed.

Speakers and Bios



Gary S. Brown is the statewide Elder Abuse Coordinator for New York Attorney General Letitia James. He is also the Assistant Attorney General-in-Charge of the AG's Westchester Regional Office. Previously, Mr. Brown served as Director of Communications & Policy Research at the NYS Consumer Protection Board; Director of the Westchester County Dept. of Consumer Protection; Executive Director of the Fund for Modern Courts; and as an attorney in private practice. Mr. Brown is co-chair of the Westchester Elder Abuse Coalition, serves on the county's Multidisciplinary Team on Elder Abuse, and is a member of the Elder Financial Exploitation Advisory Board of the National Adult Protective Services.



Ron Deutsch is the Executive Director of the Fiscal Policy Institute, one of the most respected public voices on progressive policies and issues that especially impact those NYers with lower and middle incomes. He has been a tireless advocate for working families for the past 25 years in Albany and led the Statewide Emergency Network for Social and Economic Security (SENSES, a statewide anti-poverty advocacy organization) for 13 years and the Director New Yorkers for Fiscal Fairness for past 8 years.

At FPI, Ron Deutsch's budget work will focus on building broad coalitions around the renewal of the millionaires tax, ending the States austerity budgeting and reinvesting in our schools and cities, boosting the wages of working families, addressing deficiencies in our economic development system and promoting a progressive state and local tax structure that works for all of us. He also leads an all volunteer non-profit (www.thegivingcircle.org) that works to help improve the lives of families in the Capital District, nationally and internationally.



Bryan Fischer, Communications Lead at Livanta LLC serves as a primary liaison between the BFCC-QIO Program for healthcare providers, stakeholders, beneficiaries, and families in Livanta's BFCC-QIO service areas. Mr. Fischer holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Historic Preservation from Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg, VA and has been with Livanta since 2015. He formerly served as Assistant Dean of Admissions at Villa Julie College in Stevenson, Maryland. Before joining Livanta, Mr. Fischer worked for the Department of Defense as a senior

technical editor. Mr. Fischer is also currently a serving line officer in the Maryland Defense Force, holding the rank of Major.

Speakers and Bios



Richard N. Gottfried represents the 75th Assembly District, covering Chelsea, Hell's Kitchen, Murray Hill, Midtown and part of the Lincoln Center area in Manhattan. He is chair of the Assembly Health Committee since 1987. He is a leading state health policy-maker not only in New York but also nationally. He was a major architect of New York's landmark managed care reforms, and is continuing to fight for stronger protections for consumers and health care providers, & public support for universal access to quality, affordable health care.

Highlights of his legislative work include the passage of: the Prenatal Care Assistance Program for low income women; the Child Health Plus Program, which allows low-and moderate-income parents to get free or low-cost health insurance for their children; the law that gives patients access to information about a doctor's background and malpractice record; Family Health Plus, which provides free health coverage for low-income adults; the Health Care Proxy Law, which allows people to designate someone to make health care decisions for them if they lose decision-making capacity and the Family Health Care Decision Act, which allows family members to make health care decisions when an incapacitated person has not filled out a health care proxy; simplification of enrollment in publicly-financed programs (such as Medicaid); the HIV Testing and Confidentiality Law; laws that promote stronger primary and preventive care and formation of accountable care organizations (ACOs); and the law to legalize medical marijuana.

In the Legislature, he has been the leading proponent of patient autonomy, especially in end-of-life care, and reproductive freedom. He also sponsors the N.Y. Health bill to create a universal publicly funded single-payer health coverage plan for New York State. Each year, he fights to protect and increase funding for Medicaid, school health clinics, HIV/AIDS services, and other health concerns.

Dick Gottfried is a member of the Assembly Majority Steering Committee and the committees on Rules and Higher Education, as well as Health. He is the head of the Manhattan Assembly Delegation. He previously served as Deputy Majority Leader; Assistant Majority Leader; chair of the Assembly committees on Codes (covering the criminal justice system), and Children and Families; and chair of the Assembly task forces on the Homeless, Campaign Finance Reform, and Crime Victims.

Mr. Gottfried was first elected to the Assembly in 1970, at the age of 23, while a student at Columbia Law School. He was born in New York City in 1947. He is a graduate of Stuyvesant High School, Cornell University (BA, 1968), and Columbia Law School (JD, 1973). He is a lawyer, but does not maintain a private practice. He works full time as a legislator. He is a fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine, and a member of the American Public Health Association, the New York Civil Liberties Union, the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, the Art Students League, and the China Institute.

He lives in Manhattan with his wife, Louise, a nursery school teacher. Their son Michael and his wife have a daughter.

Speakers and Bios



Mark Hannay is Director of the Metro New York Health Care for All Campaign, a citywide coalition of community groups and labor unions founded in 1993 that advocates for fundamental health care reform leading to a universal health care program. He is a member of the Steering Committee of Health Care for All New York, and co-chairs its Organizing Committee and its LGBT Task Force. He also serves on the Steering Committees of New Yorkers for Accessible Health Coverage, and Medicaid Matters New York, and serves on the board of the NY Metro Chapter of Physicians for a National Health Program.



Eric Hausman is an Independent Consultant specializing in Medicare Education and Training. He has conducted hundreds of Medicare presentations since 1998 on all aspects of Medicare and related insurance, both to groups of people with Medicare and to professionals. Over the last 15+ years, he has served as the Lead Trainer for the HIICAP program in NYS, providing training and technical assistance to Medicare counselors throughout the state. He previously worked in the Medicare operations of Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield.

Eric holds both his BBA and MBA degrees from Baruch College in Manhattan. He loves to talk to people about Medicare.



Judith Jones is a member of StateWide's Tompkins County Chapter and has been active for many years in the Finger Lakes Chapter of the New York Health Campaign. She works diligently to advocate for the passage of the New York Health Act, pending state legislation to ensure quality health care for everyone through a single payer health care system.

Speakers and Bios



Lara Kassel is the Coordinator of Medicaid Matters New York (MMNY), a statewide coalition of over 140 organizations representing the interests of New Yorkers served by the Medicaid program. In this role, Lara organizes all of the activities of this diverse coalition, which works to ensure that Medicaid consumer interests are included, understood and met in any and all discussions on Medicaid in New York. She was a member of the original Medicaid Redesign Team, as well as the DSRIP Project Approval and Oversight Panel.



Eric Kingson, professor of social work, is a member of the Syracuse University School of Social Work's faculty. A 2007 recipient of the Syracuse University Chancellor's Citation for Faculty Excellence and Scholarly Distinction and Syracuse University's 2010 Martin Luther King, Jr. Unsung Hero Award, he is founding co-director of the Social Security Works (www.socialsecurity-works.org), and co-chairs the Strengthen Social Security Campaign (www.strengthensocialsecurity.org),

a coalition of over 300 national and state organizations. A founding board member of the National Academy of Social Insurance (NASI), he is a past-chair of the Social Research, Policy and Practice section of the Gerontological Society of America and is currently on the board of the National Committee for the Preservation Social Security and Medicare Foundation.

Kingson served as policy advisor to two presidential commissions (1982-3, 1994-5) and directed the Emerging Issues in Aging Program of the Gerontological Society of America (1984-5). He received his doctorate in 1979 from Brandeis University's Florence Heller School for Social Policy and Management; his M.P.A. in 1976 from Northeastern University. His scholarship examines the politics and economics of population aging, Social Security policy, the baby boomers, and cross-generational obligations. His research also examines the distributional effects of changes in retirement age.

Speakers and Bios



Senator Rachel May was elected to the New York State Senate in November 2018. She chairs the Senate Committee on Aging and the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources and sits on several other committees, including agriculture; elections; environmental conservation; higher education; and Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation.

Prior to her election, Senator May spent 15 years working in environmental sustainability at Syracuse University and SUNY-ESF, including serving as director of sustainability education. Before that, she was a professor of Russian language and literature, first at SUNY-Stony Brook and then at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Senator May earned a master's degree from Oxford University on a Marshall Scholarship and a Ph.D. in Russian language and literature from Stanford University. She also earned a master's degree from SUNY-ESF. She lives in Syracuse with her husband, Tom, a professor at Le Moyne College; their daughter, Sophie, is a senior at Cornell University.



Ms. Kathleen Otte is the Regional Administrator for HHS Regions I and II for the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL). In this capacity, she represents the Administration and the Assistant Secretary on Aging on all matters related to the implementation of the Older Americans Act (OAA) and other aging related issues within the 8 states and 2 territories she oversees. Prior to joining AoA, Kathleen served as the Director of the Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services for the State of New Hampshire.

Kathleen and the New Hampshire team designed and implemented a caregiver support program that received national distinction by winning the Regional Innovation Award from The Council of State Governments and developed the nation's first statewide 'Structured Decision Making' process for Adult Protective Services.

Kathleen has over 30 years' experience in the field of aging, having served or volunteered in various human service delivery programs. In 2014, Kathleen received the Spirit of Jane Addams Award for Outstanding Performance in Social Justice from Be the Evidence, International for her work with Elder Justice Initiatives.

Speakers and Bios



State Senator Gustavo Rivera has represented the 33rd Senate District in the Bronx since November of 2010. The 33rd Senate District includes the neighborhoods of Kingsbridge Heights, East Tremont, Crotona Park, Fordham, Mount Hope, Belmont, Van Nest, Claremont, and Morris Park.

Since taking office, Senator Rivera has focused his efforts on addressing issues of health inequity both legislatively and on the ground. In 2011, Senator Rivera launched the Bronx CAN (Changing Attitudes Now) Health Initiative. The goal of this community oriented health initiative is not only to encourage Bronx residents to develop healthy behaviors, but to shape

policies that will help tear down some of the institutional barriers that stand in the way of Bronxites having a healthier lifestyle.

In 2018, his passion to improve the health of New Yorkers lead Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins to appoint Senator Rivera as the Chair of the New York State Senate's Health Committee. As the Chair, Senator Rivera's goal is to collaborate with his colleagues, stakeholders, & constituents to improve health outcomes, increase access to coverage, and ensure a financially viable system for the 20 million New Yorkers he proudly serves.

Prior to his appointment to Chair, Senator Rivera served as the ranking member of the Senate Health Committee for six years. As a sitting member of the committee, Senator Rivera passed three laws to ban smoking around schools, afterschools, and libraries, and has been a champion of public health and harm reduction policies. In March 2017, he became the main sponsor of the "New York Health Act," an innovative bill to create a single payer health system in New York State.

Senator Rivera has also championed and empowered Latino communities across New York State and the United States. In 2018, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) elected Senator Rivera to serve an initial three-year term on the nonpartisan organization's 35-member Board of Directors. NALEO'S mission looks to foster civic engagement in Latino communities, increase the effectiveness of Latino policymakers, and promote policies that advance Latino political engagement. For over a decade, Senator Rivera has also served as a mentor for the annual Model State Senate program, "Somos El Futuro", sponsored by CUNY, SUNY, the NY State Assembly, and the Puerto Rican Hispanic Task Force.

Prior to becoming an elected representative, Gustavo worked as a community organizer for several local and state candidates including Jose Marcos Serrano and Andrea Stewart-Cousins' campaigns for State Senate, as well as Fernando Ferrer's 2001 campaign for Mayor of New York City. In early 2008, SEIU hired Gustavo to manage their activities on behalf of then-presidential candidate Barack Obama in several crucial primary states. Gustavo traveled to Indiana, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Texas, and his home of Puerto Rico on behalf of Senator Obama. Gustavo was then tapped by Senator Obama to serve as his Constituency Director in the crucial swing state of Florida. After the election, Gustavo returned home to New York State to serve as the Director of Outreach for U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. Additionally, Gustavo has also served as an adjunct professor at Pace University and Hunter College, where he has taught courses in political science.

Gustavo was born in Santurce, Puerto Rico. In 1998, Gustavo graduated from the University of Puerto Rico and moved to New York to begin a doctoral program in political science at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. He has lived in Kingsbridge Heights for almost 20 years.

Speakers and Bios



Katie Robbins is the Director of the Campaign for New York Health, the statewide campaign advocating for universal, guaranteed health care in New York. She was the executive director of Physicians for a National Health Program – NY Metro chapter from 2014-2017, and served as national organizer with Healthcare-NOW! from 2008 – 2011 during the health care debate leading to the passage of the Affordable Care Act.



Cynthia Rudder, PhD has been a longtime advocate for nursing home residents in New York State. Dr. Rudder was a Founder and Director of LTCCC (fka) Nursing Home Community Coalition of New York State from 1982 to 2012, and is continuing her advocacy work with a number of organizations fighting for a good quality of life and care for our most vulnerable citizens.

Dr. Rudder has received a number of awards for her research and advocacy, including a Lifetime Achievement Award from CMS in April, 2013 and the Director's Distinguished Achievement in Aging Award for Advocacy and Protecting the Rights of the Elderly from the NYS Office for the Aging in 2010.

She has been or is a member of many state and federal advisory groups and with grants from numerous foundations and governments, she has published a number of reports and articles on nursing home and assisted living.



John Silva is the News Literacy Project's senior director of education and training. He joined NLP in March 2017 with 13 years of experience as a middle and high social studies teacher with Chicago Public Schools. He first became involved with news literacy in 2014 when his students engaged in NLP's original classroom program.

A U.S. Marine Corps veteran, John spent several years in corporate telecommunications positions before deciding to become a teacher. He graduated from the University of Illinois at Chicago with a bachelor's degree in the teaching of history and has a master's degree in education, with a concentration in e-learning, from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He became a National Board Certified Teacher in 2012.

Speakers and Bios



Jean Stone is the Former Director of the Northeastern Program Integrity Field Office at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)

Jean Stone retired in July 2017 from CMS after 46 1/2 years. Her Medicare & Medicaid anti-fraud activities included conducting and leading local & national onsite investigations of providers like a 7-state DME Stop Gap Plan which revoked 490 suppliers' Medicare & Medicaid payments & enrollment;

denied >\$36M in claims; identified >\$69M in overpayments; opened 1,240 new investigations & referred 28 cases to law enforcement for more than \$51.9M in Medicare billing.

She served as CMS' liaison with federal and state law enforcement in Brooklyn, NY - 1 of 9 DOJ HEAT (Healthcare Fraud Prevention & Enforcement Action Team) Strike Forces.

Ms. Stone testified as an expert witness for the US Dept of Health and Human Services in federal court in over 50 Medicare civil and criminal trials in 8 states and Puerto Rico and trained hundreds of OIG & FBI special agents at the FBI Academy in Quantico, VA and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, GA.

She continues teaching US DHHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) Special Agents at its facility in Largo, MD, most recently on Sept 10th of this year. She has volunteered for NY's Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) since shortly after her retirement.

Speakers and Bios



Beginning in 1961, **Cathy Unsino** worked in clinical, supervisory, administrative, and teaching positions in a range of social agencies. She was both faculty advisor and field instructor for the Columbia School of Social Work and was adjunct professor for Columbia, NYU, Hunter, Fordham, Wurzweiler and Adelphi Schools of Social Work.

She was hired as a consultant in nursing homes & in Continuing Care Retirement Communities where she pioneered an approach to Changing the Culture of Nursing Homes. She was a Fellow of the Brookdale Center on Aging, Scholar-in-Residence in Aging at the University of Washington, VP of the Founding Board of the Pioneer Network and delivered the keynote for its first annual conference.

Cathy has delivered keynotes in some 35 cities across the country on nursing home transformation for professional, governmental and citizen audiences under the auspices of regional Alzheimer's Associations, the Gerontological Society of America, the American Society on Aging, the National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform (now known as the Consumer Voice), and numerous Area Agencies on Aging. After training as a psychotherapist, since 1976 she has also maintained a private practice in psychotherapy.

Speakers and Bios



Lois Uttley, MPP, is the Director of the Women's Health Program for Community Catalyst, a national consumer health advocacy organization. In that role, she is building on more than 25 years of research, policy analysis and advocacy to advance access to timely, affordable and culturally-competent health care for women, LGBTQ people and families.

Ms. Uttley, who is based in Manhattan, is active in New York consumer health advocacy, serving on the steering committee of the statewide Health Care for All NY coalition. She founded & is coordinator of a statewide consumer alliance, Community Voices for Health System

Accountability (CVHSA), that is raising consumer voices as health systems propose mergers, acquisitions, new construction, downsizing and closings of hospitals. In August of 2020, she testified before a joint hearing of the NYS Assembly & Senate Health Committees, proposing the use of Health Equity Assessments to evaluate Certificate of Need applications to determine whether CONs will improve or worsen access to health services for underserved communities.

Ms. Uttley was founder and Director of the MergerWatch Project & previously served as Vice President of Family Planning Advocates of NYS, Director of Public Affairs for the NYS Department of Health and as a journalist covering New York State government for the Albany Times Union. She has served as President of the Public Health Association of NYC and Chair of the national Action Board and Joint Policy Committee of the American Public Health Association. In New York, she has served on numerous city and state health policy advisory boards and councils. Most recently, she was a member of the NYS DOH Hospital Quality Rating Stakeholder Workgroup and the NYS DOH Workgroup on Freestanding Emergency Departments.

Ms. Uttley has deep knowledge of health systems transformation and the ways in which consumers can be affected when their local delivery systems consolidate, downsize or close. Her most recent publication, "Giving New Yorkers a Voice in Oversight of Hospital Consolidation," appeared in the Spring 2019 issue of the New York State Bar Association's Health Law Journal. She was lead author of "Empowering New York Consumers in an Era of Hospital Consolidation" (May 2018), which reported findings from a year-long study of New York's Certificate of Need (CON) program, funded by the New York State Health Foundation. The report recommended that state oversight of hospital consolidation should be more transparent and engaging of affected consumers and require hospitals to predict the impact of proposed mergers on the price of health care. A 2016 national study she co-authored, "When Hospitals Merge: Updating State Oversight to Protect Access to Care, identified best practices from among the 36 CON programs still in operation.

She has been active in national women's health advocacy as co-founder of Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need, which has regional coordinators in 27 states. She earned a Master's in Public Affairs and Policy from the Nelson A. Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy at the University at Albany and teaches in the Master's in Health Advocacy Program at Sarah Lawrence College. She was honored by the Ms. Foundation for Women with its Gloria Award, and has received awards for her women's health advocacy leadership from APHA's Maternal Health section and its Sexual and Reproductive Health section.