



# CONNECTIONS

Updates from Person Centered Services Care Coordination Organization



## TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH SPECIALIZED CASELOADS

PAGE 3

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:



A MESSAGE FROM CEO  
BRIDGET BARTOLONE  
PAGE 2

MEETING A CHALLENGE TO  
VACCINATE THOUSANDS  
PAGE 4

CARE COORDINATION  
SUCCESS STORY: TINNIAS  
PAGE 5

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION  
COMMITMENT  
PAGE 5

COMPREHENSIVE  
ASSESSMENT PROCESS  
PAGE 6

HOT TOPICS WEBINAR SERIES  
FOR FAMILIES  
PAGE 7

COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIPS  
& PARTNERSHIPS  
PAGE 7



## A MESSAGE FROM CEO BRIDGET BARTOLONE

With so many obstacles placed in front of us throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been an incredible time. Together -- with the thousands of people we serve, our agency and community partners, and our tireless and talented employees -- we have tackled countless challenges. I am very proud of the team at Person Centered Services and so honored to work with them to serve people who depend on us for high-quality Care Coordination.

Throughout the last many months, it seems the only constant has been change! It is staggering to consider the impact the pandemic has on everyone. In our work, we have the privilege and tremendous responsibility of taking care of people, both the people we support and our employees. We take very seriously our job to be advocates for the individuals, for our agency partners, and for each other. At no time has that role been more critical than in 2020 and 2021! This newsletter will give you a brief glimpse into this important work and the true impact of Care Coordination.

You'll read about some great heights reached by people we support, about our essential work in the communities we serve, and how we navigated through the pandemic and beyond.

As we head into the end of 2021, we know we still have a great deal of work to do, and we are ready! Thank you for your commitment and all you do, and for sharing our vision of a world where all people live fulfilling lives



### CONTACT US



For enrollment and eligibility, call (855) 208-3533 between 8AM and 4:30PM.

For General Information or to locate a Care Coordinator, contact (888) 977-7030 or [customerservice@personcenteredservices.com](mailto:customerservice@personcenteredservices.com) between 8AM and 4:30PM.

If you're already enrolled and have an urgent need between 4:30PM and 8AM, contact our On-Call Service at (833) 200-0678.

To anonymously call with questions, concerns or issues, please contact our Anonymous Line at (866) 324-2460.

# TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH SPECIALIZED CASELOADS

This year, Person Centered Services set up a new Specialized Caseload Program that offers expert assistance for individuals in unique circumstances. “Go-to” Care Coordinators are equipped to work on specific caseloads alongside a dedicated team.

To date, there are 11 specialized caseloads, serving almost 400 people. These caseloads include programs focused on complex care, early childhood, criminal justice, members of the Amish community, and indigenous people. Care Coordinators with Specialized Caseloads become experts in the areas needed for these unique populations. They stay up to date and educated, and offer solutions-oriented support that people need to thrive.

For example, Jennifer Hoff is a Care Coordinator who works on a Specialized Caseload for people with behavioral health concerns in the Rochester area. She supports individuals whose mental or behavioral health affects their daily lives. Jennifer partners with a clinical specialist and a supervisor who also has behavioral health experience.

Recently, Jennifer made a major difference in the life of Katrina Jones, a woman who needed all new providers, medication, and housing. Jennifer was able to get her started with a counselor, a psychiatrist, emergency medication refills, and a supportive housing opportunity.

“Jennifer is on her A-game,” says Katrina. “She always goes above and beyond with her Care Coordination. She advocates for me whenever I need something done.”

Because of Jennifer’s advocacy, Katrina is now flourishing. She has a new circle of support and technology that makes it easier for her to take the medication she needs. Katrina enrolled in the Fall semester at Monroe Community College to finish her degree!



Katrina Jones (left) and Jennifer Hoff (right) work together to advocate for Katrina’s goals and needs.

Another key specialized caseload is dedicated to the aging. Care Coordinator Carrie Conley serves older individuals in the Finger Lakes region. She helps them establish health care proxies, address end-of-life issues, and advocates on their behalf with medical professionals and family members.

Lorraine Hubbell receives specialized support from Carrie. She is very proud of her indigenous heritage. Her grandfather was a chief of the Onondaga Nation and she regularly visits the Ganondagan State Historic Site, which honors her ancestry. At 80 years old, she continues to live in her own apartment in Canandaigua, where she has self-directed staff visit daily.

Carrie has been there for Lorraine during challenging times, performing regular check-ins. When Lorraine’s husband of 35 years passed away, Carrie was able to find her grief support. She also connected her to the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it was available.

“Though Lorraine has been through a lot in her life, she always has a smile and wants to try new things and be active in the community,” says Carrie, who is honored to empower Lorraine.



Lorraine Hubbell, shown here and on the cover with Care Coordinator Carrie Conley, receives specialized support.

# MEETING A CHALLENGE TO VACCINATE THOUSANDS

When COVID-19 vaccines first started trickling into New York State, the barriers for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to receive them seemed insurmountable. How would families navigate a complex registration system? How would individuals get to the clinics? Would the vaccination sites accommodate their unique needs?

Person Centered Services, alongside agency partners, arranged specialized clinics. In each county, the situation and process was different. In every case, however, it meant assisting with the registration of thousands, and sometimes securing transportation and other resources.

Our quick and aggressive mobilization effort resulted in more than 5,400 receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. This included more than 71% of individuals living in certified settings.

“With the health and wellbeing of thousands in mind, so many of the people who work in the developmental disability field got together and successfully carried out of what we thought at first would be nearly impossible,” said Alicia Fellows, Chief Program Officer.

Person Centered Services will also be assisting people with Booster Vaccines, if necessary.

**"It's a strong partnership, all for the people we serve."**

**- Alicia Fellows,**  
Chief Program Officer

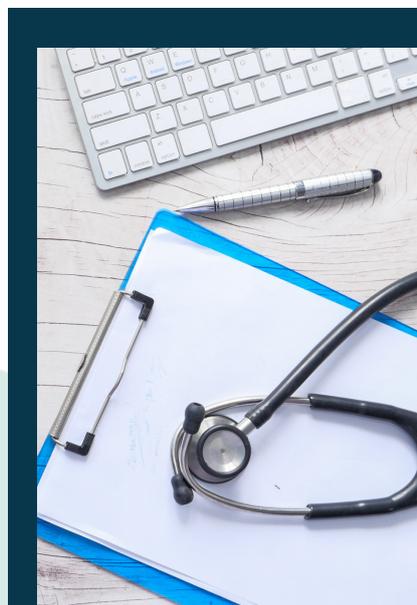


Jason MacClellan, 19, of Tonawanda, received his vaccine in a special drive-up clinic set up in Lockport specifically for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine to be administered to at-risk populations. Jason said his Care Coordinator, Tamara Austin, “did everything to get us here today, for the vaccine. We wouldn’t be here without her and we’re so thankful.”



With assistance from other providers, Person Centered Services worked around the clock to ensure people with intellectual and developmental disabilities were deemed eligible for the vaccine. They partnered with officials across Western New York to earmark vaccine doses for this vulnerable population.

“By making this a priority and collaborating with our many community and provider connections, we know we have worked together to save lives,” said Bridget Bartolone, CEO of Person Centered Services. “This is Care Coordination at its best!”



## DID YOU KNOW?

We have an on-staff comprehensive Clinical Team, led by Amy Peters, Director of Clinical, that consists of a Registered Nurse, Behavioral Health Specialist, Population Health Nurse and Mental Health Professional.

The Clinical Team collaborates with the people we serve, our Care Coordinators and providers to offer their support and expertise when needed.

# TINNIAS FINDS THE PERFECT APARTMENT

Martinnias “Tinnias” Hardy has long been a caring neighbor and friend to all who know him in his home community of Lackawanna. With the support of his employer and job coach, he has maintained employment at an area restaurant for 25 years.

This year, Person Centered Services was proud to help him reach his goal of living more independently! Care Coordinator Hillary Jelowski worked closely with Tinnias and his mother to coordinate his move into his very own apartment.

Although there were challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, Person Centered Services was dedicated to helping Tinnias find a place in his community that was right for him. Learn more about Tinnias’s story and find other stories of our Care Coordinators’ amazing work at [personcenteredservices.com/news](https://personcenteredservices.com/news).



## COMMUNITY AWARDS



### COLLEEN GOUGH BUFFALO BUSINESS FIRST C-LEVEL EXECUTIVE AWARD

Colleen Gough, Chief Quality & Compliance Officer, was recognized by Buffalo Business First as one of the area's top executives.



### TERI BELLAIRE BUFFALO BUSINESS FIRST EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH CARE AWARD

Teri Bellaire, a Registered Nurse in our Clinical Services, was honored as a health care hero by Buffalo Business First. Teri was recognized with an Excellence in Health Care Award for her work creating new screening tools and discovering statewide trends in data.

## DIVERSITY

# OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY & INCLUSION



Ari Daniels, D&I Manager

In 2020, we launched a Diversity & Inclusion program (D&I) with the purpose to further our core values of people, integrity, and trust, as well as our vision of a community where all people lead fulfilling lives. In addition to hiring a full-time Diversity & Inclusion Manager, Ari Daniels, and forming an internal D&I Council to lead the strategic focus of this, we have created a company-wide D&I committee with diverse representation from across the company. The D&I committee meets monthly and provides perspective, feedback, and ideas, and ensures voices of employees in all regions are brought to the committee via the subcommittees.

We successfully completed the first year of this important program. Based on the results and feedback, we have outlined a series of 2021-2022 initiatives & related metrics to continue the momentum. These initiatives include: training all leadership in effective D&I interviewing and hiring practices; utilizing the company’s mentoring program to develop diverse employees to reach their potential, whether in individual contributor roles or in leadership roles; developing a model for continuous training and conversation among all leadership and staff; using the annual survey to measure culture and progress on the diversity, inclusion, and equity practices within the company, and more.

“Person Centered Services’ D&I initiative involves many important goals, especially offering a space for genuine and diverse discussion about our employees’ differences as well as similarities,” says CEO Bridget Bartolone. “It’s about opening up opportunities and understanding further the people we serve and each other. We have made incredible progress so far, and it’s exciting to consider how much impact this will have on our company, and all connected with us.”

# LEARN ABOUT THE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

According to New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) regulations, all individuals we support must go through a comprehensive assessment process. This process is a way to plan person-centered care and build a Life Plan. In this process, Care Coordinators gather information and evaluate an individual's needs.

The assessments identify service needs currently being addressed; service and resource needs requiring referral; gaps in care and barriers to service access; and the individual's strengths, goals, and resources available to enhance Care Management efforts and empower personal choice and decision making. Below is a quick primer on the comprehensive assessment process and its different parts. Please reach out to your Care Coordinator with any questions!

## CAS OR CANS

Coordinated Assessment System (CAS) or the Child Adolescent Needs Strength (CANS) are administered by OPWDD staff or a third party hired by OPWDD called Maximus. OPWDD uses it to identify a person's strengths, needs and interests to help with the person-centered planning for care. We needed a way to consistently consider the physical and mental health of the people we serve which allows us to plan/support/link the people we serve with the appropriate medical services.

## PATHS

The Personal Assessment Tool for Health and Services (PATHS) is administered by a Care Coordinator. The functional assessment tool for Life Plan development, and to identify medical, clinical, behavioral, I/DD, social and community services. The goal is to gather all tools that identify developmental disability, medical, mental health, behavioral health, chemical dependencies, social and emotional needs

## ANY QUESTIONS?

Contact your Care Coordinator for any questions or concerns regarding the assessments explained above.

# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Person Centered Services is active in our community through many initiatives, partnerships and sponsorships. Among them is an accessible and sensory-friendly community treehouse, pictured at right, at Buffalo's Explore & More - The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Children's Museum. The popular play area provides an enchanting atmosphere for families with children of all abilities. Be sure to check it out! Below are scenes from many more of our partnership events in recent months!



Students at Orchard Park High School (above left) and the Summit Center (above right), stuffed folders for Person Centered Services as part of a program to help them complete important learning requirements and help build administrative skills.



## COLLABORATIONS AND AFFILIATIONS



Care Management Alliance  
NEW YORK

Care Management Alliance of New York (CMANY) ensures all New Yorkers with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities can continue to access services for fulfilling, meaningful, and inclusive lives in our communities.



The Developmental Disabilities Alliance of Western New York (DDAWNY) is a collaborative group of member voluntary agencies that provide services to people with developmental disabilities. Visit [ddawny.org](http://ddawny.org).



MyCompass

MyCompass is a partnership between three of New York State's seven Care Coordination Organizations, forged to develop better, more sustainable models of care and support for individuals with Intellectual/Development Disabilities (IDD) statewide.



PERSON  
CENTERED  
SERVICES  
Reach Your Potential



## LEARN WITH US!

## WORK WITH US!



Person Centered Services hosts a monthly “Hot Topics” live webinar series. Each webinar features an expert on subjects impacting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

Look for future webinars on social media and [personcenteredservices.com](https://personcenteredservices.com).



Our organization is actively recruiting for people to join our team! All new employees receive a \$1,000 sign-on bonus!

View our openings on our website at [personcenteredservices.com/careers](https://personcenteredservices.com/careers).