

Issue 8: June 2017

Connections

Interconnecting Regional Healthcare

FEATURE STORY

Motivating Through Lived Experience:
New Behavioral Health Peer Supports Use
Their Life Stories to Empower Others

+ pg. 3

Meet our May "Care
Manager of the Month"



CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE

NCI OFFERS "BRIDGES OUT OF POVERTY" WORKSHOP FOR LOCAL PROVIDERS

IF YOU HAD TO...
COULD YOU MOVE
EVERYTHING YOU
OWN IN HALF A DAY?

Nearly 20% of your patients think about this on a regular basis.
Fighting poverty is everyone's responsibility.

Challenge your thinking. Become an advocate. Strengthen our community.
BRIDGES OUT OF POVERTY
Strategies for Professionals and Communities

If you're ready to become a **Champion for Change**, please contact the
Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization at:
(315) 755-2020
ext. 13

Poverty, one of the North Country's greatest disparities, is a complex social, economic, and political issue that a "one-size-fits-all" approach fails to resolve. However, by investing time to explore the research, listen to stories of those in poverty, and discover new ways of thinking about policies, we can create better outcomes.

That's why NCI recently invited its partners to identify a "**Champion for Change**" within their organizations — someone interested in learning more about poverty so they can raise awareness and inspire a culture change in their workplace and community.

These Champions will take part in the nationally-recognized "**Bridges Out of Poverty**" program, a two-day workshop to be offered in Watertown later this month. Participants will discover concepts and tools used to explore all facets of poverty, build resources, improve outcomes, and support those who seek to move out of poverty.

While we opened the program hoping to attract around 20 potential Champions, NCI is pleased to report that registrations have doubled the number of spots available. Due to this overwhelmingly positive response, another session is being planned for August. Please stay tuned for updates.

WE ASKED AND YOU DELIVERED. THANK YOU!



Did you know? *HealthConnections VA & DoD Patient Lookup*

HealthConnections recently added a new feature to its Patient Lookup to make it faster and easier for users to search for the patient health records from the Veterans Administration (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD).

Upon entering a patient's record, a VA/DoD query will be launched automatically to pull any existing records for that individual from the VA/DoD systems. Clicking on the "eHealth Exchange Documents" tab will launch a list of all available VA/DoD patient results, and users can click on each result to open and view data.

Both the HealthConnections consent form and the VA Request for Authorization to release protected health information are required prior to "unlocking" the patient's VA records through HealthConnections. Civilian organizations must have the VA-exclusive form completed and submitted by fax to 315-425-2401. To access the form, [click here](#).

Questions? Contact HealthConnections Support at 315-671-2241, ext. 5, or email support@healthconnections.org.

May 2017
CARE MANAGER
of the Month

Every month, NCI profiles a local care manager to help the community learn more about the valuable role they play in our region's healthcare system.

Our "Care Manager of the Month" for May 2017 is Trisha Kelly!

Trisha works at ACR Health's Watertown office as the Support Services Care Manager Supervisor. She also has a caseload of patients who she provides care management services for. We sat down with Trisha and asked her a few questions about herself and her job:



Q1: How long have you worked at ACR Health?

"I've worked at ACR Health since October 2016. I started as a care manager and as of January 2017, I have been the care manager supervisor."

Q2: What is your favorite part about working at ACR Health and care management? Is care management something you've wanted to do since graduating?

"I was more clinically focused. I worked in a nursing home for four years and then in short term rehab for almost a year before I moved here. When I moved here, I wanted to try something different...a community position.

My favorite part of working at ACR Health is working with staff here. It's a friendly environment and everyone gets along. We all look forward to coming to work and getting our work done. My favorite thing about care management, other than the working environment, would be the challenge. It's not always easy when working with this population, but I really enjoy the challenge."

Q3: Do you carry a caseload as well as supervise?

"Yes, I carry a small caseload and supervise four care managers at the Watertown location. I will begin supervision of the Canton office in June. There are three care managers in that office that I will supervise."

Q4: Where are you from?

"I am from Michigan, the metro-Detroit area. I moved here with the military last May so I am still getting to know the area and different agencies."

Q5: Did you go to school in Michigan?

"Yes, I went to Michigan State for my undergraduate degree and Wayne State for my Masters in Social Work."

Q6: What do you like to do outside of work? Any hobbies or interests?

"I love to boat! I grew up boating with my family in Michigan. My family owns a lake house so we grew up water skiing and slalom skiing. It's my favorite activity."

Q7: What's your favorite movie?

"Pay it Forward" and "Pitch Perfect"

Q8: Is there anything else you would want others to know about you or your agency?

"Just that ACR Health offers so many different services that people don't realize. I'm going to try my best to get the information out there. I also firmly believe that working together with other community agencies is so important!"

**HAVE A
NOMINATION?**

Send it to:
eshustack@northcountryinitiative.org
or sraso@fdrhpo.org!

NCI KICKS OFF TRI-COUNTY CARE COLLABORATIVES

As our complex healthcare system continues to evolve and grow, our patients receive care and interact with many different physicians, nurses, case managers and other healthcare professionals across multiple settings.

As a result, we've learned that healthcare providers must coordinate with each other to ensure that patients get what they deserve — **the right care, at the right time, from the right person.**

Care managers coordinate all aspects of a patient's care, ensuring they receive the services needed to meet their physical, social, and emotional needs.

They are trusted advocates who go above-and-beyond to help with medication questions, transportation issues, insurance coverage, referrals, housing and so much more.

Because care managers are

so intimately involved with patients and caregivers, they are often the first ones who notice changes in their patient's condition. They are the first line of defense against the use of unnecessary services and helping to avoid unnecessary hospital and emergency room visits.

The North Country Initiative recognizes care management as a crucial part of improving our region's health and closing gaps in the healthcare delivery system. We are committed to creating an effective, sustainable care management platform in our tri-county region.

Recognizing the need for improved communication, NCI convened the **Care**

Coordination Collaboratives in April.

These monthly workgroups focus on education, networking and problem solving using de-identified case studies. Our membership, which consists of care managers from primary care practices and community based organizations, choose our educational topics each month.

To date, we have discussed the following topics: Advanced Directives, CNY Health Home, local Certified Diabetes Educators, and local Community Health

Workers/Behavioral Health Peer Supports, among others.

Potential future topics include: motivational interviewing, identifying drivers of utilization, and assisting complex patients, particularly those with substance abuse or mental health problems.

UPCOMING COLLABORATIVES

*Jefferson / Lewis County:
June 15th from 2:00-4:00 p.m.*

*St. Lawrence County:
July 25th from 1:00-3:00 p.m.*

Recent Study: ACO-Based Care Management Reduces Cost

A [study published in the May issue of Health Affairs](#) describes a care management program at Massachusetts General Hospital, in which the Partners HealthCare System ACO took an existing program from one hospital and standardized it across all hospitals. The authors report a reduction in ED visits, hospitalizations and Medicare spending.

Interestingly, as the length of program participation increased, ED visit rates and Medicare spending declined in a stepwise fashion over time. Hospitalization rates increased upon initial entry to the program and then decreased over time. Although the researchers originally hypothesized that hospitalizations would decrease early after admission to the program, reductions in hospitalization were associated with participation in the program for a longer period of time.

Case management was the ACO's primary strategy to achieving its quality and cost goals, and they have shown very positive results that have improved over time.

There are some important lessons our community can take away from this study as we work to expand case management. We must start somewhere. Improvements take time but they do happen, and care management leads to better quality care for our patients.



Kelly Mead (top) and Jane Arnold (bottom)

Motivating Through

LIVED EXPERIENCE:

New Behavioral Health Peer Supports
Use Their Life Stories to Help Others

BY

Celia Cook

DSRIP Program Manager



WHAT'S THE STORY?

In late 2016, NCI sent out a Request for Information (RFI) to qualified partners, looking for Behavioral Health Peer Support Services. These services are necessary to help our region meet some very important DSRIP deliverables and improve health outcomes for patients with behavioral health diagnoses, including those who have co-occurring chronic health conditions.

From the RFIs we received, Northern Regional Center for Independent Living (NRCIL) was selected. NRCIL is a perfect match for this job — they have been providing quality, peer-run supports and services for decades throughout our region. ***(Hey, if the shoe fits we're gonna wear it!)***

To get an idea of how this newly established program is going, a few of us from NCI sat down with Jane Arnold and Kelly Mead, two of NRCIL's Behavioral Health Peer Supports. It was immediately evident that Jane and Kelly's life experiences, work ethic and genuine compassion for others have already begun to make difference.

They're paying it forward to others needing to be heard, understood, and connected to the services they need.



OKAY, LET'S START WITH SOME INTRODUCTIONS!

Jane — Jane's military family moved to the area in the 1980's and she has lived in the North Country ever since. She is well-seasoned on what services are available in our region and some of the challenges unique to residents of Northern New York.

Through her personal and family situations, Jane has learned

to seek out various services and understand how to work effectively with other organizations to link people to services they need for a safe, healthy and fulfilling life. If someone you care for needs assistance, Jane can help them take on obstacles that stand in their way to make sure they get results.

"I love learning new things," she said. "Every day is completely different, and being able to teach others empowerment makes me so excited to come to work every day."

Kelly — Kelly recently moved here from Southern California. She experienced firsthand how California transformed its healthcare system to include peer support services and the positive impact it had on her and others.

When Kelly experienced a personal struggle years ago, she was connected to a peer support specialist and a system of strength-based services providing evidence-based care. She credits these services for helping her get to where she is today.

"Lived experience is what I work off of," she said. "For me to get where I'm at today, I stumbled many times. I didn't get here overnight."

Now Kelly is ready to use her own experiences to help others.



SO HOW IS THIS GOING TO HAPPEN?

Providing such a wide range of services to a diverse community will not be an easy job, but Jane and Kelly are more than dedicated to the work they do.

Together, they practice strength-based goal setting with their clients. They start with a casual conversation as an initial

"BEING ABLE TO TEACH OTHERS EMPOWERMENT MAKES ME SO EXCITED TO COME TO WORK EVERY DAY."

— Jane Arnold
NRCIL Behavioral Health
Peer Support Specialist

interview, getting a general sense of what their clients' needs are and what services might be helpful to them. They then prioritize the situations that are at hand and work closely with their clients, encouraging them to find the supports they need to achieve the short- and long-term goals they have set for themselves.

In this way, Jane and Kelly wear many different hats — coach, mentor, investigator, trusted confidant and whatever else is needed to help the people who come to them.

"People come here looking for help," Jane said. "They need someone to point them in the right direction, and I often hear them say 'someone finally understands me.'"

"I can honestly say that I've been there and I know how they feel," she said. "Once you open that door, it helps people open up, especially the tougher ones to reach."

Kelly wholeheartedly agrees. She said that making a personal connection with her clients has

made all the difference in helping them.

"It's helpful to connect with them on an emotional level," she said. "We meet them where they're at."

Whenever possible, Kelly and Jane try to meet with clients where they're most comfortable — at home, at work, somewhere in the community, or elsewhere. They say this helps them to connect more as well as remove any transportation concerns for the client.

"I just keep it focused on them," Kelly said. "It's all about what they want; I keep putting the power back on them and help to link them to the resources they need."

Though the program is in its early stages, both women have had success stories already. What's more important though, is the energy with which they approach the opportunities and challenges ahead.

"I love my job," said Kelly, with nods of agreement from Jane. "Being a part of the community and being able to reach out and make a difference in someone's life is what keeps me going."

"I think this initiative is wonderful," she added. "It'll work, you'll see!"

If you have a patient, family member, or friend who you think could benefit from Behavioral Health Peer Support Services, contact the Northern Regional Center for Independent Living at (315) 785-8703 or by visiting www.nrcil.net.



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Contact Us

A Message From NCI

WEBSITE UPDATE

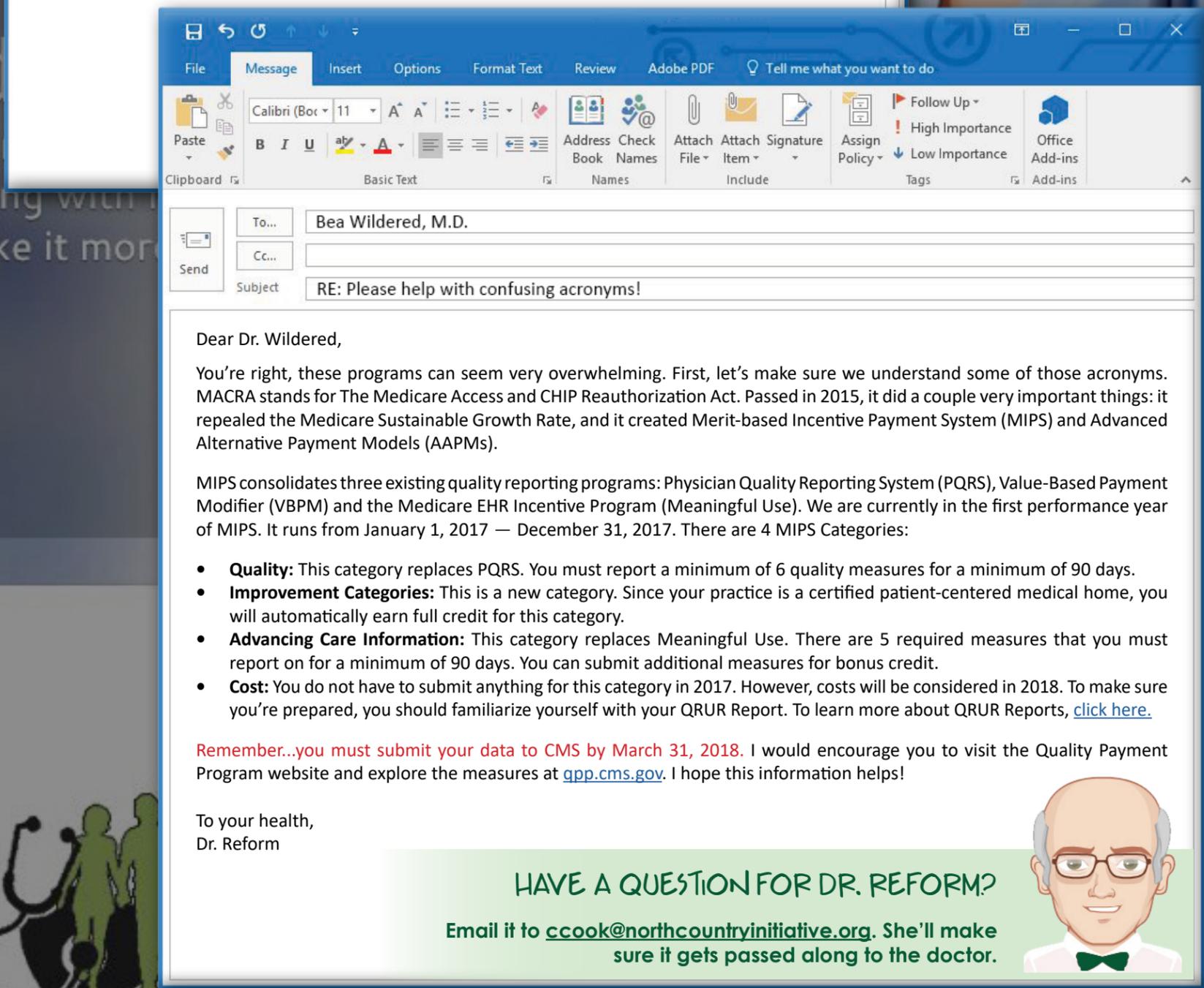
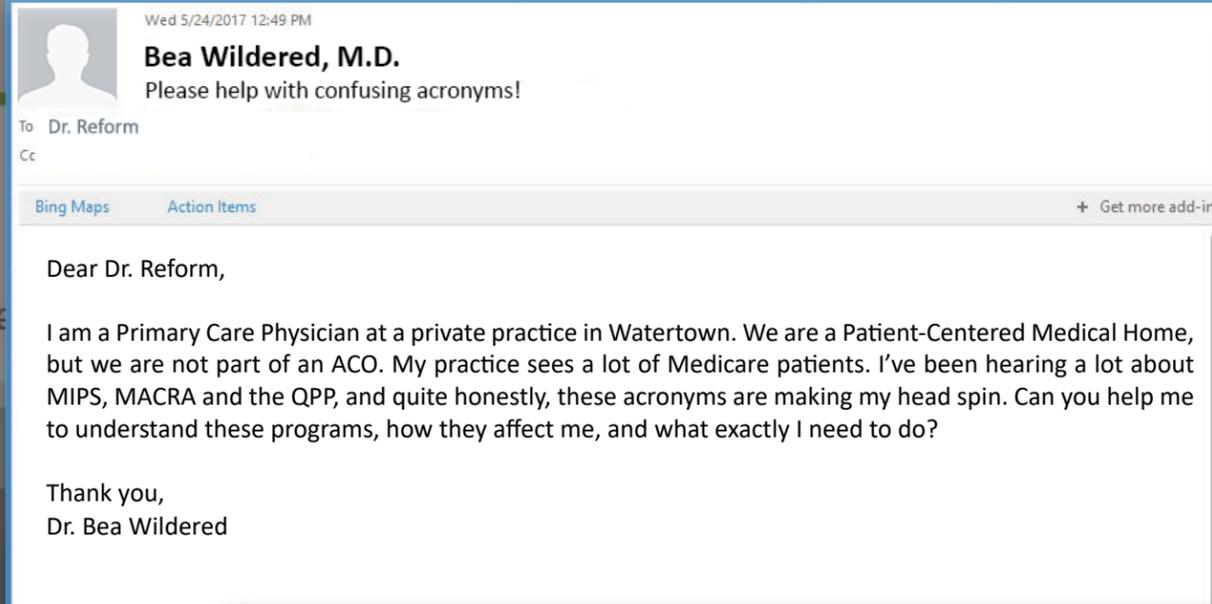
CARE COORDINATION RESOURCE PAGE NOW AVAILABLE ON NCI'S WEBSITE

The North Country Initiative is pleased to announce the latest addition to its website, www.northcountryinitiative.org — a Care Coordination resource page!

This new webpage, which is dedicated to providing valuable resources for our region's care coordinators, features upcoming events, information on members of the "care team," links to referral forms, materials from Care Coordination Collaborative meetings, service directories, and more!

It also houses our new "Care Manager of the Month" series, in which we profile a different local care manager each month to help the community learn more about the valuable role they play in our region's healthcare system.

Should you have any questions, comments or suggestions while you are exploring this new online resource, feel free to send them to our Care Coordination Team by emailing sraso@fdrhpo.org or eshustack@northcountryinitiative.org. Thank you!



HAVE A QUESTION FOR DR. REFORM?

Email it to ccook@northcountryinitiative.org. She'll make sure it gets passed along to the doctor.