



August 13, 2021

## *News Headlines*

### **Regional Food System Efforts Highlighted**

An article recently [published](#) by the Adirondack Almanack highlights AHI's **Adirondack Food System Network**, a collaboration of multiple organizations working together as equal partners to better understand system-wide issues, identify gaps and develop realistic solutions to help strengthen and promote a more resilient food system.

For information on the Adirondack Food System or to get involved, visit the [Adirondack Food Network System](#) home page.

### **WWAMH Partners with AHI's Clear the Air in the Southern Adirondacks for Smoke Free Initiatives**

Andrea Deepe of Warren Washington Association Mental Health (WWAMH) recently wrote a [letter to the editor](#) discussing WWAMH's support of a smoking ban at Washington County-owned facilities, such as Huletts Park and Lake Lauderdale Park. This ban, supported by AHI's Clear the Air in the Southern Adirondacks (CASA), will be voted up or down on August 20.

For more information on CASA and upcoming smoke free events and initiatives, be sure to follow the CASA [Facebook](#) page and [Instagram](#).

If you or someone you know needs help quitting, you can call 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487). You'll be connected to a cessation counselor who can provide free services to you or a loved one.

### **Glens Falls Hospital Requires That All Employees Receive COVID-19 Vaccine**

Glens Falls Hospital announced on August 6 that all employees are required to receive the Covid-19 vaccine. The policy extends to physicians, nurses, support staff, contractors and all colleagues with clinical or nonclinical responsibilities. The vaccines have proven to safely and effectively reduce the rates of serious COVID-19 infections and reduce the risk of hospitalizations and death in breakthrough cases. Yet as the highly contagious Delta variant of the virus spreads, broad vaccination has become even more critical, especially for those who work in health care settings.

Glens Falls Hospital held its first COVID-19 Vaccine clinic on December 23, 2020 and has vaccinated a total of 5,362 individuals (employees and community members). Since December, Glens Falls Hospital has offered the vaccine to every member of its workforce, and today, more than 86 percent of all employees are fully vaccinated.

Dianne Shugrue, President and CEO of Glens Falls Hospital says that, “We have undergone extensive and careful consideration of requiring our team to receive the COVID-19 vaccine to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our patients, staff and community.” She adds, “The vaccine requirement aligns Glens Falls Hospital with the Albany Medical Health System’s mission to provide quality care and prioritization of safety for our patients, colleagues and community. The effects of this pandemic have been devastating, but the hope of moving forwarding towards a better tomorrow, starts with the vaccine.”

Employees must be fully vaccinated by October 1, 2021. Those not fully vaccinated will need to complete weekly testing until coverage is complete. If booster shots are deemed necessary, those will be required at the appropriate time. Exemptions and deferrals may be approved on a limited basis. Any employee who does not receive an exemption or deferral, or show proof of vaccination, will be terminated from the organization. Those meeting the limited exemptions and deferrals will be required to undergo regular weekly COVID-19 testing for the duration of deferral or exemption.

In a Glens Falls Hospital community education seminar hosted by Hillary Alycon, MPH, CIC Director of Infection Prevention and Control, she stated, “People need to be very confident in the safety and effectiveness of these vaccines. There is no live virus present in the vaccine, only what is known as the messenger or mRNA spike protein, so it is impossible for the vaccine to cause COVID-19 or harm our DNA. When we take the vaccine, we begin to develop antibodies that recognize these spike proteins which are on the outside of the COVID-19 virus. This builds up our immunity and will help keep us safe from the disease.”

Vaccine clinics continue to be scheduled regularly throughout the area. You can find a nearby location by visiting [www.vaccines.gov](http://www.vaccines.gov), a website which also contains comprehensive information about the vaccine, answers to common questions and educational materials.

### Citizens Advocates CEO Named to State Rural Health Council

MALONE, N.Y. – James D. Button, Chief Executive Officer of Citizen Advocates, was recently appointed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo to the New York State Rural Health Council.

“I am both honored and humbled to be entrusted with this opportunity,” said Mr. Button. “This gives Citizen Advocates and those we support a crucial seat at the table to advocate for the unique and urgent healthcare needs of North Country communities.”

“Citizen Advocates has long been a leader for person-centered, health and human services with a focus on vulnerable populations in underserved communities” said Nicholas Eells, President of the Citizen Advocates Board of Directors. “We are exceptionally proud to add our voice to the important conversations influencing healthcare policy in the rural communities we serve.”

To read more, visit [Citizens Advocates](#).

## *Important Information*

### AHI Telehealth Update

**Nancy DelMastro** has recently rejoined AHI as **Telehealth Project Manager**. Nancy previously worked at AHI and held the position of Telehealth Project Specialist. During her time in that role, Nancy coordinated two telehealth grants from July 2019 to November 2020. Nancy looks forward to providing technical assistance to partners throughout the region and state looking for information on telehealth as it relates to implementation, technology, reimbursement, clinical standards of practice, and more.

In addition, **Andrea Bonacci** joined AHI as Director of Population Health Programs in July 2021 and will also be supporting AHI's telehealth program.

For questions or assistance related to telehealth, please contact Nancy at [ndelmastro@ahihealth.org](mailto:ndelmastro@ahihealth.org).

### Be the Match – Bone Marrow & Stem Cell Drive

Visit the **bone marrow and stem cell drive** at the Essex County Fair August 18 – 22, 2021 in Floral Hall. Be the Match is the largest registry for potential stem cell donors. Stem cells are life saving cells for patients with blood diseases such as leukemia and lymphomas, and are also used in many other treatment protocols.

For more information, visit the Essex County Fair or visit [Be the Match](#).

### Self-Care Isn't Selfish... It's Smart

As New Yorkers navigate through new changes caused by COVID-19, people continue to seek emotional support to help them cope with the adjustments, stress, and anxiety. In response to this need, NY Project Hope is proud to introduce **Online Wellness Groups!**

Participation is open; no registration is required. Mechanisms are also in place to protect the privacy of participants. For more information, visit our website at [NYProjectHope.org](http://NYProjectHope.org).

NY Project Hope is a statewide program of the NYS Office of Mental Health and is funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

[NY Project Hope](#)

## *Events*

**North Country Leadership Summit**

The 2021 North Country Leadership Summit is one month away and Adirondack Health Institute is pleased to invite you to participate in this event! Visit <https://ahihealth.org/2021-north-country-leadership-summit/> for the full agenda and registration links!

Presentations will take place at 10am, 12pm, and 2pm, Monday through Friday.

## 2021 North Country Leadership Summit

*Emerging from a Year of Change: An Opportunity to Rebuild and Reimagine*

Sessions will feature telehealth and population health experts discussing sustainable telehealth programs, methods for improving social determinants of health, post-pandemic planning in healthcare systems, and workplace retention strategies.

September 13th-17th, 2021

Daily one-hour sessions:  
10:00am, 12:00pm, and 2:00pm

*Click Here to Register*

*For more information, or to inquire about sponsorship opportunities, please contact Sara Deukmejian at [ahisummit@ahihealth.org](mailto:ahisummit@ahihealth.org)*



### AHI Career Opportunities

AHI is hiring! AHI is seeking dedicated, motivated, and highly passionate individuals who share our drive and commitment to making a difference by improving the health of our community. We are seeking a **Director of Data Analytics** as well as **Regional Care Coordination Specialists** to join our team. AHI provides a friendly and challenging work environment and a comprehensive benefits package. For more information or to apply online, visit [AHI Careers](#).

EOE/M/F/V/D.

### AHI COVID NEWS

Over the past year AHI has published a COVID newsletter three times per week. Publications have decreased in recent months to one time per week and at this time, we are discontinuing this publication.

Through the ADK HUB and the State sites you can still obtain current

statistics and information. [AHI's website](#) continues to have links to resources available for our community partners.

Thank you to all who provided information to assist with keeping our region up to date.

## Share Your Updates

AHI partners in Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Saratoga, St. Lawrence, Warren, and Washington counties are encouraged to send news items to [communications@ahihealth.org](mailto:communications@ahihealth.org) to be considered for inclusion in the AHInformer.

This edition and past issues of the newsletter are available at <https://ahihealth.org/ahi-news/ahinformer/>.

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