Members of PPNCNY Leadership team met virtually throughout the pandemic. Pictured Top Left to right: Chris DiStefano, Regional Director of IT; Nicole Hills, Vice President of Patient Services; Christian Oleck, Chief Financial Officer; Corinne Barber, Director of Human Resources; Lisa Simpson, Director of Finance; Tess Barker, President & CEO; Amy Valentine, Director of RQM, HIPAA Privacy, Corporate Compliance and Security Officer; and Jane Spencer, Fund Development Officer. Missing from photo: Katie Ramus, Chief Experience Officer.
The first half of 2020 has already felt like a year gone by: the impeachment trial of the president, the Coronavirus creating a real global health crisis, Trump’s speech at the inaptly named March for Life — the first time a sitting president has attended in person — and the State of Union turned into a reality show. It is a scary time, and for many of us who remember the dark pre-Roe days, it feels like we are moving backwards...rapidly.

Yet despite this — or sometimes because of this — I am so inspired to see how you have helped thousands of people in need with your donations to Planned Parenthood of the North Country New York. There is so much for you to be proud of, and I’m excited to share some of the highlights with you in the stories that follow.

You’ll read about our fantastic health care team, who continue to work diligently through the COVID-19 pandemic, providing exceptional health care via phone and video, and serving as a source of relief and comfort at a moment of fear and crisis. It is your support that helps keep our doors open and our staff proving care, enabling us to add new services such as primary care, gender-affirming care, PrEP and Telehealth video visits.

Plus, your commitment to PPNCNY strengthens the entire community through our coalition work. By partnering with organizations that focus on social justice — including rights for people of color, disenfranchised voters, and LGBTQ+ people — we’re helping to make safer and healthier communities for all those we serve. We seek to build and sustain a movement that is led by our patients and clients because we know that if they are able to lead efforts for themselves and their communities, we are ultimately building the grassroots strength to win immediate and long-term victories at the local, state, and federal levels.

You’ll also get a first hand look at some of our “mission heroes,” who are sharing their stories about why their work at Planned Parenthood matters.

What you do for PPNCNY patients, young people, and families is amazing. On behalf of those we serve, as well as our coalition partners, thank you for always standing with us.
"The COVID-19 pandemic has forced me as a provider to stretch further than I ever have before. Everyday new challenges arise requiring me to be more creative in my practice in order to meet my patient’s needs while simultaneously minimizing the threat of exposure to our patients, our staff, and myself. But I know one day when this is a nothing more than a memory, I will be able to proudly say that I was here at PPNCNY during the COVID pandemic. We are evolving rapidly: The mission continues; the doors are open.”

Ashley, NP (pronouns: she, her, hers)
Lead Clinician & GAHT Program Director
Plattsburgh Health Center

We are so proud of our staff. They live our motto, “Care — No Matter what.” No matter what your circumstance, no matter where you come from, no matter how you identify, no matter what your ability to pay or no matter what this administration does to keep us from our vital work—our healthcare heroes are providing healthcare for you when you need it most— even through the Covid-19 pandemic.

Their commitment to our patients remains steadfast. Even through Covid-19, all of our health centers remain open and fully staffed. The regulatory agencies, policies and guidelines from HIPAA, OSHA, NYSDOH, OMIG/HHS and PPFA were changing daily and our health care management team needed to remain vigilant and focused. We needed to ensure the new guidelines, which were changing in real time; were implemented correctly.

We spent time trouble shooting risk and quality management changes by auditing charts and meeting with providers and staff daily to ensure communication and best practices. Infection control standards took priority. And once again, the infection control landscape was morphing frequently as more and more was learned about COVID. This required staying on top of revised infection control guidelines and getting new standards out to staff asap.

Staff stayed on top of critical PPE inventory, keeping our ears to the ground sourcing out supplies. We understood quickly we needed to make certain we had ample inventory for months to come.

We enhanced prevention and protocols and quickly established virtual methods to see patients. Telehealth allows many of our patients the luxury of seeing their providers from the comfort of their own home. With businesses closing and layoffs happening everywhere, healthcare has been a critical need for many.

Our best practices became creative and innovative at our heath centers. So innovative, the National Planned Parenthood office would like our North Country staff to share, train and implement those best practices with other Planned Parenthood’s across the nation. It’s been very exciting for a small affiliate like ours!

Our administrative staff have been working remotely to help prevent the spread of the virus. We are now alternating 2-3 days a week in the office and the other time working from home. The leadership team met virtually every day at first, and then a couple of times a week to address the challenging, rapidly-evolving health care crisis, keeping our departments and each other up to date.
Superhero staff of COVID-19

Meredith
PRONOUNS: SHE/HER/HERS
LPN
@ Watertown & Lowville

"TO BE OPEN AND HERE FOR OUR PATIENTS IS MEANINGFUL TO THEM AND TO US. A PATIENT CALLED US SUPERHEROES THIS WEEK AND IT MADE OUR DAY!"

Shannon
PRONOUNS: SHE/HER/HERS
Health Center Receptionist
in Pittsburgh

"IT HAS DEFINITELY BEEN A CHALLENGE TO LEARN A NEW WAY OF PROVIDING CARE TO OUR PATIENTS ALMOST OVERNIGHT. I AM GRATEFUL TO OUR PATIENTS FOR BEING SO UNDERSTANDING DURING THIS ONGOING PROCESS OF ADAPTATION."

Cathryn
PRONOUNS: SHE/HER/HERS
Medical Assistant (MA)
Watertown/Lowville Health Centers

"WORKING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC HAS BEEN CHALLENGING AND REWARDING. OUR PATIENTS ARE SO HAPPY AND GRATEFUL WE HAVE REMAINED OPEN SO THEY CAN GET THE CARE THEY NEED."

Jessica
PRONOUNS: SHE/HER/HERS
Medical Receptionist (MR)
Watertown and Lowville Health Centers

"WE IMPLEMENTED CHANGES AT FIRST, WE THOUGHT WOULD BE A HURDLE. BUT WORKED OUT GREAT! WE’VE BEEN VERY BUSY. FOLKS REALLY NEED OUR SERVICES AND I’VE BEEN FORTunate ENOUGH TO FIND NEW WAYS TO HELP SO MANY PEOPLE."

Kayla
PRONOUNS: SHE, HER, HERS
Health Center Manager (HCM)
Watertown and Lowville Health Centers

"COVID-19 HAS TAUGHT ME COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS. WORKING OUTSIDE OUR COMFORT ZONES HAS MADE US STRONGER INDIVIDUALLY AND AS A TEAM AND I CAN’T IMAGINE WORKING WITH ANY BETTER TEAM."

Melissa Lane
PRONOUNS: SHE/HER/HERS
Health Center Receptionist

I AM SO GRATEFUL TO BE PART OF OUR PP FAMILY! WORKING DURING COVID AND OUR NEW, EVER EVOLVING PROCEDURES DEFINITELY HAS BEEN CHALLENGING, BUT I WOULDN’T WANT TO BE ANYWHERE ELSE. TO MY CO-WORKERS -THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING THAT YOU DO ON A DAILY BASIS TO OUR PATIENTS-THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND EVER LASTING LOVE."
AMONG THE CHALLENGES WE HAVE FACED DURING THIS PANDEMIC, THERE HAVE BEEN OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW AND EVOLVE BOTH PROFESSIONALLY AND PERSONALLY. THE STRENGTH AND TENACITY OF OUR PLANNED PARENTHOOD TEAM AND OUR PATIENTS IS TRULY INSPIRING! I WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL OF OUR PATIENTS FOR ADAPTING ALONGSIDE US AS WE HAVE MADE CHANGES TO THE WAY WE DELIVER HEALTHCARE. I FEEL GRATEFUL TO BE A PROVIDER AT PLANNED PARENTHOOD AND A MEMBER OF THE NORTH COUNTRY COMMUNITY.

MOLLY
PRONOUNS: SHE/HER/HERS
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT (PA-C)
MALONE AND PLATTSBURGH HEALTH CENTERS

EACH OF OUR PATIENTS HAVE DIFFERENT ISSUES, PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS. SOME MAY NOT HAVE TRANSPORTATION TO GET TO OUR HEALTH CENTERS AND OTHERS MAY NOT HAVE A PHONE OR COMPUTER FOR A TELEHEALTH VISIT. COVID-19 HAS FORCED ME TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX WHEN GIVING INDIVIDUALIZED CARE TO OUR PATIENTS.

JESSICA
PRONOUNS: SHE/HER/HERS
NP IN WATERTOWN

“COVID-19 HAS BEEN A TRUE TEST OF OUR TEAMWORK, COOPERATION AND RESPECT FOR EACH OTHER. IT HAS SHOWCASED HOW WELL WE CAN WORK TOGETHER AT A MOMENTS NOTICE WHILE CONTINUING TO PROVIDE QUALITY CARE.”

ABBIE DARLING
PRONOUNS: SHE/HER/HERS
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT (PA)
WATERTOWN HEALTH CENTER.

“OUR PATIENTS KEEP TELLING US OVER AND OVER HOW GRATEFUL THEY ARE WE ARE HERE AND OPEN.”

DEB
PRONOUNS: SHE/HER/HERS
HEALTH CENTER RECEPTIONIST

“DURING THIS PANDEMIC, LEARNING HOW TO INCORPORATE TELEHEALTH VISITS UNDER OUR CARE HAS BEEN CHALLENGING, BUT VERY REWARDING. SEEING OUR PATIENTS (AND THEIR DOGS) IN THEIR HOME ENVIRONMENT BEING ABLE TO STILL GET THE CARE THEY NEED IS EXCITING!”

MIKAELE
PRONOUNS: SHE, HER, HERS
MEDICAL ASSISTANT

“THE MOST REWARDING MOMENTS THROUGHOUT MY DAY RESULT FROM FEELING LIKE I’M ABLE TO REALLY CONNECT WITH OUR PATIENTS.ALTHOUGH THIS PANDEMIC HAS SERIOUSLY ALTERED THE WAY WE ARE ABLE TO ADMINISTER CARE. I’M PROUD TO SAY OUR DOORS REMAIN OPEN DURING THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES. VIA OUR TELEHEALTH PLATFORM WE REMAIN CONNECTED TO YOU, AND PASSIONATE ABOUT PROVIDING QUALITY CARE!”

KELSEY
PRONOUNS: SHE, HER, HERS
HEALTH CENTER RECEPTIONIST/MEDICAL ASSISTANT
The Planned Parenthood Generation Action groups at SUNY Plattsburgh and St. Lawrence University hit the ground running in their respective on campus clubs. The fall semester started out with the news that they had been awarded 1000 free condoms by The Condom Collective to distribute on campus. They also received a grant to supply campus bathrooms with free pads and tampons.

They also hosted several successful events, including holiday themed Sex Trivias, educational discussions on topics including STIs and the presentation of sex positivity in music and continued to be a presence in student centers where they were able to connect with their peers face-to-face. Unfortunately, the early closure of campus in March halted their plans for a second annual Condom Carnival to finish out the school year, but they are looking forward to returning in the fall, and making next year even better!
Planned Parenthood of the North Country New York, Inc.

We’ve partnered with Press Ganey, a patient-centered environment where employees and our health care staff are empowered and motivated to deliver an exceptional experience to every patient. The mission of Press Ganey is to build a high performing workforce that delivers safe, high quality, patient centered care. After surveying our North Country Planned Parenthood staff, our affiliate ranked #2 in the NATION for employee engagement. This means our staff feels their work makes a difference; they are willing to embrace change and they take pride and feel connected to their jobs and the people they work with. Our patients are sent questionnaires after their visit. Their scores and comments are uploaded in real time. This allows us to see emerging trends at our health centers or take care of problems immediately. Here is a sampling of real comments from our patients:

“Honestly I couldn’t have had a better experience. I was going to call the facility if I hadn’t received a survey to tell you all what an incredible staff there is. I’ve been to a couple clinics for various reasons and you can always feel the slight judgement under the employees nice act but here at the Plattsburgh Clinic, I felt completely cared for and welcomed without judgement from any of the many staff I encountered. The compassion the staff showed me will never be forgotten and I thank each and every one of you for helping me through this terrible situation.” —Plattsburgh, age 20

“The staff here is AMAZING especially the women at the front desk. They are always super welcoming and caring. Big shout out to Jessica. She always puts a smile on my face and is really great.” —Watertown, age 19

“Always an absolute pleasure to visit this clinic, everyone is incredibly open, accepting, and more than willing to help, even over issues completely unrelated. I was beyond taken care of, and who I saw eagerly helped me with a completely unrelated medical issue, with gusto. It’s always a pleasure to go to them, and I’m always excited to see the staff, they make me feel like family, and I know they truly care about my health.” —Malone, age 30

“I would have to say my provider is my favorite. It is clear she really cares about her patients!” —Canton, age 24

“Molly might as well be my Primary care physician, everything I come to her with anything she remembers me and is willing to answer all my questions and do whatever it takes to help. What a great gal, and what a great experience it is always.” —Malone, age 31

“I loved how everything was up to me whether I’m underage or not.” —Plattsburgh, age 17

“Safe, Courteous, and Informed staff from arrival to discharge. I want to thank the Plattsburgh clinic, and specifically Nurse Ashley for making me feel informed, more than comfortable, and safe, during these weird times. I originally called prior to my appointment expressing concern about having to go into a clinic because of C-19. I was then referred to a nurse (via phone) who was able to switch my regular appt to teladoc, this minimizing my time having to be inside the facility for my Depo Provera injection only. I found this accommodation to be touching and more than helpful.” —Plattsburgh, age 35

Virtual Plunge brings in over $12,000

We asked our Plungers to create their own fundraisers and jump into Lake Champlain! They didn’t disappoint! Tom Duca documented his plunge and raised over $3,000! To the right is Betsy Brown and her daughter, Dani about to plunge. They raised over $1,000. Thank you to all who participated, whether it be plunging or making a donation to PPNCNY. We look forward to 2021 when we can all jump into Lake Champlain together again!
We’re Your Friend With Benefits

Give a monthly donation to PPNCNY and get:
- Insider Access to exclusive PPNCNY news
- Discounts and VIP access to PPNCNY events
- Special Friends with Benefits SWAG

**First Base**—Gifts starting at $10 a month receive free admission to Friends with Benefits events, updates from Friends with Benefits communication network, pin and sticker swag.

**Second Base**—Gifts starting at $20 a month receive free admission to all Friends with Benefits events and $20 discount on all other events, updates from Friends with Benefits communication network, T-shirt, pin and sticker swag.

**Third Base**—Gifts starting at $25 a month receive free admission to all Friends with Benefits events and a $25 discount on all other events, updates from Friends with Benefits communication network, T-shirts and premium swag.

**Home Run**—Gifts of $50 or more a month become VIP Friends with Benefits with exclusive premium swag and VIP access to events. Please call our office directly at 518-561-0605 x 128 to set up a friendship level that is right for you!

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**Reasons and Perks to donating monthly…**

“I find it easier to give monthly because I don’t notice the difference out of my account, it makes an immediate impact and it’s easier than writing a bigger check a couple times a year. Plus, they sent me this great glass! I love being part of the club and having the inside scoop.”

“PPNCNY send me this cute mask during Covid19 because I became a monthly donor. It was timely and much appreciated.”

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Please consider an automatic gift on the 7th of each month from your Visa, MasterCard, American Express or Discover card.

| Name of Donor (name) pledge $ (monthly amount) to be charged to my: |
| Credit Card # Expiration Date |
| CVV Code (on reverse of card) AMEX is the 4 digit code on the front of the card |
| Signature Date |

Your bank account or credit card statement will serve as a monthly record of your transaction. You can notify us by telephone or in writing when you wish to change or cancel this agreement. PPNCNY will provide you a summary of annual gifts in January.
As a healthcare organization dedicated to serving people from all walks of life, PPNCNY recognizes the disproportionate impacts of racism, discrimination, homophobia and transphobia on our patients and our communities. In the face of these persistent hardships, our staff is committed to providing equitable, inclusive care and services. We also understand that this commitment is not implied, and that ongoing dialogue and action are required to ensure our patients and staff feel safe, supported, and respected while in our care.

To uphold that commitment, PPNCNY developed an Inclusion & Diversity Committee made up of staff dedicated to these efforts. Structurally, the committee provides education and guidance to staff and leadership to ensure our programs and services are inclusive, equitable, and representative of the needs of diverse communities. The committee also helps staff explore unconscious bias, and how simple changes to language and presentation can improve inclusiveness in our health centers. In its simplest form, the committee encourages staff to think critically about the roles of diversity and equity in our care model, and how the experiences of disenfranchised and marginalized populations impact our patients, our communities, and healthcare as a whole.

PPNCNY Celebrates PRIDE

June is LGBTQIA+ PRIDE month. Planned Parenthood proudly celebrates the resilience, strength and activism of LGBTQIA+ communities and reaffirms our commitment to a world where no one experiences discrimination, shame or violence because of their gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation. We continue to fight back against those who wish to undo the progress of the last half century. Your local and national Planned Parenthods stand with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people in the struggle for full equity—many of whom turn to us for health care, referrals, linkages to services, education and support.

Planned Parenthood of the North Country New York, Inc. is grateful for the many patients, volunteers, staff and supporters of all genders and identities who work every day to ensure that people in communities across the North Country get the health care and information they need. We fight together to provide accessible, affordable, health care for every individual. No matter where they live, how they identify, where they come from or their ability to pay. PPNCNY gives everyone who walks through our doors the care they need, ensuring them the opportunity to live authentic, meaningful lives.

In June of 2019, Pride month was celebrated in Watertown NY. Over 500 people attended the first PRIDE flag raising at City Hall and over 1,200 people participated in events related to the Watertown LGBTQIA+ community. PPNCNY is proud to participate and support this event.

PPNCNY’s goal is to bring June PRIDE events to the North Country communities we serve. Our plan was to kick off “Plattsburgh Pride” in 2020. Due to Covid-19 gathering restrictions we were unable to do so. Look for Plattsburgh Pride in 2021. We welcome community partners and businesses to help sponsor activities and events. Call Shelby at 518-561-0605 x 128
You may remember Jaime Benner who received care at our Watertown health center. She was just 27 years old and in her 90 day waiting period for health insurance at her new job when she felt a lump in her breast. As a mom of a young daughter and raising her sister because her own mom had just died, people depended on her. Her primary care doctor could not see her for three weeks, but our local Planned Parenthood health center saw her the same day she called. Her mammogram came back “inconclusive.” The radiologist said she was young and not to worry, but our staff was not satisfied with that answer and got her an appointment with the leading breast clinic in Rochester. Three weeks later, Jaime was recovering from a double mastectomy. Her cancer was days from spreading to her lymph nodes.

Jaime could only afford the lifesaving medical care she received from her cancer diagnosis because she was on Medicaid during her 90 day waiting period for her new health insurance. When this administration threatened to not reimburse Planned Parenthood for Medicaid, Jaime went straight to Washington DC and spoke on behalf of Planned Parenthood to Congress. She’s become a spokesperson for Planned Parenthood’s Cancer Survivors Network and is part of the Federation’s National Storytellers, inspiring others to share their Planned Parenthood stories.

When we say Care—No Matter What. We mean no matter what your circumstance, your ability to pay, no matter where you are from or how you identify. PPNCNY will provide you and/or help you get the care you need and deserve. If we don’t provide a service you need, we will help get you connected to the right place. Planned Parenthood is a safety net provider in our communities, which means we deliver health care and other needed services to uninsured, Medicaid—only and other vulnerable patients. We promise, “Care—No Matter What.”

Casey told us an incredible story about how Planned Parenthood has been there through difficult, challenging and happy times in her life. We thought her story was worth sharing with you. You can read her story in her own words on our website at ppncny.org.

Do you have a Planned Parenthood story you would like to share with us? Every patient has a different story and we would love to hear yours. Call Shelby at 518-561-0605 x 128 to get started!
Legacy of Leadership

In 2019, we mourned the loss of our very first Executive Director, Jan B. Summerville at 94. Ten days before her death, Jan was celebrating with Planned Parenthood and expressing her wit and wisdom at our Grace Wright Humanitarian Award honoring Dr. Barton Van Slyke on the St. Lawrence River. Jan’s passionate voice and actions have been instrumental in positive change, dignity, and accessibility to reproductive health for men, women and families across the North Country.

In 1948, Ms. Summerville lived in Poughkeepsie and began volunteering for Planned Parenthood. When she moved to the Watertown area, she found many friends and neighbors who felt access to reproductive health care and birth control should be made available in the North Country. In 1966, this group of like-minded individuals established Planned Parenthood of Northern New York and Ms. Summerville was appointed Executive Director.

To celebrate PPNCNY’s 50th anniversary, PPNCNY established the Jan B. Summerville Legacy of Leadership Award Scholarship to be given to a traditional or non-traditional student at Jefferson Community College. This scholarship is awarded yearly, through the Northern New York Community Foundation, to a student majoring in Human Services who has volunteered or demonstrated leadership in their community.

We loved our visits with Jan over the years. We would take her out to lunch or visit with her in her Sackets Harbor home. When she moved to the Summit at Samaritan, we let Jan decide how she wanted to spend her time with us. She would talk proudly about her children and grandchildren, give us book suggestions and ask us how Planned Parenthood was doing locally and nationally. Jan had strong beliefs about the important things in life; politics, religion, healthcare and she was never afraid to speak her mind. We just loved that about her. Last summer we gave her a tour of our remodeled Watertown Health center and brought her to our Grace Wright Humanitarian Award event on Wellesley Island. She was sharp as a tack and never ceased to amaze us with her bright baby blue eyes and impish, dry wit. Rest easy, Jan. We love you.
Call 1-800-230-PLAN

Choice Locations

PLATTSBURGH: *
66 Brinkerhoff St.
Plattsburgh, NY 12901

CANTON:
9 Miner St.
Canton, NY 13617

OGDENSBURG:
419 Ford St.
Ogdensburg, NY 13669

SARANAC LAKE:
41 St. Bernard St.
Saranac Lake, NY 12983

WATERTOWN: *
160 Stone St.
Watertown, NY 13601

MALONE:
246 W. Main St. Suite 1
Malone, NY 12953

OGDENSBURG: * Administrative offices
160 Stone St.
Watertown, NY 13601

LOWVILLE:
7398 Turin Road
Lowville, NY 13367

Or visit us at PPNCNY.ORG

Find us on:
Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for more information on upcoming events and initiatives.

Call 1-800-230-PLAN

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