

New York State Hepatitis C Elimination Annual Progress Report

May 10, 2023 • 10:00 am – 1:30 pm



Department
of Health

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Agenda

Welcome Joseph Kerwin, Director, AIDS Institute	10:00 am – 10:10 am
Keynote James V. McDonald, MD, MPH, Acting Commissioner of the New York State Department of Health Ashwin Vasan, MD, PhD, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene	10:10 am – 10:30 am
Progress Towards Hepatitis C Elimination	
New York State Updates on Programs, Policy, and Significant Accomplishments Colleen Flanigan, RN, MS, Director, Bureau of Hepatitis Health Care and Epidemiology, AIDS Institute	10:30 am – 11:30 am
Metrics Update Larissa Wilberschied, MS, Epidemiology and Surveillance Program Manager, AIDS Institute	
New York City Updates on Programs, Policy and Significant Accomplishments Tristan McPherson, MD, MPH, Medical Director, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene	
Metrics Update Christina Hwang, MPH, Surveillance Analyst, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene	
Break	11:30 am – 11:40 am
Panel Discussion: The Path Forward for Hepatitis C Elimination To achieve elimination, New York will need to innovate and take steps to address inequities that sustain the Hepatitis C epidemic. Based on their experience, panelists will share approaches to providing hepatitis C services within the priority settings and engaging the priority populations identified in the NYS Hepatitis C Elimination Plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moderator: Shannon Mason, MPH, AIDS Institute• Dr Anthony Martinez, MD, AAHIVS, FAASLD, Erie County Medical Center• Dr. Matthew Akiyama, MD, MSc, Montefiore Medical Center• Abigail Hunter, MPH, MSN, FNP-BC, VOCAL + Mount Sinai Cures• Liza Pereira, Community Liaison, Evergreen Health Services• Nirah Johnson, LCSW, Director of Special Populations, NYC Department of Homeless Services	11:40 am – 12:50 pm
Achieving Hepatitis C Elimination John Ward, MD, Senior Scientist, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director, Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination	12:50 pm – 1:20 pm
Closing Call to Action Colleen Flanigan, RN, MS	1:20 pm – 1:30 pm

Speakers



Joseph Kerwin

Director, AIDS Institute - New York State Department of Health

Joseph (Joe) Kerwin was appointed as Director of the AIDS Institute in March 2023. Mr. Kerwin is a native of Troy, NY. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy, a Master of Divinity degree, as well as a Master's Degree in Applied Psychology from Yeshiva University. Prior to his nomination, Mr. Kerwin was a Deputy Director in the AIDS Institute for four years. His portfolio as Deputy Director expanded during this time to include oversight of the AI's Health Care Programs, Uninsured Care Program, Medicaid Programs and Health Care Financing. Mr. Kerwin has been with the AIDS Institute for more than ten years. He has been in the progressive roles of Assistant Bureau Director, Section Director, and Deputy Director. Prior to joining the AIDS Institute, Mr. Kerwin was the Executive Director of AIDS Services at Catholic Charities from 2000 to 2004 and the Program Administrator of the AIDS Program and Division of HIV Medicine at Albany Medical Center from 2004 to 2011.



James V. McDonald, MD, MPH

Acting Commissioner of New York State Department of Health

James V. McDonald M.D., M.P.H., was appointed Acting Commissioner of Health January 1, 2023. Prior to joining the New York State Department of Health in July of 2022, Dr. McDonald served at the Rhode Island Department of Health since 2012.

At the Rhode Island Department of Health, he served in multiple roles including, Interim Director of Health, Chief Administrative Officer of the Board of Medical Licensure and Discipline, Medical Director for the COVID unit, as well as the Medical Director for Center for Customer Services and the Drug Overdose prevention program. He was also a member of the Governor's task force on Preventing Overdose deaths. Dr. McDonald has faculty appointments at the Brown School of Public Health as well as the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University.

Dr. McDonald earned his M.D. from Loyola Stritch School of Medicine in Chicago, his pediatric residency in the US Navy, and his preventive medicine residency from the State University of New York. He earned his MPH from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. He earned his B.S. in Biology from Siena College. Dr. McDonald is board certified in pediatrics as well as preventive medicine.

His diverse career includes officership in the U.S. Navy, as well as private practice in rural areas where health care shortages existed. Dr. McDonald also served in the Indian Health Service in the Navajo Nation, serving as Medical Director of Outpatient Medicine in Chinle, Arizona.

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Ashwin Vasan, MD, PhD

Commissioner of New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Dr. Ashwin Vasan is the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Dr. Vasan is a primary care physician, epidemiologist and public health expert with nearly 20 years of experience working to improve physical and mental health, social welfare and public policy for marginalized populations here in New York City, nationally and globally. Dr. Vasan began his career in global health, working at Partners in Health and the WHO, and most recently served as the President and CEO of Fountain House, a national mental health nonprofit. He serves as faculty at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health and Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons, and he continues to see patients at New York-Presbyterian Hospital.



Colleen Flanigan, RN, MS

**Director, Bureau of Hepatitis Health Care and Epidemiology
New York State Department of Health, AIDS Institute**

Colleen Flanigan currently serves as the Director of the Bureau of Hepatitis Health Care and Epidemiology at the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute. Ms. Flanigan has been involved in hepatitis C-related work for two decades. She directs the hepatitis C programmatic and policy work and the hepatitis B and C surveillance activities for New York State. Ms. Flanigan is also responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the NYS Hepatitis C Elimination Plan.



Ms. Flanigan holds a Bachelor's degree in Biology and a Master's degree in Nursing.

Larissa Wilberschied, MS

**Evaluation Specialist, Bureau of Hepatitis Health Care and Epidemiology,
AIDS Institute - New York State Department of Health**

Larissa Wilberschied, MS, is the Program Manager for the Surveillance and Epidemiology Unit of the Bureau of Hepatitis Health Care and Epidemiology at the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute. She has 20+ years of experience in public health: including hepatitis C, tuberculosis, HIV, substance use, and communicable disease epidemiology. She was a member of the New York State Hepatitis C Elimination Surveillance, Data, and Metrics Workgroup and is involved with the development and tracking of the primary hepatitis C elimination metrics.



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Tristan McPherson, MD, MPH

Medical Director, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Dr. Tristan McPherson is the Medical Director for Viral Hepatitis at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and Assistant Professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases and Immunology at New York University Grossman School of Medicine. He received his medical degree at the University of Tennessee, completed a combined residency in Internal Medicine and Pediatrics at Vanderbilt University Medical Center and Infectious Diseases fellowship at New York Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center. Following fellowship, he joined the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) and was assigned to the Chicago Department of Public Health's Communicable Disease Program. During EIS, his work focused on applied epidemiology, disease surveillance, and outbreak response related to multidrug-resistant pathogens, vaccine-preventable diseases, legionellosis, and COVID-19. He is active in professional organizations, having previously served as President of the National Med-Peds Residents' Association and several committees in the Infectious Diseases Society of America.



Christina Hwang, MPH

Surveillance Analyst, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Christina Hwang is a Surveillance Analyst for the Viral Hepatitis Program at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. She received her Master's in Public Health from Columbia University where her focus was Infectious Disease Epidemiology. Before moving to public health, she worked as an assistant researcher at NYU Langone Medical Center and Columbia University.



Shannon Mason, MPH

Assistant Director, Bureau of Hepatitis Health Care and Epidemiology, AIDS Institute – New York State Department of Health

Shannon Mason is the Assistant Director of the Bureau of Hepatitis Health Care and Epidemiology at the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute. She uses her extensive experience with training development and technical assistance to support the Bureau's core initiatives. Ms. Mason participated in the development of the NYS Hepatitis C Elimination Plan and is responsible for monitoring activities related to the recommendations in the Plan.

Ms. Mason received her Master's in Public Health from the Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University in Atlanta.

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Anthony Martinez, MD, AAHIVS, FAASLD
Associate Professor of Medicine
Jacobs School of Medicine
University at Buffalo
Medical Director, Hepatology
Erie County Medical Center



Dr. Martinez cares for patients with liver disease and addiction disorders, including opiate dependency, viral hepatitis, alcoholic and fatty liver disease, at Erie County Medical Center where he is the medical director of hepatology. His clinic “La Bodega” has been recognized both nationally and internationally as a novel co-localized model for the management of viral hepatitis and addiction disorders. Dr. Martinez has lectured around the world on Hepatitis C management among people with substance use disorders. His team’s work has been presented at the annual liver meeting of the American Association for the Study of Liver; the annual conference of the International Network On Viral Hepatitis in Substance Users and at the International Liver Congress.

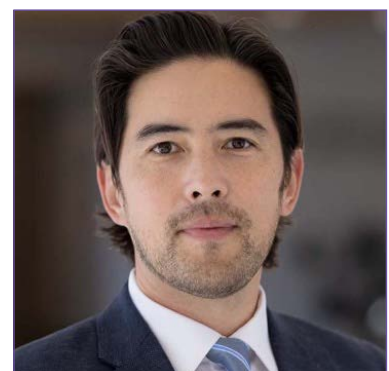
His research involves improving hepatitis C treatment in populations disproportionately affected by HCV, particularly people who inject drugs. He has been a primary and co-investigator on numerous clinical trials related to hepatitis C and fatty liver disease and he is board certified by the ABIM and the American Academy of HIV Medicine.

A fierce advocate, he works to eliminate hepatitis C treatment restrictions throughout the United States and in Europe.

Dr. Martinez is a Fellow of the American Association for the Study of Liver Disease where he serves on the HCV special interest group steering committee; the European Association for the Study of The Liver; the American Society of Addiction Medicine; he is an ambassador and co-chair of the Chronic Liver Disease Foundation HCV Committee.

Matthew Akiyama, MD, MSc
Montefiore Medical Center

Dr. Akiyama is an Associate Professor of Medicine and infectious diseases clinician and researcher at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Montefiore Medical Center. In addition to providing care to people living with HCV, HIV, and substance use disorders, Dr. Akiyama conducts research focusing on socioeconomically marginalized populations with particular emphasis on the intersection of HCV, HIV and Covid-19 in the criminal legal system. Dr. Akiyama is the recipient of funding from the National Institutes of Health to develop and test innovative models of care to improve linkage to and retention in care among individuals coming from jail and prison.



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Abigail Hunter, MPH, MSN, FNP-BC
VOCAL + Mount Sinai Cures

Abigail Hunter is a family nurse practitioner with a focus on substance use, harm reduction and HCV treatment in outpatient, community settings. After graduating from University of Michigan with a Masters' in Public Health in Population Planning and International Health, she worked as a coordinator of a network of HIV and substance use providers in North Brooklyn. Subsequently, she translated behavioral research findings for social service agencies, provided trainings, and worked on manuscript development and grant submissions at National Development and Research Institutes, Inc. In search of medical training and a more direct impact on health behavior associated with substance use, she attended SUNY Downstate Medical Center for her BSN and MSN in Family Health. Since graduation, she worked at an opioid treatment facility providing methadone, buprenorphine, HCV and primary care to substance users. In January 2020, Abigail began working with Mount Sinai Health System's Respectful and Equitable Access to Comprehensive Health Care (REACH) Program in collaboration with VOCAL-NY, a statewide grassroots organization that builds power among low income people affected by HIV, homelessness, incarceration, through direct action, community organizing and service provision. Medical services at the low threshold, non-judgmental Mount Sinai Cures clinic include HCV treatment, wound care and buprenorphine provision.



Liza Pereira
Community Liaison, Evergreen Health Services

Liza Pereira has worked as a Peer Specialist, Retention Adherence Specialist, Hep C Linkage Specialist and now is a Sexual Health Community Liaison at Evergreen Health in Buffalo, NY. She is a graduate of Buffalo State College with a BA in Business Administration. Liza is also a New York State Certified Peer, she is certified in Hepatitis C, HIV, and Harm Reduction. She was the 3rd person in NYS to get their certification in all three tracks in the first NYS Certified Peer graduation class of 2016. Not only has Liza worked in the HIV, Hep C, and Harm Reduction field for 8 years, she is also a person living with HIV for 29 years, was cured of Hepatitis C in 2014, and has been in recovery for 24 years. Liza is also one of the spokesmodels on both, NY Cures Hep C campaign and the HIV Stops with Me. Liza has 5 children, 8 grandsons, 2 granddaughters, and 1 great grandson.

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Nirah Johnson, LCSW
Director of Special Populations,
New York City Department of Homeless Services

Nirah Johnson, LCSW has over 30 years of experience working with people with complex care needs, in the field of disability, aging, HIV, substance use, viral hepatitis, and homelessness. For the past 15 years, Nirah has worked at the NYC Department of Health and NYC Department of Homeless Services to align government programming and resource with community needs. Using a grass roots coalition building approach, she has identified and coalesced resources to develop and implement multiple peer and patient navigation programs, clinical practice training and tools, data management systems and health communication campaigns.



John Ward, MD
Senior Scientist, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Director, The Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination

Dr. Ward directs the Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination of the Task Force for Global Health providing a community of practice for hepatitis elimination programs to collaborate, receive technical assistance, and participate in operational research. In 2022, Dr. Ward brought together Member States to launch the first United Nations Group of Friends to Eliminate Hepatitis. Globally, Dr. Ward advises hepatitis elimination activities at WHO, PAHO and other organizations. Over a 13-year tenure, Dr. Ward directed the CDC Division of Viral Hepatitis with responsibilities for viral hepatitis surveillance, prevention, and research. Over a 14-year period, Dr. Ward directed national HIV/AIDS surveillance, identified new HIV transmission modes, HIV natural history and evaluated the first FDA licensed screening tests to detect HIV infection. Dr. Ward has authored over 175 scientific publications of viral hepatitis and HIV. Dr. Ward conceived of and edited *Silent Victories*, a history of public health in the 20th Century published by Oxford University Press. Dr. Ward is a Professor in the Hubert Department of Global Health, Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University, Atlanta.

