Oasis Master Trainer Program Bios

Susan Wehry, M.D.
Commissioner
Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, State of Vermont

Dr. Wehry is a geriatric psychiatrist with over 30 years of experience in late life mental health. Since 2011, she has served as Commissioner of Vermont’s Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living. Prior to beginning her term as Commissioner, Dr. Wehry was on the faculty at the University of Vermont College of Medicine. A popular and nationally recognized speaker and advocate, Dr. Wehry has educated policymakers, caregivers, administrators, physicians and other health and human service professionals from Alaska to Florida. In 2010 she authored a curriculum known as OASIS designed to transform care of individuals with challenging behaviors. The curriculum is now in use in over 200 homes in Massachusetts and in Vermont.

Nancy Leveille
Sr. Director, Member Operational Support Services
New York State Health Facilities Association

Ms. Nancy Leveille is the Senior Director for Member Operational Support at the New York State Health Facilities Association (NYSHFA), a trade association that services over 260 Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF) throughout New York State (NYS). In this position, she provides leadership on policy and operations; direction for the clinical, quality, education and operational services to its members and advocacy for elders. She is also the primary developer and program coordinator of the Long Term Care Leadership Institute for the Foundation of Quality Care, Inc., an affiliate of NYSHFA. In this role, she created and is implementing grant sponsored leadership development educational courses. Ms. Leveille is a Registered Nurse with over 35 years of experience in clinical and administrative roles throughout the health care continuum.

Gayle Farman
Sr. Director of Resource Development,
Foundation for Quality Care, Inc.

Gayle Farman, MPA, is the Sr. Director of Resource Development for the Foundation for Quality Care, Inc. (FQC), a position she has held since 2010. FQC is an affiliate of the New York State Health Facilities Association (NYSHFA) and under Ms. Farman’s direction provides workforce education, research, and quality improvement for long-term care professionals and organizations. Ms. Farman brings more than 27 years of experience in public administration, health care administration, program management, grant development and grant management in the following sectors: hospital, mental health, developmental disabilities, and long term care.

Shelley Sabo
Executive Director
New York State Center for Assisted Living

Shelley Wagar Sabo, is the Executive Director for the New York State Center for Assisted Living (NYSCAL), an affiliate of the New York State Health Facilities Association (NYSHFA), based in Albany, NY. Prior to joining NYSCAL, Ms. Sabo was Director of Workforce and Quality Improvement at the National Center for Assisted Living (NCAL) in Washington, DC. During her tenure with NCAL, Sabo led numerous quality initiatives, including the association’s “Advocating Care Excellence,” and the series of Guiding Principles for Quality, Leadership and Dementia Care. She holds a Master’s degree in Management for Organizational Effectiveness and has more than 30 years in long term care and assisted living, including operations, quality improvement and workforce development.
Ms. Claudia Blumenstock
President & CEO
Copernicus

Claudia Blumenstock is an aging expert with over 30 years of experience in the older adult marketplace. A graduate of Albany State University, Ms. Blumenstock received her B.A. in Sociology and went on to become a licensed Nursing Home Administrator in New York State where she practiced for eleven years. Now as CEO of Copernicus, Inc., Ms. Blumenstock designs unique, cost effective programs for older people, connecting them to their pursuits and passions on university campuses, in a community setting, along the health-care continuum or at home. Ms. Blumenstock has presented extensively on the topic of Active Aging and Collaborative Partnerships.

Ms. Kristin Breese
Director of Operations
Celtic Consulting, LLC

Kristin Breese, RN, BS Ed, RAC-CT has been a registered nurse in Connecticut and Rhode Island for over 20 years and has experience in the healthcare industry for 30 years. Ms. Breese has a background in acute-care, homecare (including Infusion Therapy), Skilled Nursing Facilities, work as a Regional Medicare Specialist, Director of Nursing, Director of Clinical Reimbursement and MDS Coordinator. Additionally she spent 8 years utilizing her Bachelor’s degree in Education with a specification in Science. Ms. Breese has been with Celtic Consulting, LLC since 2010 and is a member of the Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities (CAHCF) Education Committee and Advisory Panel. She regularly performs corporate trainings and educational seminars/webinars.

Ms. Sharon Carlo
Director of Continuing Care
The REDS Group

Sharon Carlo is the Principal of The Reds Group in Akron, New York, a Consulting practice specializing in assisting nursing facilities with quality management, regulatory compliance, and staff and team development. Recent experience includes assistance, with Directed Plans of Correction and Immediate Jeopardy, revision of care planning processes, and preparation of CMS appeals and Berger Commission testimony. Frequent personal and webinar speaker on topics of interest to skilled nursing facilities.

Ms. Linda Elizaitis
President
CMS Compliance Group, Inc.

Linda M. Elizaitis, R.N., RAC-CT, B.S., has extensive expertise in post-acute and long-term health care. Prior to forming CMS Compliance Group, Linda was Vice President of Associated Geriatric Information Network, Inc. (AGIN, Inc.), an industry-leading consulting group. Linda oversees the development of quality improvement programs, system correction/ enhancement related to Immediate Jeopardy citations, Directed Plans, Directed Inservice, development and implementation of plans of correction, informal dispute resolution preparation, regulatory compliance reviews, and new program development for CMSCG’s clients. She speaks regularly on key compliance issues including survey preparation for national and state organizations.
Ms. Merlene Foster-Coke  
Centers for Specialty Care Group  

Merlene Foster-Coke, RN MSN C-NE has been a Registered Nurse for 20 yrs. In 1994, she obtained an Associate Degree in Nursing from Borough of Manhattan Community College. Her career as a Registered Nurse started at a Long-Term Care Facility in Brooklyn, New York, where she was employed for 10 years. After receiving her BSN, she pursued a Master’s Degree in Nursing at Long Island University Majoring in Nurse Executive & Health Care Management. In January, 2014, she was afforded the opportunity to work as Regional Educator for Centers for Specialty Care.

Ms. Lisa Garay  
VP Clinical and Quality  
Cassena Care  

With more than 25 years of diverse experience in the healthcare industry, Ms. Lisa Garay is a well-established senior operations executive with multi-faceted experience ranging from clinical operations to strategic planning. Ms. Garay specializes in complex organizations including skilled nursing facilities, senior housing and community based programs. Currently, Ms. Garay is the Vice President of Clinical Operations with Cassena Care, a healthcare consulting and management firm specializing in the long term care industry, where she performs operational oversight, streamlines delivery of services and implements strategies for retaining the best healthcare practices and performance in the industry.

Ms. Mary Guarino  
Director of Education  
Elderwood Learning Center  

Mary E. Guarino is Director of Education for Elderwood, a group of Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living facilities in Western and Central New York. Mary’s works closely with the faculty at the Elderwood Learning Center to research, oversee curriculum development and implementation of major educational initiatives. She collaborates with the Nurse Educators at each facility to ensure standardization and consistency of comprehensive educational programming across the organization.

Ms. Amy Lee  
Coretactics Healthcare Consulting, Inc.  

Amy Lee is the President of Coretactics. She is an experienced Registered Nurse with a Master’s in Nursing and a Certification in Nursing Rehabilitation. She brings her 20-plus years’ experience in acute and long-term care together to in a holistic approach to health care management and quality improvement. Her diverse clinical background and expertise in the development of quality improvement programs, knowledge of State and Federal regulations and risk management allows her to facilitate sustainable improvements in long-term care and assisted living.

Ms. Maureen McCarthy  
Celtic Consulting LLC  

Maureen is the President of Celtic Consulting LLC and the CEO and founder of Care Transitions LLP, a medical behavioral support service provider. McCarthy is also the creator of the McCarthy Method, a documentation enhancement system for ADL coding. She has been a registered nurse for over 25 years with experience as an MDS coordinator, director of nursing, rehab director and a Medicare specialist.
Ms. Lydia Restivo  
West & Restivo Consulting

Lydia Restivo, RN, CDONA is the co-founder of West & Restivo Quality Consulting, LLC, and the former Quality Compliance Consultant for Healthcare Compliance Group LLC. In these roles, Lydia’s responsibilities include consulting services in all areas of Federal and State Regulations including: Mock Surveys, System and Program Development, Infection Control, Inservice Education, Quality Assurance Programs, Risk Management Programs and response to all DOH and Federal Statements of Deficiencies.

Ms. Barbara Speedling  
Consultant & President  
Innovations for Quality Living

Barbara Speedling, Quality of Life Specialist, is a New York based quality management consultant who provides education, training and support to community, residential and long-term care providers around the country in the development of programs and services to meet a broad range of special needs. Guidance is offered in maintaining regulatory compliance and improving the quality of care and quality of life of individuals with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia, mental illness, brain injury and complex psychosocial needs.

Ms. Rhonda Rotterman  
Staff Development Educator  
Family Choice of NY

Rhonda Rotterman is an adjunct faculty member at the University at Buffalo’s School of Nursing and the owner of Rotterman, LLC, a consultancy firm that specializes in leadership development and person-centered care training across the lifespan. She currently works with Family Choice of NY, a subsidiary of Independent Health. This organization focuses on care management in facilities and the community. As staff education developer, Rhonda focuses on program development and education for mid-level providers, physicians and other health care professionals who oversee services for the frail, disabled and elderly in Western New York.

Ms. Tammy Wahl  
Upstate Service Group

Ms. Tammy Wahl is a Clinical Consultant and Nurse Educator for Upstate Services Group, LLC, a company that operates 15 Skilled Nursing Facilities throughout New York State. In this position, she plans, develops and assists in the implementation of educational programs throughout those facilities. In addition, she makes recommendations and assists with revision of facility processes. Ms. Wahl is a Registered Nurse with over 23 years of experience in clinical and administrative roles. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from Misericordia University. She is a recognized leader in clinical reimbursement in the skilled nursing facility environment and is dually certified in the resident assessment process by nationally recognized organizations.

Ms. Ruth West  
West & Restivo Consulting

Ruth West, RN, BS is the co-founder of West & Restivo Quality Consulting, LLC, and the former Director of Regulatory Compliance for Healthcare Compliance Group LLC. In these roles, Ruth’s responsibilities include consulting services in all areas of Federal and State Regulations including: Mock Surveys, System and Program Development, Infection Control, Inservice Education, Quality Assurance Programs, Risk Management Programs and response to all DOH and Federal Statements of Deficiencies.