

From the chapter president

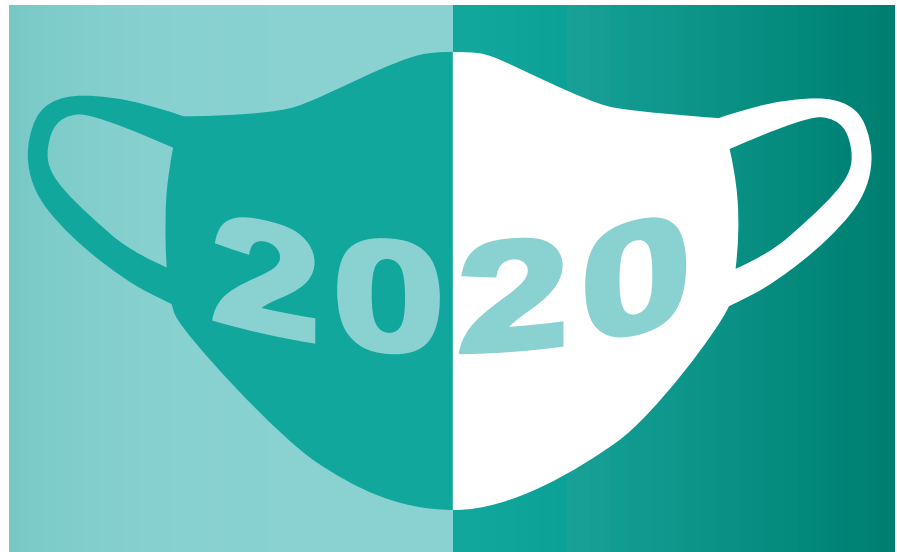
Reflecting on a Long and Difficult Year



*by Sean Massey,
Women, Gender, and
Sexuality Studies*

It's been a long year. We are now almost 11 months into a global pandemic that has killed over 1.5 million people worldwide and over 34,000 in New York state. Guidance from our elected leaders at the federal level has been inaccurate or lacking entirely, resulting in uncertainty, sickness, depleted resources, and needless death; and has contributed to out-of-control health and economic crises that, by all accounts, could have been lessened significantly if leaders in Washington had responded quickly and honestly from the start. And, although I may not agree with every decision coming from Albany, I believe we are fortunate that our state leaders have been willing to step up and act like the public servants they were elected to be.

Since the pandemic started in early spring, UUP leadership has been in non-stop negotiations with SUNY and NYS demanding that our campuses are kept safe (or as safe as they can be during a global pandemic); that, as our campuses face the challenging financial



times ahead, the terms and conditions UUP worked so hard to negotiate aren't neglected or abandoned entirely; and that, as these challenges shift and change over the coming months, UUP remains a strong voice in every decision that is made.

There are many accomplishments to highlight. A telecommuting agreement that allows employees, whenever possible, to work from home was negotiated and then extended (twice!) through the end of the year. A COVID-19 testing agreement was negotiated that requires that testing of employees follow the protocol set up for students, that non-invasive swab test will be used (rather than the unpleasant long one), that tests will be

free, and that test results must remain confidential and can't be placed in personnel files or in any way retained beyond their use in surveillance and contact tracing. This agreement also

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Connection

Binghamton Chapter newsletter

Number 99 November 2020

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An official publication of the Binghamton Chapter of the United University Professions, Local 2190 of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, and affiliated with New York State United Teachers; the Binghamton Chapter is a member of the Broome County Federation of Labor.

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors or of the Binghamton Chapter and are not necessarily the opinions of United University Professions.

The editor welcomes letters and other comments of interest to the Binghamton Chapter.

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requires that UUP be involved in any discussions related to student testing or changes to the testing protocol.

UUP developed and presented a set of COVID-related safety guidelines that have been accepted by SUNY central. UUP stood firm when NYS delayed distribution of our negotiated salary increases, making sure we will be getting all negotiated increases as

well as all retroactive pay that is due. UUP made sure our other negotiated financial resources such as the DSI, Drescher, IDA, and compression funds remained. And UUP continues to push for an extension to the expiration deadline of vacation time accruals.

UUP has also been working hard to keep members informed of our rights and

protections as they relate to the unique challenges brought on by the pandemic. Statewide UUP has hosted area-specific workshops (e.g., for those working in our libraries, athletics, student affairs, admissions, student accounts, financial aid, registrar, information technology, as well as contingent employees) to talk about how the pandemic affects the work done in those areas and the unique challenges faced by employees in each area. They hosted a series of Regional Town Halls in September and October for the entire membership. And, at the local level, our Chapter hosted several Virtual Office Hours sessions, inviting statewide officers to provide information and answer questions for members on our campus.

Chapter leadership has been advocating for members on our campus as well. As the fiscal challenges of the pandemic are being pushed onto individual departments and programs, some members are being pressured by

their supervisors to agree to extra work without being offered adequate (or any) compensation. When asked to take on extra duties, work on weekends, or cover positions (i.e., those left open due to changing demands of online teaching, safety protocols, working from home, or non-renewals) some are being discouraged from asking for extra-service pay or comp time, with the suggestion they simply need to be "team players."

This burden has been felt even more keenly by those without tenure or permanency.

The fiscal crisis has also resulted in cuts to our adjunct and contingent members. Numbers from statewide UUP suggest there has been a net loss in part-time academics (adjuncts) over the past year. And some of those who remain have experienced a

reduction in their hours, which risks them falling below the threshold needed to keep their health insurance during the pandemic. Although we were successful in getting this reversed for some members in the spring, the issue has re-emerged this fall.

During our monthly labor management meetings, we continue to ask management to show leadership and to direct their VPs, Deans, and Chairs to practice fair and compassionate decision making. We remind them that these decisions affect actual people, colleagues, who shouldn't be treated like expendable office supplies during budget conversations. We've asked that they send a clear message down through the supervisory chain that whenever extra work is placed on someone under their supervision, regardless of the reason, they must either remove something from their plate, request extra service pay or a

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temporary salary increase, or approve the use of comp time. We've also asked that they send a clear message that, until the pandemic is over, employees should be working from home; and that all exceptions require a clear, honest, and defensible justification as to why their work has to be done on campus and in person. Even with these efforts many of these problems persist. We are perplexed and frustrated as to why these concerns aren't being taken more seriously, and are strongly considering taking the next step of calling some of these administrators out by name.

Our collective struggle continues, and the end isn't around the corner. As I write this column, Broome County is experiencing a spike in COVID cases. Similar spikes are being seen across the state, and things are significantly worse in other states – especially those who have colluded with the conspiracy

of denial coming from Washington. We are fortunate that, according to President Stenger, our campus seems to be hanging on. Overall, the financial challenges facing our campus have not resulted in the massive layoffs that we've seen in other sectors. Statewide UUP reports that they have not received any indication from SUNY System Administration that retrenchments are being discussed. However, we continued to be concerned about our part-time and contingent colleagues who are being non-renewed, and about the impact these decisions will have on the health and well-being of their families.

We don't know what the future will bring. The potential for a financial catastrophe is still on the horizon. It is critical that the state and federal governments step up and provide much needed economic stimulus money. Congress must pass a new COVID-19 mitigation package and New York state

must pass the stock transfer tax as soon as possible. And then state leadership must make sure these funds find their way to our campuses.

The last thing I'll say is that even with all the stress, pain, fear, and fatigue, our members continue to work exceptionally hard to make sure Binghamton University remains the premier public university. Congratulations to all of you! Binghamton University stands out as an example across SUNY! You should be proud. I also want to thank my fellow chapter officers, the chapter executive committee, our chapter assistant Linda, the union representatives across campus, and all our members for the strength and perseverance you have shown in weathering these difficult times.

In solidarity!

— Sean



MANAGEMENT SALARIES

2019 salaries as listed on the "See Through New York" website: <https://www.seethroughny.net/>.

| NAME | TITLE | RATE OF PAY | TOTAL PAY |
|------------------------|---|--------------|--------------|
| Stenger, Harvey | President | \$431,970.00 | \$493,589.00 |
| Neiman, Donald G. | Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost | \$339,629.00 | \$352,579.00 |
| McGoff, Michael F. | Senior Vice Provost and CFO | \$271,090.00 | \$283,410.00 |
| Sammakia, Bahgat G. | Vice President Research | \$298,930.00 | \$322,612.00 |
| Navarro, JoAnn | Vice President Operations | \$289,749.00 | \$280,357.00 |
| Rose, Brian T. | Vice President Student Affairs | \$279,568.00 | \$299,218.00 |
| Koch, John C. | Vice President University Relations | \$211,705.00 | \$209,158.00 |
| Srihari, Krishnaswami | Dean of Watson College of Engineering and Applied Science | \$372,913.00 | \$434,933.00 |
| Dhillon, Upinder Singh | Dean of School of Management | \$317,386.00 | \$329,469.00 |
| Meredith, Gloria E. | Dean of School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences | \$308,117.00 | \$321,734.00 |
| (Former) | Dean of Harpur College of Arts and Sciences | \$296,514.00 | \$300,141.00 |
| Bronstein, Laura | Dean of College of Community and Public Affairs | \$273,703.00 | \$303,428.00 |
| Ortiz, Mario | Dean of College of Nursing and Health Sciences | \$273,462.00 | \$283,044.00 |
| Kendrick, Curtis | Dean of Libraries | \$231,428.00 | \$241,435.00 |

Note: Based on the current contract, an adjunct must teach 6 credits per semester to qualify for health insurance. Given the current minimum wage for adjuncts, that's a minimum of either \$6500 for a 6 credit teaching load or \$8333 to teach two 4-credit courses.

COVID-19 and WORKLOAD CREEP



What Academics Need to Know



*Benita Roth,
Binghamton Chapter
Academic Vice President/
UUP*

These are unprecedented times. No one needs reminding of that, nor do we need a rundown in this piece of all the ways that our daily lives have been changed. As the title implies, I'm going to focus here on the question of "workload creep" and the way that creep has been sped up due to COVID-19.

To first reiterate what is often misunderstood about UUP members and workload: we don't have a 9 to 5 job. We UUPers have what is known as a "professional obligation." What does that mean? First drawing from the SUNY Board of Trustees own policies, "[t]he professional obligation of an employee consistent with the employee's academic rank or professional title, shall include teaching, research, University service and other duties and responsibilities required of the employee during the term of the employee's professional obligation" (Article XI, Title H, Sec. 2). That passage has to be "operationalized," that is, put into practice in real life terms. It is an important basis to understand, because the idea of professional obligation really does structure what we do at the university.

For professional members, duties are outlined in performance programs which should be updated yearly. For academics, it's a different story. Those of us who are either tenured or tenure track are generally expected to do research, teaching, and service, and these slices of the obligation "pie" are not necessarily the same size, and can shift. Because we are a research institution, the research slice is generally bigger than teaching, and teaching bigger than service. One more thing to consider is that the majority of tenured/tenure-track academics are on ten-month appointments, meaning that there are two months of the year when they

are not obligated to attend to all these duties. For contingent academics — adjuncts — things are different yet again, as the majority of these members have — or should have — fairly specific duties outlined: they will teach a certain number of courses or certain specific courses, coordinate a program, hold office hours and the like. Department/program historical norms also play a role in managing expectations of workload. The bottom line is, while the slices of the pie can change size, the pie can't become bigger; that is, the workload itself can't increase (apologies to those who prefer cake). UUP has noted for many years that academic workloads have been "creeping" upwards. In 2018, UUP statewide Academic Vice-President Jamie Dangler and Professional Vice-President Tom Tucker were quoted in a piece in UUP's *The Voice* about workload creep.¹ Concerns about workload creep very much predate the current crisis, and are part of a long-term trend toward withdrawing state support from public universities, and forcing universities to act like cut-throat corporations in order to survive.

The wrinkle in all of these negotiated arrangements is the challenge created by COVID 19 as related to our workload, not to mention our lives in general. UUP has heard from many of you since the spring, and we continue to hear from you. From my standpoint as a unionist, it is imperative that we understand that **the mutually negotiated standards that UUP negotiated as part of our agreement with the state of New York still hold during the pandemic.** I state this as a principle which is crucial for us to maintain. In stating this principle, I'm influenced by my reading and teaching in health politics. The U.S. and the world have faced and regularly will face multiple crises of various origins. When I teach about health politics, I use a book by a medical ethicist/health law expert named George Annas, who teaches at the "other BU," Boston University.² In the book, Annas argues that when it comes to medical ethics, there is no such thing as "crisis" or "emergency" ethics. In fact, rather than ethics needing to change to suit emergencies, they need to stand in

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How to Fight **WORKLOAD CREEP**

**HELPFUL
HINTS**

PROFESSIONALS

- 1** Understand the basic principles that apply to your professional obligation.
- 2** Discuss your job duties with your supervisor as your Performance Program is being developed.
- 3** Make sure you have a current Performance Program that accurately reflects your professional obligation.
- 4** Be sure you are able to perform all of the duties in your Performance Program. Ask for training, if needed.
- 5** Consult with the chapter leadership if you have questions.
- 6** Document workload increases:
 - Keep a log of work done in areas that are subject to workload creep.
 - Document that you have taken on additional workload for specific reasons/projects — and note that you do not consider it to be part of your professional obligation going forward.
 - Make sure your Performance Program is modified to reflect workload increases, identifying extra work in relation to previous years.
- 7** A change in duties and responsibilities may warrant a promotion, salary increase, reduction in other duties, extra service pay or compensatory time.
- 8** Consider requesting a salary increase or promotion when you feel it is warranted, especially if your Performance Program shows an increase in duties and responsibilities.
- 9** If additional duties are added to your Performance Program, ask for others to be removed or for a salary increase.
- 10** If you are denied a salary increase or promotion, you can appeal the denial to the College Review Panel.

Participate in Workload/Performance Program workshops run by your labor relations specialist.

Access the LEAD Program via the UUP website to learn more about workload and other topics.

Check out UUP's Guide for Professionals for tips on how to use your Performance Program to help keep workload in check. An updated guide will soon be available at www.uupinfo.org

For more information, contact your chapter officers or VP for Professionals Tom Tucker at ttucker@uupmail.org or 1.800.342.4206

ACADEMICS

- 1** Understand the basic principles that apply to an academic's professional obligation. If one part of your obligation is increased, another should be decreased. Your total obligation should remain the same.
- 2** Bring workload issues to your UUP chapter officers to discuss possible remedies.
- 3** Document workload increases:
 - Keep a log of work done in areas subject to workload creep. Ask your chapter president or vice president for academics for a log sheet.
 - Document that you have taken on additional workload for specific reasons/projects — and note that you do not consider it to be part of your professional obligation going forward.
 - Note workload increases in your annual report, identifying extra work in relation to previous years.
- 4** Take steps to ensure that extra responsibilities and volunteer work do not become part of normal workload expectations.
 - Document in writing that volunteer work is being done on a voluntary basis and for a specific period of time or to accomplish a specific one-time task (through emails, letters to department chairs, deans or other administrators).
 - Have department-level/unit-level discussions about workload issues to try and get everyone on the same page.
- 5** If you are asked to take on extra responsibilities, you can ask for compensation (extra service pay, reduction of duties in a subsequent semester for taking on extra duties now).
- 6** Academic-year appointees are not under obligation during the summer. Check with chapter officers on the exact start and end date of the academic-year professional obligation on your campus. Work with your chapter officers to develop practical suggestions to handle summer work that may be beyond the class preparation and research activities normally done during summer months.
- 7** Workload creep is often experienced individually, but is part of a collective problem. Work collectively, with the assistance of your UUP chapter, to address workload issues.

For more information, contact your chapter officers or VP for Academics Jamie Dangler at jdangler@uupmail.org or 1.800.342.4206

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place. Just as military ethics remain the same in peace and war, there is only one set of bioethics, the rules needed to govern how we treat people.

I would extend Annas' logic in this way — COVID 19 crisis or not, **our contract stands**, as do offer letters, and general and historical norms about what our professional obligations are. Having written that, here are some things that academic members can do if they feel they are unfairly being asked to do too much:

- 1) Contact UUP and let us know what is going on.
- 2) Document the extra work you are doing in whatever way you can. Memorialize extra workload requests by writing about them, by responding to your chair/director about their workload expectations, by including the extra work in your annual reports, etc. Again, contact UUP for more ideas about how to document the increase.
- 3) Ask for extra compensation if the pie gets bigger — extra service moneys, course releases, or other specific

ways that can be negotiated with your supervisor to recognize and compensate for the work.

- 4) Take the summer seriously. We were all thrown by what happened in the spring, and many if not most of us worked through the summer to prepare for the new COVID 19 normal. But the summer coming up should be a different one that adheres to our contract in terms of what expectations can be put upon ten-month academics, and the period of non-obligation needs to be preserved.

It is true that there are many variations on the theme of workload creep. In a way, we all have different jobs and/or different professional obligations. Trying to maneuver by oneself can be daunting, which is why your chapter leadership in UUP is here to help. Talk to us sooner rather than later, and we will work with you to keep the creep out.

1. <https://uupinfo.org/voice/fallwinter/2018-19/2018FallWinterVoice4Web.pdf>

2. The book I teach is George Annas, 2010. *Worst Case Bioethics: Death, Disaster, and Public Health*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. You can see his faculty website at <https://www.bu.edu/law/profile/george-j-annas-2/>. He is also on Twitter @georgejannas.



Guide to Maintaining Your Health Benefits Due to Retrenchment or Non-Renewal from SUNY



*UUP Statewide
and
Mac Gunter*

Though we have not received any indication from SUNY System Administration of retrenchments due to the COVID-related budget crisis, we are concerned about part-time professionals and adjuncts being non-renewed. In the unfortunate event that we start to see non-renewals and retrenchments, we present this information to provide answers to questions that members might ask.

Health insurance is an enormous concern for everyone. If you receive a termination notice from SUNY, please contact your campus Health Benefits

Administrator to verify the date your healthcare coverage will end and to obtain information on your healthcare options. Loss of coverage is considered a qualifying event for enrollment in other options. Here are two options from which you can choose to maintain health benefits.

1. COBRA

When health coverage provided by your employer (SUNY) ends, you may opt to continue your existing coverage under COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act). COBRA states that if you lose your job for any reason other than “gross misconduct,” you have the right to continue in your employer’s NYSHIP group plan for up to 18 months.

SUNY’s COBRA covers various benefits including health insurance

(e.g., Indemnity Plan, PPO, and HMO), prescription drugs, and cafeteria plans. Note that the UUP Benefit Trust Fund will extend COBRA dental and vision coverage for up to 36 months due to involuntary separation. Be aware that the UUP dental and vision COBRA does not cover medical COBRA.

Eligibility

If your employment began and was terminated before you were eligible for health insurance, you are not eligible for COBRA coverage. To be eligible for continued coverage, you must be covered under a group health plan (individual or family) until the day before the last day of your employment. Unless you selected a family plan, your spouse, domestic partner or dependents will not be covered under COBRA. If

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you have a family plan, the maximum age for dependent children to be covered under COBRA is 26.

When to give notice

You have 60 days from the date coverage ends or from the date you are notified your coverage will end, whichever is later, to elect COBRA.

Premium Payments

Monthly payments are mandated. The initial premium payment must be made within 45 days from the date of COBRA election.

Maximum Coverage Period

If your job was terminated, if you resigned voluntarily, or if your hours were reduced, the maximum coverage time is 18 months. However, coverage will end if one of the following events occurs:

- The employer ceases to provide a group health plan to its employees.
- The laid-off employee fails to pay the required premiums in a timely manner.
- The laid-off employee becomes a covered employee under another group health plan.
- The laid-off employee becomes eligible for Medicare.

2. The Marketplace

The marketplace is an online tool to assist individuals in shopping for health insurance coverage. In New York it is called *the New York State of Health* (<https://nystateofhealth.ny.gov>). You might consider the marketplace plans instead of COBRA if you are eligible for income-related premium subsidies.

You can purchase marketplace coverage outside of the annual open enrollment period if you have a qualifying life event such as loss of coverage due to layoff or reduction in hours. Like COBRA, you must have been enrolled in coverage the day before the layoff date, and to enroll

for dependent coverage, your previous coverage must have been a family plan.

Generally, you have 60 days from the date of the life-qualifying event to enroll, but the earliest date that coverage is effective is the first day of the second month following the coverage loss. For example, if you lose coverage on August 15, your earliest date of coverage is October 1. If you are aware of an upcoming loss of coverage, you should enroll prior to the end of coverage to minimize any gap.

Voluntary termination of COBRA is not considered a qualifying event, so if you elect COBRA following a loss of coverage and want to change to a marketplace plan, you must wait for the COBRA benefits to be exhausted or until the next marketplace open enrollment period beginning Nov. 1.

Note: Depending on your income level, you could apply for Medicaid (the essential plan) or child health plus. You must sign up by the 15th of the month to be covered by the first day of the next month. This coverage is only offered up to the age of 65. Then you must apply for Medicare.

Coverage

The marketplace plans primarily cover only medical and prescription drugs. All marketplace plans cover 10 essential benefits:

- Ambulatory patient services
- Emergency services
- Hospitalization
- Maternity and newborn care
- Mental health and substance abuse disorder services including behavioral treatment
- Prescription drugs
- Rehabilitative and habilitative services and devices
- Laboratory services, preventive and wellness services, and chronic disease management
- Pediatric services, including oral and vision care

There are no exclusions for pre-existing conditions.

Applying

You can apply online, by phone, in person or by mail. There are New York State of Health certified experts to provide in-person help for filling out your forms. The In-Person Assistor (IPA) and Navigator program is designed to meet the needs of New Yorkers by providing assistance in convenient, community-based locations.

For more information, visit <https://on.ny.gov/2Fh23yq>.

Enrollment Information Required

You will need to provide facts about the people in your household and their income. You need to supply names, addresses, phone numbers, and social security numbers. You also need to confirm if you have access to other health insurance.

Availability of Health Plan Network Information

Even though you can search to see if your current doctors or facilities where you receive health care services are part of a plan's network of providers, it is best to call your doctors, hospitals, other facilities, and the health plans directly before completing the plan selection process. Be aware that the plans that your provider accepts and/or the "network" they are in may change.

Maintaining Benefits in Retirement

For those represented employees who will be transitioning into retirement, please contact your Health Benefits Administrator at your campus for eligibility regarding your health benefits.

You may also contact the UUP Benefit Trust Fund at 800-887-3863 to speak to our Retiree Coordinator.



Hope Amid the Opioid Crisis



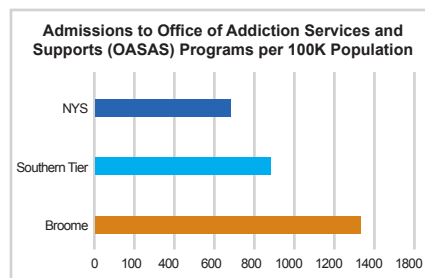
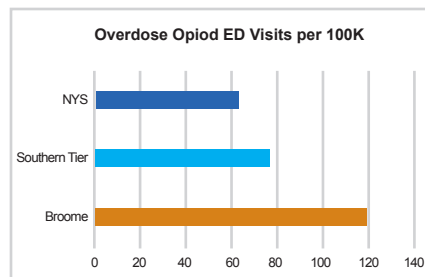
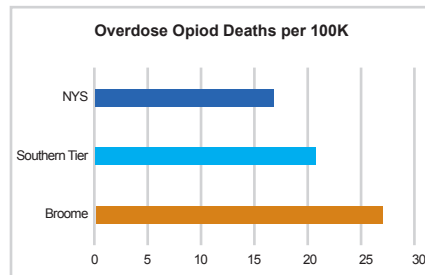
by *Serdar Atav,*
Professor, Decker
College of Nursing
and Health Sciences

Opioids are a class of drugs that include heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and pain relievers available by prescription, such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, morphine, and many others. The chemical structure of all opioids is similar to morphine which is extracted from poppy seeds.

According to SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration), in 2018, an estimated 10.3 million people aged 12 or older misused opioids. This number included 9.9 million prescription pain reliever misusers and 808,000 heroin users. As with most health issues, the COVID-19 pandemic will have exacerbated these numbers in 2020. Opioids produce euphoria, and over time they lead to tolerance to get the same euphoria, leading to addiction. Sustained misuse of opioids causes acute to chronic alterations in the brain leading to psychological problems such as anxiety, depression, agitation, hallucinations and paranoia. Nationally, deaths from drug overdoses have increased by a factor of 2 in the last 10 years. It is estimated that more than 48,000 Americans died of opioid overdoses in 2018. Economic costs combined with the value of lost lives added up to a whopping \$696 billion in 2108, representing 3.4 percent of GDP.

In Broome County, the opioid use disorder crisis has been devastating both in terms of human lives and and its economic impact on our already suffering economy. In pretty much all indicators, including opioid involved death rates and emergency department

visits, Broome County is either the worst or the second worst in New York State after Suffolk County. The charts below demonstrate the relative position of Broome County with respect to the state and the region:



Experts agree that recovery from addiction cannot be solely achieved by individuals. Recovery requires collaborative efforts from the family, community, and society. Community resources and other protective factors are necessary to insulate oneself from the disrupting effects of homelessness, unstable work, personal or cultural beliefs destructive to recovery, and learned social behavioral norms. Collaboration among collective teams is needed

for a stronger community response to distressing opioid-related trends.

The Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) Cohort Intervention Project is a collaborative effort among Lourdes Hospital, Addiction Center of Broome County (ACBC), Truth Pharm, REACH Medical, Southern Tier AIDS Program (STAP), and Rural Health Network (RHN). It provides services to people who have OUD in Broome County with a focus on reducing stigmatization, improving health and social determinants of health, and reducing the cost of care for participants. According to a report presented at Lourdes by Jo Ann Moore, the OUD Cohort Intervention Project has resulted in some remarkable outcomes:

- Emergency Department (ED) utilization **decreased 44%**.
- Hospitalizations **decreased 48%**.
- The number of patients who left the hospital against medical advice **decreased 70%**.
- The decrease in ED and Hospital utilization amounted to a corresponding **decrease of \$435,036** in claims billed to Medicaid.
- Primary care utilization by clients **increased 110%**.

If you know of anyone who might need assistance with opioid use disorder or any other addiction, you can contact:

Binghamton University Employee Assistance Program: eap@binghamton.edu (607-777-6655)

Truth Pharm: info@truthpharm.org (607-296-3016)

Addiction Center of Broome County (ACBC): 607-217-5449

