

Health Advisory Council Bios

Dr. Abra Caroci, Pediatric Dentist in Rochester, Brighton & Pittsford, NY
Special Olympics NY Clinical Director, Special Smiles
Golisano Health Leadership Award 2018

Dr. Abraham Caroci is a pediatric dentist committed to offering children and families high quality service and care for long lasting healthy smiles. He graduated from Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health at A.T. Still University and also received a certificate in Public Health. When he moved to Rochester in 2013 he found a passion in serving those with special needs and became the Special Olympics New York Special Smiles Clinical Director to help coordinate projects, locally and statewide. He is also a board member of the American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry which focuses on integrating the medical and dental fields to serve people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



Dr. Holly Brown, DNP, RN, PMHNP-BC, PMHCS
Executive Director of the Golisano Institute for Developmental Disability Nursing
Special Olympics NY Clinical Director, Health Promotion



As a member of the Wegmans School of Nursing faculty, Holly Brown DNP, RN, PMHNP-BC, PMHCS serves as an Associate Professor and is the Executive Director of the Golisano Institute for Developmental Disability Nursing (GIDDN). Dr. Brown teaches in the Psychiatric NP and DNP programs. The work of GIDDN is to educate nurses across all academic programs about the physical and mental/behavioral health care of individuals diagnosed with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This work also aims to promote nurses' skillful advocacy and leadership for the population, which has been largely underserved in healthcare settings due to multilayer inclusion challenges. Dr. Brown and her GIDDN team are developing and deploying curriculum in the undergraduate and graduate programs at SJF, including the procurement of clinical experiences to enable students to gain skills and confidence working with the population. Dr. Brown has served as the primary investigator for a variety of grant-funded programs: Special Olympics International Inclusive Health Innovation Grant, Inclusive Health Nurse Practitioner Residency Curriculum, and the Mother Cabrini Foundation: Optimizing Outcomes for Hospitalized Patients with IDD.

In addition to her academic and administrative responsibilities, she maintains an active clinical practice as Hillside's Senior Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner, specializing in the care of children and adolescents dually diagnosed with intellectual/developmental disabilities and psychiatric conditions and their families in community, school-based settings. Dr. Brown holds board certification as a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner and is a Child and Adolescent Clinical Specialist. She completed her Doctor of Nursing Practice at the University of Rochester in 2013 (project title: Creating Opportunities for Personal Empowerment (COPE): A Strategy to Promote Residential Treatment Staff Self-Efficacy).



Ianthe Dunn-Murad, ScD, CCC-A
Special Olympics NY Clinical Director, Healthy Hearing

Dr. Ianthe Dunn-Murad, a bilingual clinical audiologist for 25 years. Has worked in various areas including, inpatient rehabilitation, schools for the Deaf, medical and university settings. She is currently working as the clinical program director of clinical education for the Long Island Audiology Doctoral Consortium Program at Adelphi, Hofstra and St. John's Universities and is an appointed Adjunct Audiology Professor of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences at Hofstra and St. John's Universities where she teaches undergraduate, graduate and doctoral level courses.

Ianthe completed her Doctorate in Science with a concentration in Audiology in 2002 from the School of Health and Medical Sciences at Seton Hall University in New Jersey. Her research focused on binaural processing of older adults with normal hearing. Dr. Murad is a NYS licensed audiologist and licensed to dispense hearing aids in NYS. She also holds the credentials of the Certificate of Clinical Competence from the American SpeechLanguage and Hearing Association (ASHA) for 25 consecutive years.

Passionate about serving her community, Ianthe is interested in eliminating hearing health disparities and improving hearing access and affordability within the underserved and underrepresented communities and in promoting Audiology as a career path for BIPOC students' interested in the health professions. Clinical Specialty Area Includes: adult diagnostics, with a set interest in global humanitarian hearing healthcare and service learning.

She has been an active volunteer for ASHA. She served as member-at-large on the Multicultural Issues Board in 2010—and, in 2016, she was among 28 professionals nationwide chosen for ASHA's 2016–2017 Leadership Development Program for audiologists. She also served as the New York state representative on ASHA's Audiology Advisory Council (2017) and was on the ASHA Convention Program Committee (2018, 2019 Topic CoChair, and 2020). Most currently, she serves as a site visitor for the Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA). In addition to her service to ASHA, in June 2017, Dr. Dunn-Murad was appointed to serve on the Board of Speech Language Pathology and Audiology for the New York State Office of Professions, Education Department. She also serves on the Global Standards Steering Committee for the Coalition of Global Hearing Health—a committee tasked with developing global guidelines for humanitarian ear and hearing care outreach projects. Her most recent professional appointment includes serving as a member on the Nomination and Election Committee for her national professional association the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. When not busy with work and service, Dr. Dunn-Murad enjoys time with her husband and three children. As a native New Yorker, she enjoys the outdoors and Broadway shows.

Benjamin Margolis, M.D.

Dr. Margolis is board certified in neurology and psychiatry, having completed the combined residency program at Brown University. He specializes in neuropsychiatric care for adults with I/DD in the New York Hudson Valley. He attended medical school at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine after the post baccalaureate premedical program at Columbia University, and holds a BFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York City. An active member of AADMD, he is working to improve behavioral and mental health care of individuals with I/DD on local, state and national levels.



Ani Mooney, RN
Special Olympics NY Parent & Coach

Ani Mooney has been a Registered Nurse for the Troy City School District for 25 years. However, her primary role is being a parent to a Special Olympics Athlete, Tommy. Ani has volunteered for Special Olympics New York for over 28 years. She is an Assistant Coach for Floor Hockey, Powerlifting, Softball, and Swimming. Ani has also assisted with Healthy Athletes and traveled to State Games as a Nurse with the Capital District Region Delegation. She has spearheaded multiple SONY fundraisers and assisted with countless others. Ani has been on the Board of Directors for The Arc of Rensselaer County for the past 10 years, and has worked at the Easter Seals Summer Camp for Individuals with Disabilities.

**Billy Seide**
Special Olympics NY Athlete Leader & Health Messenger

Billy Seide has been a Special Olympics New York athlete for 24 years! Over the course of his involvement, he has competed in softball, snowshoeing, unified bowling and athletics, and even had the opportunity to play softball in China at the World Games in 2007. Billy is a strong leader for all SONY Athletes. A member of the Hudson Valley Region Athlete Leadership Council, as well as the former Chairman of the Statewide ALC, Billy is an advocate for himself and his peers. Billy brings his personal experiences, his passion for Special Olympics, and his sense of humor to the Health Advisory Council and is looking forward to representing his fellow athletes as a member of the Council.

Vincent Siasoco, MD, MBA
Special Olympics NY Clinical Director, Health Promotion & MedFest
Golisano Health Leadership Award 2019

Vincent Siasoco, MD, MBA, is a Board-certified Family Medicine Physician is a Clinical Director for Special Olympics MedFest and Health Promotion programs. He is Chair of the Special Olympics International Global Faculty Advisory Panel for Health Promotion and a member of the Special Olympics International, Global Medical Advisory Committee. He was awarded the Special Olympics New York Golisano Health Leadership Award in 2019 and Golisano Global Health Leadership award in 2021. He has almost 20 years of experience in caring for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities as a clinician, educator, and administrator. He is an Assistant Professor in the Departments of Family Medicine and Pediatrics at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. He is the Director of Primary Care at the Rose. F. Kennedy (RFK) Children's Evaluation and Rehabilitation Center at Montefiore and Director of Clinical Model Services Training at the RFK University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) at Montefiore. He is the Medical Director at ADAPT Community Network (formally known as United Cerebral Palsy of NYC). Dr. Siasoco is a Board member of the American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry, Positive Exposure, and at Mercy Home for Children. He serves as Co-Chair of the Cerebral Palsy (CP) State Medical Director's Council and Co-Chair of their annual CP State Medical Director's Council Clinical Conference. In addition, he serves as Co-Chair of the Medical Taskforce of the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities.



Joanne Florio Siegel, LCSW



With over 40 years of experience in the field of developmental disabilities, Joanne is currently the Co-Director of the Rose F. Kennedy University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (RFK UCEDD) and has dedicated her career toward enhancing the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families through clinical services, self-advocacy facilitation, community education and policy development. As Principal Associate in Department of Pediatrics at Einstein College of Medicine, she is championing an effort to infuse "IDD through the life span" into the medical school curriculum at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

In 2017 she took her first Polar Plunge with Special Olympics at the Bronx Zoo! She sees Special Olympics Athletes as empowered self-advocates who can lead future efforts in breaking down barriers to full community participation and acceptance.

Adriana Verwey, MD, MPH

Dr. Adriana Verwey is a Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrician and Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Rochester Medical Center. She is Associate Director of the Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities, a University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (SCDD/UCEDD), where she leads a systems-level approach focused on enhancing inclusive and accessible recreation, leisure, and play within our communities. In addition to her medical training as a pediatrician, Dr. Verwey has also completed a Masters in Public Health and training through the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) in Rochester. She holds a role as core faculty for pediatric medical resident education with a focus on improving physician skills in providing well-rounded and inclusive care for individuals with developmental disabilities. Much of her curriculum development work focuses on dismantling ableism across all spaces. She has academic interests in health disparities and data driven advocacy to support community level interventions to improve the health of all members of the community. Her passions include advocacy around creating inclusive and equitable neighborhoods with a focus on inclusive and accessible recreation, leisure, and play.



Claire Watson, PhD, MS, MSPH **Golisano Health Leadership Award 2023**



Dr. Claire Watson is the Founding Program Director for both the Public Health and Health Science majors at St. Bonaventure University. Her experience as a college professor, cardiovascular rehab specialist and public health practitioner have prepared her well for her work with Special Olympics athletes, combining the research and skills from clinical and preventive fields. Dr. Watson is a SONY Clinical Director for Health Promotion, having managed/participated in, 5 health screenings across New York State during her first year as Clinical Director. Most recently, she was chosen to be one of the first Directors to "Train the Trainer" for new Clinical Directors for Special Olympics International. Dr. Watson is also the proud Mom of an incredible high school junior, Alexander, who also wants to be an agent of change through an education and career in journalism.

Frederick Wetzel, PhD, CDP, NCC

Dr Wetzel is the (retired) Downstate Director for the NY State OPWDD, Division of Quality Improvement. He currently provides Consultation on Health Care topics to numerous agencies supporting individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. He also volunteers for the OPWDD Central Office Mortality Committee.

