



News from the Office of  
**ERIE COUNTY EXECUTIVE MARK POLONCARZ**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **BURSTEIN TO PARTICIPATE IN DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL ADOLESCENT HEALTH AGENDA**

*Health Commissioner will Represent NACCHO on Expert Panel; Expertise with Adolescent Health Cited*

**ERIE COUNTY, NY**— Today, Erie County Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein announced that she was asked to represent the National Association of County and City Health Officials (“NACCHO”) on an expert panel to develop a national adolescent health agenda (“AHA”) for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Adolescent Health (“OAH”). As part of this nationwide effort to build awareness about the importance of the teen years on healthy development and lifelong health, OAH will enlist leaders in healthcare, public health, education, social services, and other sectors to discuss their perspectives on priorities and strategies for promoting adolescent health. These perspectives will provide diverse, expert insights that will build the substance, scope, and shape of the AHA.

“Dr. Burstein is an excellent choice for this panel, and I congratulate her on being recognized for her wealth of knowledge and expertise in dealing with adolescent health issues,” **said Erie County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz.** “She is an ardent promoter of adolescent health and tireless advocate for children’s health matters, and I am sure that she can provide the pertinent local health department perspectives that will be crucial to this developing agenda.”

“I am honored to be chosen to represent NACCHO in creating this important public health policy, and look forward to interacting with my colleagues in its development,” **said Burstein.** “As Erie County’s Health Commissioner I have attached great importance to adolescent health issues and their long-term effects, stressing the need for education and awareness of what teens and young adults are going through. Promoting adolescent health today will lead to healthier adults and a better quality of life in the future, and the development of a national agenda is a tremendous step in that direction.”

OAH currently monitors five areas of adolescent health: reproductive health, mental health, physical health, substance abuse, and relationships. The AHA is being established to increase awareness of the importance of the adolescent and young adult years in encouraging the development of healthy attitudes and practices in these areas that will translate into lifelong health.

The creation of the AHA will incorporate several key steps, including:

- Gathering input from leaders in fields that work with adolescents
- Review by adolescent health experts
- Obtaining federal partner feedback
- Outreach and discussion with stakeholders and adolescents
- Development of the National Adolescent Health Agenda
- Release and dissemination

Participants from each sector will take part in two meetings via webinar. The first meeting will consist of a moderated discussion on what each perceives as the most pressing health needs of adolescents, the role each respective sector plays in addressing those needs, the challenges they face, and strategies for moving forward. The second meeting will involve each sector reviewing and refining OAH's synopsis of their discussion while working towards a consensus statement. The perspectives gained from these sessions will shape and define the overall scope of the AHA, which will be released in late 2013.

**For more information:**

On the Erie County Department of Health, visit <http://www2.erie.gov/health/>

On the National Association of County and City Health Officials, visit <http://www.naccho.org/>

On the Office of Adolescent Health, visit <http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/>

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