

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **SCHUYLER NAMED AS COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

**Jamestown:**-- Chautauqua County Executive Gregory J. Edwards announced today that Chautauqua County Department of Health Director Christine Schuyler has been appointed as the new Commissioner for the Department of Social Services.

Christine Schuyler will be replacing Steve Wickmark, who resigned from the position effective in April, but who stayed on temporarily until a new commissioner was appointed.

In July 2008, Schuyler was appointed as the Director of the Chautauqua County Department of Health. Under her leadership, the Health Department has made significant progress in improving agency efficiencies and health outcomes for County residents despite the unprecedented public health and fiscal challenges.

"Chris has emphasized the importance of collaboration with all stakeholders in our community as a means to improve the overall health and well-being," said Edwards. "She has aggressively evaluated programs to ensure that the health of our community is protected in the most efficient and cost-effective ways possible."

Schuyler has also led the health department through times of challenge such as the H1N1 Pandemic, and challenges after the Silver Creek Flood and the Dunkirk Fire. During the Pandemic she and her team coordinated with government agencies, community agencies, schools, the medical community and the media to provide health education and immunizations to the public. After the Silver Creek Flood, she and her team responded quickly and efficiently to ensure a safe and dependable water supply and provide education on environmental hazards. After the Dunkirk Fire, she successfully relocated the NYSDOH licensed Article 28 Diagnostic & Treatment Center clinic within two weeks of fire.

Schuyler has also taken many actions to improve efficiencies and preserve the public health mission and infrastructure such as consolidating Jamestown and Mayville Environmental Health offices, internalizing the Cancer Services Program and Medicaid Obstetric and Maternal Services Program, and the Health Department receiving an award by NYSDOH to operate the County's Women, Infants and Children's (WIC) Program, which has seen an almost doubling of participation, greatly exceeding the state's goals. She has also led the Health Department to the streamlining of Family Planning Services, the establishment of the Food Handler Training Program, and very recently she aided in the integration of Veterans' Services into Cancer Services Program outreach and recruitment.

In her new role, Schuyler will provide administrative oversight for the departments of Public Health and Social Services. This includes ultimate responsibility for day-to-day operations thus ensuring quality service to the community while meeting state and federal mandates for each program.

She will also be involved with various local and state committees and sub-committees as related to the assorted program areas.

"The consolidated leadership of these two departments will result in the provision of united, efficient and cost effective services to help county residents become healthy and self-sufficient," said Edwards. "This new model will provide individuals, families and communities more stream-lined access to the critically important human services that both of these departments provide."

The combined goal of these two departments is to establish a common sense human service delivery system that is comprehensive, responsive, coordinated and based on measurable results. Health Department preventive care initiatives such as healthy lifestyles, screenings and education can now partner with social services programs. This could result in an increase in self-sufficiency and personal accountability and a decrease in Medicaid utilization and social program expenses as a reduction in preventable diseases is seen.

Together, Public Health and Social Services provide various forms of assistance to the citizens of Chautauqua County including disease prevention, health promotion, environmental health services, income support, child protection and services, medical assistance and comprehensive services designed to promote a higher quality of life for children, families and disadvantaged adults.

The Chautauqua County Department of Health strives to protect and promote the health and environment of County residents by preventing disease, prolonging meaningful life, protecting the environment, and providing leadership during health crises. This Department is the County's local health district and under the local board of Health, formulates, adopts and publishes rules, regulations, orders and directions for the security of life and health in the County consistent with Public Health Law and New York State rules and regulations. A 60 person workforce staffs the department and oversees and provides over 40 public health programs, mostly mandated by State regulations.

The Chautauqua County Department of Social Services, in partnership with the community, focuses on its responsibility to maintain effective, yet caring services to families in need, while connecting them with an opportunity to achieve self-reliance. This Department is the County's local district for Social Services and administers all phases of Social Services and Public Assistance programs as defined in New York State Social Services Law as well as the Youth Bureau. The Department is staffed with a 324-person workforce and provides over 30 support and assistance programs, mostly mandated by State and Federal regulation.

Schuyler has served as the County's Public Health Director for the last three years. Her previous experience includes nursing, sales and marketing, physician relations, and hospital administration. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing and Master's Degree in Health Care Administration. She also serves on the Chautauqua County Leadership Network Board, Tapestry Governance Board, Western New York Public Health Alliance and Am-Vets Ladies Auxiliary

"The current economic climate presents us with a new normal in which we have to continue to

find new ways to ensure efficiency and effectiveness,” Schuyler said. “I look forward to working with County Executive Edwards, other Department Heads, Health Department and Social Services staff, and our community partners to better serve the Health and Social Service needs of the residents of our County.”

Schuyler lives in Busti and is married to John Schuyler; they have four children: Joe and Nicki Triscuit and Chase and Jamie Schuyler.

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