



JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Contact: Lisa Lagos, 315.786.3735

April 7, 2025

**2025 Public Health Service Awards of Distinction in celebration of
National Public Health Week – April 7-13, 2025**

Watertown, NY – The Jefferson County Public Health Service has established public health excellence awards to honor employees and community partners for outstanding service in the advancement and improvement of public health. The awards are given annually in celebration of National Public Health Week, and the ceremony for this year’s recipients will take place on Thursday morning, April 10, 2025 at 8:30 a.m. at the Jefferson County Public Health Service facility, located at 531 Meade Street, Watertown, NY. In addition to the honorees receiving such well-deserved recognition, the awards are named for the past two directors of public health, Jean A. Bilow and Ginger B. Hall, as well as Retired U.S. Army Reserve Major General Robert J. Kasulke, MD, Jefferson County’s long-serving medical director, who passed away in late 2023.

Employees nominated colleagues and partners over the winter, and the department’s administrative team selected the following 2025 award winners:

Paul D. Barter

Jefferson County Director of Emergency Medical Services

*To be awarded the 2025 **Jean A. Bilow Award for Public Health Excellence***

Jeri L. Fuller

Medical Social Worker with the department’s Certified Home Health Agency

*To be awarded the 2025 **Ginger B. Hall Award for Public Health Clinical Excellence***

Stephanie A. Graf

Deputy Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County

*To be awarded the 2025 **Robert J. Kasulke, MD Award for Public Health Community Partnership***

The award for public health professional excellence is named for Jean A. Bilow, the first and longest-served Jefferson County Director of Public Health. Much of the department’s current structure and programming was either put in place or greatly expanded through Jean’s leadership. While programs have certainly evolved since her retirement, Jean had a vision that expanded public health’s impact broadly into the greater health care system, and improved population health. The Medical Examiner, Emergency Medical Services, and health promotion programs all happened under Jean’s leadership. Jean also led the department’s responses to a significant meningococcal outbreak, novel H1N1 influenza, pertussis, and other communicable disease responses. Jean’s tenure also saw the development of public health preparedness and response, which was put in place following the 9/11/2001 terrorist attacks.

The award for public health clinical excellence is named for Ginger B. Hall, the second Jefferson County Director of Public Health. Before Ginger became the department head, and during her time as Director, her tenure greatly advanced clinical care, quality assurance, and quality improvement standards in the home and clinic settings. Ginger also ably led the department’s response through the COVID-19 pandemic, and she worked tirelessly to procure funding to establish the first community paramedicine program pilot in New York State, which is measurably and significantly reducing costly Emergency Department visits and hospital inpatient admissions in Jefferson County.

The award for public health community partnership is named for Robert J. Kasulke, MD, who served as Medical Director and Assistant Medical Examiner for Jefferson County over approximately three decades. Dr. Kasulke sadly passed away in November 2023. A hallmark of Dr. Kasulke's career was service to the community and to the country. In addition to his work for the department, he was medical director for Hospice of Jefferson County for many years, he served as a physician for the Gouverneur Correctional Facility, he was a Major General in the U.S. Army Reserves, and he was actively committed to honoring veterans, through both honors programs for veterans that became patients of Hospice, and honor flights to Washington D.C. which supports aging veterans in visiting national war memorials. Dr. Kasulke served his community tirelessly, through active membership on many community agency boards of directors.

Media is invited and encouraged to attend this event.

~End~