

County Commissioner of Community & Family Services Robert Allers to Retire

Poughkeepsie...Dutchess County Executive Marcus J. Molinaro has announced the retirement of longtime Dutchess County Commissioner of Community & Family Services Robert Allers. Mr. Allers has served Dutchess County for over 40 years in various roles including the past eighteen years as Commissioner of Community & Family Services (formerly known as Social Services).



*Robert Allers, Dutchess County
Commissioner of Community &
Family Services*

County Executive Molinaro stated, "For more than 40 years, Bob Allers has been making a vital difference in people's lives. He has offered protection to young children and vulnerable adults, he has understood the importance of helping someone obtain financial independence, and he has valued the dignity of every individual. Under his leadership, Dutchess County has been a model for innovation throughout New York State. Commissioner Allers has touched countless lives and made them better and we are grateful for his dedicated, professional service."

Robert Allers began his career with Dutchess County Government in 1974 as a caseworker in the Adult and Family Services division of the Department of Social Services (former name of the current Department of Community & Family Services.) He later served as senior caseworker and then supervisor in the Child Protective Services division where he investigated cases of child abuse and neglect and worked to help and protect children and their families. He also worked in various roles in Adult Services. He was promoted to Deputy Commissioner in 1993. In October, 1996, Robert Allers was appointed Commissioner of Social Services by former County Executive William R. Steinhaus.

As Commissioner, Mr. Allers has been responsible for oversight of the Department of Community and Family Services (DCFS) and its mission of providing assistance and support to eligible families and individuals with the aim of restoring each beneficiary to maximum independence. DCFS is Dutchess County's largest department with annual operating budget of almost \$144 million and over 350 employees. DCFS is responsible for the allocation of an additional \$500 million in state and federal funds for programs such as Medicaid, child support, food stamps, etc. The department provides a wide range of services and programming to thousands of individuals and families every month, from protective services for children and adults, housing services, domestic violence prevention services, foster care and adoption, juvenile detention and justice services, child support enforcement, Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), temporary assistance, employment programs, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) aka food stamps, and Medicaid.

Under Commissioner Allers' leadership, the Dutchess County Department of Community and Family Services has been recognized throughout New York State for its innovation and has served as a best practice models by social services district throughout the state. Commissioner Allers is a member of the New York Public Welfare Association, serving as the organization's president in 2004. Additionally, Commissioner Allers and his DCFS team have served on countless committees and workgroups through the state to share their insight and expertise with other county and state officials to develop statewide program initiatives based on Dutchess County pilot programs.

Among the initiatives and programs that have been developed under Commissioner Allers' leadership:

- Coordinated Children's Services Initiative (CCSI) in partnership with Astor Services for Children & Families. CCSI is a collaborative effort among families, community agencies and other concerned parties that seek to strengthen the families of children, ages 0-18, at risk of placement outside the home. DCFS helped establish the program with Astor and remains the primary funder of the program.
- Child Advocacy Center (CAC) with Child Abuse Prevention Center. The Child Advocacy Center was the first of its kind in New York State. The CAC brings child protective services workers, law enforcement officers and other service providers together under one roof to meet the needs of child victims and families while undergoing sexual abuse investigations. This coordinated response reduces trauma to the child victim and enhances prosecution. The CAC operates with the guidance of a multidisciplinary team with representation from each Dutchess County public and private agency involved in dealing with child sexual abuse and the most severe physical abuse and neglect.
- Wheels to Work with Dutchess County BOCES - donated vehicles are provided to individuals and families to help obtain and retain employment, acquire jobs with more hours or higher pay, or gain access to higher education to increase their wage potential. The program has successfully helped people to achieve financial independence.
- Employment services in partnership with the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce. DCFS was the first in New York State to partner with a local Chamber of Commerce to offer employment services. Programs include the Step-Up Employment Mentoring Program, Youth Employment Services (YES), Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), and Responsible Parent Program among others to help those receiving Temporary Assistance to attain self sufficiency.
- Expansion of Dutchess County domestic violence services. Commissioner Allers has played a key role in coordinating county domestic violence services. By working in close coordination with the various county departments that provide domestic violence services including the District Attorney's Office, Department of Mental Hygiene, Office of Probation and Community Corrections, the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office and others; Commissioner Allers has been

able to take advantage of state funding streams that have enabled Dutchess County to expand its domestic violence service by more than 300%.

“This is just a small sample of the initiatives and innovations that Commissioner Allers has implemented in order to better assist people and improve their lives. Bob Allers has understood the importance of helping people to gain employment so they no longer rely on public assistance. He has been willing to break through common silo mentality to work with other county departments and community agencies to deliver vital programs and services to our community while maximizing state and federal reimbursement to save taxpayer dollars. The fact that many of the programs developed early in his tenure as Commissioner continue to be vibrant and successful today, demonstrates his ability to look at the big picture and find long term solutions. Additionally, Bob Allers’ understanding and knowledge of the various State and Federal funding streams and his ability to think outside the box has saved millions in taxpayer dollars over the years,” said County Executive Molinaro.

Commissioner Allers said, “When I began at the Department of Social Services in 1974, my work brought me face to face with children who were hungry, dirty and had no immunizations. I was in homes that had no heat, unsafe staircases and no running water. Before that, the issue of domestic abuse of children and adults was something that only happened elsewhere. I am proud to be part of a team that has worked hard to help and protect the children and adults of Dutchess County. I have been blessed with the opportunity to work with so many talented, caring people. Together, we have made a difference and improved the quality of life for our residents, and for that I am grateful.”

Mr. Allers, who resides in the Town of LaGrange with his wife Martha and daughter Nicole, plans to enjoy some traveling and fishing. Mr. Allers officially retires on March 27th, 2015.

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