

## **A Message from Our Chair**

**September 2023**

We often hear from our colleagues in the movement that our Alliance is one of the strongest. I do believe that we are truly fortunate to have a strong collaborative spirit among our Ys, and that our Alliance staff team is continually working behind the scenes to support our success in multiple ways.

As an extension of YUSA and its support for Ys, the Alliance team offers services such as strategic planning, board governance, CEO onboarding and more, beyond the cornerstone advocacy work. I thought I would share a snapshot of some of the work our staff team is engaged in these days.

Sheree Vodicka is working with Lisa Humphreys and the volunteer co-chairs of the YMCA of the Triangle on its new Strategic Plan and working with Y Enterprise Shared Services (YESS) to complete details on YMCA memberships for UnitedHealthcare Medicaid members. We will be collaborating with Optum to serve the UHC Medicaid members through a process our Ys are already accustomed to. This means greater impact in a deserving community and brings more revenue for our Ys to serve.

Sheree and the team also continue to work with WellCare on refining Y membership options for its Medicaid members. As of last week, our NC Ys have earned more than \$2.7 million in WellCare memberships. In addition to helping us lean further into our mission to serve all, the Alliance team's work with Medicaid partners is so valuable for our bottom lines as we head into 2024 and federal Covid relief assistance comes to an end for our Ys.

Bruce Griffin, who serves as a full-time consultant to the Alliance now, is working with the Harrison Family YMCA and the Alamance County Community YMCA on board governance and with the Gaston County Family YMCA on strategic planning. He's also been working with Nat Auten at the YMCA of Catawba Valley on a third-party payer strategy. Bruce has been providing CEO onboarding support for YMCA of the Sandhills CEO Jeff Darling and navigating changes in structure with the Eastern Carolina YMCA, supporting the work to make our Eastern NC YMCAs strong and sustainable into the future.

Michele McKinley is launching a YUSA LINK Workspace for our Marketing Communications leaders to share digital assets so that they can work more collaboratively to share resources, as well as shepherding the launch of our statewide YUSA-sponsored DataStrength® pilot with CGR Creative. We all know that data-driven solutions make sense, and with this data and analytics tracking platform, our Ys will have access to data around our marketing and communications efforts—and recommendations for changes—to improve our business outcomes. Our Alliance's formidable reputation in the movement positioned us well to be considered for this YUSA pilot; we are the only state in the country that will have this valuable year-long opportunity.

The staff team is launching two more Peer Community Groups this fall: one for Ys with licensed childcare programs and one for Ys running food programs. All the Peer Communities that Sheree, Bruce and Michele support provide our Y staff with the opportunity to lead and learn and be connected all year long.

The Alliance is hosting two poverty simulations, which I shared about in this column last month. Your team can [register here](#) for the Oct. 24 simulation in Winston-Salem or [register here](#) for the Oct. 26 simulation in Goldsboro. The deadline to register is Sept. 29, and a minimum number of participants is required for us to host them. Join me in attending one of the poverty simulations to broaden your perspective on how low-income families are navigating daily challenges and consider how our Ys can support them better.

Of course, our Alliance team is working in other ways too, but I hope these highlights make you proud and perhaps make you reflect on how you might get more deeply engaged in the work of our Alliance across the state.

Lynn Lomax  
CEO, YMCA of High Point  
Chair, NC Alliance Board of Directors