



# COUNTY OF ERIE

**MARK C. POLONCARZ**

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

December 31, 2014

Erie County Legislature  
92 Franklin Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Buffalo, New York 14202

## **FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION**

**Re: Appointment to the Department of Mental Health**

Dear Honorable Members:

Pursuant to Article 13 § 1301 of the County's Charter, I hereby appoint Carol Dankert-Maurer to be the Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health. As you may be aware the Department of Mental Health (the "Department") has been without a commissioner since the early Fall and has been overseen by interim Commissioner Deborah Goldman.

Carol Dankert-Maurer's current term as Commissioner of the Department of Social Services expired December 15, 2014, but she is currently still serving in that role on an interim basis. Having Commissioner Dankert-Maurer transition to the position of Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health will serve multiple purposes.

First, Commissioner Dankert-Maurer will bring years of experience navigating the often turbulent waters of addressing the concerns and mandates of state agencies that oversee the Department. Additionally, Commissioner Dankert-Maurer will work especially close with the incoming Commissioner of Social Services, guaranteeing the transition of the new Commissioner will be done as smoothly as possible. Given the complex nature of the Department of Social Services, the administration feels strongly that ensuring a seamless transition from Commissioner Dankert-Maurer to our next Commissioner is paramount.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank Deborah Goldman for her efforts during her time as interim commissioner of the Department. It is my strong belief that Carol and Deborah will be well positioned to continue to provide much needed services to the people of Erie County from this essential department.

Should your Honorable Body require further information, I encourage you to contact my Chief of Staff Jennifer Hibit. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

  
Mark C. Poloncarz  
Erie County Executive

# **Carol Dankert-Maurer, LMSW**

## **Professional Profile**

- **Over 30 years of public welfare practice**
- **15 years public sector leadership**
- **Team and performance-based management experience**
- **Strong background in strategic planning, cross-systems collaboration and continuous quality improvement**
- **Significant state/national contacts in public welfare, behavioral health and social services administration**

## **Experience**

***Commissioner of Social Services  
Erie County Department of Social Services***

***June 2009 to present***

**Responsible for all aspects of organizational leadership and management for 1500 member department serving over 100,000 children and families in seven major program areas.**

### **Accomplishments:**

- **Advanced performance-based contracts for public welfare services**
- **Instituted continuous quality improvement efforts in all department operations**
- **Work with National, State and local partners to advance child well-being on multiple dimensions**
- **Promote the use of technology to meet the dynamic needs of our varied customers.**

***First Deputy Commissioner of Social Services  
Erie County Department of Social Services***

***August 2008 to May 2009***

**Provided direct leadership to Family and Children's Services Division, Human Resources and Youth Services.**

### **Accomplishments:**

- **Developed and co-facilitated the NYPWA Deputy Commissioners network**
- **Instituted enhanced practice outcomes for foster care services**
- **Conducted comprehensive review and standardization of department policies and operating procedures**

## ***Experience, cont'd***

***Deputy Commissioner of Social Services  
Chautauqua County Social Services***

***January 2005 to July 2008***

**Provided direct leadership to three program divisions (TANF, Children's Services and Child Care) and three administrative departments (Fiscal, Staff Development and Human Resources). Also had direct administrative oversight for two other human services departments (Veterans Services and Youth Bureau).**

### **Accomplishments:**

- **Developed and monitored three department budgets**
- **Facilitated departmental strategic planning process**
- **Represented department at various local, regional and state oversight bodies**
- **Developed original child welfare teaming project that is now a CW practice standard across New York State**
- **Designed and piloted "dual track" for child protection that is now state law**

***Chautauqua County Social Services***

***June 1979 to December 2004***

**During nearly 15 years in the child welfare division, progressed from a front line caseworker responsibility through a number of supervision and management assignments culminating in seven years of service as the Director of Family and Children's Services**

## **Professional affiliations**

- **Member – Permanent Judicial Commission of New York State**
- **President – NYPWA Board of Directors (1/14-1/15)**
- **Co-chair – Erie County Court Improvement Project**
- **Member – Erie County Workforce Investment Board**
- **Member – Erie County Youth Council**

## **Education**

**State University College, Fredonia – 1977**

**Bachelor of Arts, Psychology**

**St Bonaventure University – 1992**

**15 graduate hours, Community Counseling**

**Case Western Reserve University – 1995**

**Master of Social Services Administration, Social Work and Management**

**Bucharest, Romania – 1995**

**Co-taught one of the first social work class after the fall of Nicolae**

**Ceausescu, after a twenty year ban on graduate human services education**