



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Alliance for Better Health Leads Collaborative Effort to Distribute Thousands of Smart Thermometers throughout Capital Region

Community-based organizations and managed care organizations collaborate to protect CBO workers and underserved individuals

Troy, NY – April 22, 2020 – [Alliance for Better Health](#) (Alliance) today announced that it is leading a collaborative effort to secure and distribute approximately 7,500 smart thermometers to community-based organizations (CBOs) and the community members they serve in the Capital District. The ultimate goals are: 1) to provide much-needed thermometers to social and behavioral health service organizations; and 2) for the individuals who work in these organizations to monitor their own temperatures – providing public health leaders insight into the status of our community’s health and the status of the COVID-19 outbreak in the region.

The internet-connected thermometers, produced by Kinsa Health, include a patient-facing mobile app that prompts users to enter symptoms they may be experiencing while also monitoring their temperature and providing basic advice about whether they should seek medical attention. A [recent New York Times article](#) said: “Kinsa has followed the flu more closely than the CDC can”— and now experts anticipate the company’s smart thermometers will be able to do the same for COVID-19. Kinsa also uploads users’ anonymized and non-identifiable temperature readings to a central database, which enables the company to map the prevalence and severity of fevers in the region and across the country.

“Many of the community-based organizations we partner with have told us that it’s hard to get thermometers,” said Jacob Reider, MD, Alliance CEO. “We believe that by getting these thermometers into the hands of Medicaid members, uninsured individuals, and the community partners who serve these people, this initiative will help people understand their symptoms sooner, which can result in more proactive isolation procedures—while also providing insight to public health professionals about emerging COVID-19 hotspots to help local officials better direct limited public resources.”

In keeping with its mission to build health equity for all, Alliance has led this unique initiative involving health plans and CBOs in New York’s Capital Region—purchasing and distributing the smart thermometers to approximately 35 partner organizations, ranging from local homeless shelters to regional hospitals and health plans.

Several local partners contributed to this initiative, including CDPHP and MVP Health Care.

“I am thrilled to see so many great organizations stepping up for the good of our community,” said CDPHP president and CEO, Dr. John D. Bennett. “This crisis is a test of our will and our togetherness. Our community is strong, and we will persevere.”



“During these unprecedented times, it is our responsibility to support our communities as they navigate through the impact of COVID-19,” said MVP Health Care’s Senior Leader for Community Engagement, Ellen Sax. “Thermometers, masks, and other resources are key in keeping the region’s front line providers and most vulnerable healthy and safe, and we applaud Alliance for their efforts on this initiative.”

While a number of the thermometers will go directly to the underserved, the vast majority will be distributed to workers at the CBOs—such as food pantries and organizations that assist with education and housing—that provide valuable social support to those at-risk during a time when continuity of services are needed more than ever before. Northern Rivers Family of Services is one of these CBOs.

“Northern Rivers Family of Services is distributing these valuable health tools to families served by our Early Learning Center in Schenectady. These families are challenged by poverty along with a lack of services in their community, and by providing this resource, we hope to better understand and improve public health for those who need it most,” said William Gettman, CEO of Northern Rivers.

In addition to providing critical access to the smart thermometers, Alliance has launched several other projects aimed at improving health equity during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, including:

- Purchasing and donating 425 Zoom licenses and more than 40 laptops for community-based partner organizations to enable continuity and coordination of social services across the community
- Developing a [COVID-19 resource page](#) that centralizes important pandemic-related information in one location and helps partner organizations request assistance from Alliance
- Securing approximately 20,000 surgical masks for 26 partner organizations that were unable to locate a viable vendor
- Hosting community hours via video conference to strengthen connections between Alliance and its partner CBOs

“What makes Alliance for Better Health’s mission-based model work is the fact that all of us—behavioral health providers, managed care organizations, medical care provider organizations, and social care providers—are all in this together,” Dr. Reider said. “The work we are doing for people may have changed a bit in light of COVID-19—but what hasn’t changed is our combined commitment to address social needs before they turn into medical problems so that we can build health equity for all.”

About Alliance for Better Health

[Alliance for Better Health](#) (Alliance) engages medical, behavioral, and social service providers in developing innovative solutions to promote the health of people and communities, with a goal of transforming the care delivery system into one that incentivizes health and prevention. Established in 2015, Alliance and its daughter entity, Healthy Alliance IPA, collaborate with community partners to address social needs – food insecurity, housing assistance, benefits navigation – before they turn into costly medical problems. With more than 100 partner organizations across a six-county area in New York’s Tech Valley and Capital Region, Alliance prioritizes *building health equity for all*.



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