

Greater New Bedford Health Center names new CEO

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NEW BEDFORD — It took a little over a year, but the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center has found their new CEO: former Alosa Health CEO Cheryl Bartlett.

After lifelong New Bedford resident Daniel Bertoldo held the interim position following Peter C. Georgeopoulos stepping down in May of 2016, Bartlett, a Plymouth resident, saw this as an opportunity to get back to her roots both in her career and her family.

"I try to give a voice to those who don't have one," she said. "I believe access to healthcare is a right to everyone in this country. Community health centers live that philosophy. They are the boots on the ground for the health department."

Although she was born and raised in Connecticut, Bartlett spent many summers in her youth in New Bedford while staying at her cousin's house. Currently, she said most of her family resides in Fairhaven and New Bedford. She said her uncle served for a number of years as a New Bedford police officer.

"Coming back to New Bedford is coming full circle for me," she said.

While working for the state's department of public health during the Patrick administration, her work with the Mass in Motion initiative — in an effort to combat obesity and chronic disease — saw her connect with Mayor Jon Mitchell once he took office.

"Cheryl has extensive experience in public health and management, and I have great respect for her and her work," Mitchell said in a statement. "Her selection as the new CEO of the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center is welcome news, and her skills and leadership going forward will help get the center back on track."

Bartlett brings with her a long resume of leadership roles within the healthcare community ranging from commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, executive director of Substance Abuse Prevention & Public Health Initiatives for Cape Cod Healthcare to the founder and executive director of the Nantucket AIDS Network among others.

Despite her expertise, Bartlett plans to enter her new position, which she's set to begin July 10, with open ears.

"I tend to listen and learn a lot in the beginning and hear what the community needs are," Bartlett said. "I never think I'm a know-it-all."

She will, however, look to tackle some major issues affecting the SouthCoast. She said he has a passion in prostate cancer prevention and educating men about the importance of prostate exams. According to a 2013 Massachusetts Department of Public Health study, Bristol County suffered 136 deaths and 608 hospitalizations from 2007 to 2010. Having previously worked on Cape Cod regarding the opioid epidemic, Bartlett said she believes early intervention and prevention in schools is a necessary step in putting an end to ongoing drug crisis.

"I was committed on the Cape to getting every sixth grader prevention skills — lifestyle and skills building that help kids make better choices," she said.

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