

AUGUST 7, 2020 | Albany, NY

Governor Cuomo Announces Administration Appointments

GOVERNMENT



Governor Cuomo Announces Administration Appointments

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced new appointments to his administration.

"At a time when government performance has never been more important, I am pleased to welcome these dedicated individuals who represent the best of their fields and bring a wealth of knowledge that will help New York build back better than before," **Governor Cuomo said.** "I thank Dani Lever for her extraordinary work on behalf of the people of New York State. Her dedication to public service and expertise were invaluable and her work has left a lasting impact on millions of New Yorkers. She will be greatly missed and all of Team Cuomo wishes her the best on this new, exciting chapter."

Peter Ajemian has been promoted to Communications Director. He previously held the role of Senior Deputy Communications Director since November 2018, and prior to that was Deputy Communications Director for Transportation. Prior to joining the Governor's Office, he served as Chief of Staff to State Senator Brad Hoylman. He has also served as spokesman on a successful state attorney general campaign and as Senior Vice President at the consulting firm Marathon Strategies, where he worked on four successful

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-administration-appointments-39>

state ballot initiatives legalizing same-sex marriage in Washington, Maine, Maryland and Minnesota. He is a graduate of Boston University and The New School.

Peter succeeds **Dani Lever**, who joined the Governor's administration in 2014 as First Deputy Press Secretary. She subsequently served as Press Secretary before being promoted to Communications Director. Ms. Lever is joining Facebook's Strategic Response Communications team.

Stephen B. Silverman has been appointed senior communications advisor for Speechwriting and Strategic Messaging. Most recently, as an independent consultant, Steve advised the Clinton Foundation on communicating the record of President Clinton and his administration and helped create a successful alumni engagement platform. He has worked with the Afya Foundation to raise public awareness for its humanitarian relief work by executing effective external outreach to key stakeholders. He served as a strategic advisor on the Political team of Bloomberg 2020, focused on optimizing the campaign's national co-chairs policy engagement and public advocacy. Previously, Mr. Silverman served as Vice President and Change Management Executive and before that as Vice President and Chief of Staff to the CIO at the Federal Reserve Bank. Mr. Silverman led corporate communications globally for Citigroup's consumer businesses from 2002 to 2009 and played a central role in Citi Field's launch and activation. From 1993 to 1998, Mr. Silverman served as the Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Cabinet Secretary in the White House under President Clinton where he developed and executed communications programs to amplify the President's core messages through Cabinet and Sub-Cabinet public engagement. He also was a leader of the administration's disaster response efforts and played key roles in organizing public events, including the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games, the President's Summit for America's Future, official United States participation in the funeral of President Yitzhak Rabin and a flood summit of the President and mid-western governors in response to the

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-administration-appointments-39>

flooding of the Mississippi River. Mr. Silverman holds a Juris Doctorate from Northwestern University and a Bachelor's degree from Cornell University.

Marquita Sanders has been appointed Assistant Secretary for Scheduling and Operations. Much of her work was within the Obama-Biden Administration working on the Affordable Care Act as an Associate Director in External Affairs in the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and Senior Advisor for Health Programs at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. She comes to New York after her role as National Director of Scheduling and Advance for Senator Cory Booker's Presidential Campaign. Sanders has a decade of experience working on political races across the country, as well as the 2013 Inaugural Committee, the 2012 Democratic Convention. Sanders holds a Bachelor of Science in Criminology and Criminal justice from Florida State University.

Richard Becker MD, has been appointed Deputy Secretary for Health and Human Services. Dr. Becker was previously a Senior Managing Director at ToneyKorf Partners, a strategic advisory and interim management firm with a focus on complex or distressed healthcare situations. Prior to joining ToneyKorf Partners, Richard led the clinical, operational and financial turnaround of The Brooklyn Hospital Center, a 464-bed safety net teaching hospital in Brooklyn, New York, where, as President and CEO, he re-established the medical center's commitment to clinical and academic excellence, as well as its reputation in the New York region, while developing a strong healthcare network involving physicians and community-based institutions. Richard previously served as CEO and Medical Director of the George Washington University Hospital in Washington, DC, where he is also credited with leading a comprehensive clinical and financial turnaround. During his tenure at the George Washington University Medical Center, Richard was an Associate Professor of Anesthesiology and Critical Care Medicine with active roles in patient care, research and education. His recent experience involves providing strategic advisory and diligence services to

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-administration-appointments-39>

assist mission-based healthcare organizations with sustainable transformation through a variety of partnership structures. Richard holds a BA from the University of Virginia College of Arts and Sciences, an MD from the University of Virginia School of Medicine, and an MBA from The George Washington University School of Business.

Jennifer Rentas has been appointed Assistant Secretary for Health and Human Services. She previously served in multiple roles since 2012 at Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS), most recently as Senior Vice President and Chief of Staff. Following the height of the COVID-19 crisis she led HSS' "Return to new Normal" efforts including evaluation of clinical practices and policies, modifications to patient care operations, organization-wide communications, and preparations for potential resurgence, to ensure the safety of patients, staff and the community. Prior to HSS, she was a Senior Policy Analyst for the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, and worked at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital and Saint Barnabas Medical Center. Ms. Rentas received a Bachelor's degree, Masters of Public Policy and Masters of Business Administration from Harvard University.

Julissa Gutierrez has been appointed Chief Diversity Officer for the State of New York. Previously, Ms. Gutierrez served as Deputy Director of Constituency Affairs for the Governor. Prior to joining the Governor's Office, Ms. Gutierrez held a number of roles at the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund, including Director of National Programs and Community Relations and Northeast Director for Civic Engagement. During her time at NALEO Educational Fund, Julissa was a sought-after expert on Latino issues and civic participation and appeared in national and local press outlets. She oversaw the development and execution of nationally-focused and local community-based initiatives, including national coalitions such as the *ya es hora* Campaign, New Americans Campaign and the Election Protection Coalition. Julissa also previously served as Special Assistant to the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Youth and <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-administration-appointments-39>

Community Development. Ms. Gutierrez is Board Member of New Immigrants Community Empowerment and a Trustee for the Queens Public Library. Ms. Gutierrez has a B.A. from the University of Delaware and a M.A. from University of Chicago.

Laura Montross has been appointed Deputy Communications Director for Policy and Issue Advocacy. Ms. Montross most recently served as Director of Women's Outreach on Mike Bloomberg's 2020 presidential campaign and previously as a Principal at Kivvit, a New York public affairs and communications firm. Prior to that, Ms. Montross was a twice-awarded post-graduate grant recipient of the Spanish Ministry of Education in Madrid. Ms. Montross holds a Bachelor's degree in Metropolitan Studies from New York University.

Contact the Governor's Press Office

Contact us by phone:

Albany: (518) 474 - 8418
New York City: (212) 681 - 4640

Contact us by email:

Press.Office@exec.ny.gov