

**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

# **Greene County Family Planning**

## **Annual Report 2023**



**Submitted: April 1, 2024**

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Director of Public Health**

Greene County Family Planning (Family Planning) has been providing highly skilled, trusted reproductive health care for the community of Greene County for over 50 years. In 2023 we celebrated our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the Historic Catskill Point sharing a magical evening with our clinic founder Barbara Bird and many other former staff. It was a year of transition with our new clinic manager bringing a fresh perspective to the work. Staffing was the greatest challenge of the year as the full-time vacant Nurse Practitioner position has not been filled yet. The clinic is primarily funded through a competitive grant from the NYS Department of Health to promote access to reproductive health care with support of the Greene County Legislature.

We are proud to report on the work of the past year, and the progress we made with the goals we set for 2023.

**Our MISSION STATEMENT:** *Providing confidential, compassionate, and professional care, we strive to promote positive health and sexual behaviors through education, prevention, and treatment.*

### **Our 2023 Goals:**

**1. Increase the number of clients seen below the poverty level to 50% consistent with our IPRO Plan of Correction.**

*Our family planning grant requires us to provide care to those who are most in need; specifically, people who are at or below 100% of the federal poverty level. The only finding in our 2022 family planning IPRO review was that we were not seeing enough patients under the federal poverty level (\$15,050 single person/\$31,200 family of 4). In 2022, 45% of our patients were at or below the poverty level and while that number rose to 47% in 2023, the goal was not met.*

**2. Secure the Bureau of Justice Assistance Grant which will support the harm reduction work of the clinic.**

*Greene County Public Health was awarded a Bureau of Justice Administration grant in October 2023 with multiple aims. One of the grants aims is to support the salary of an additional prescriber and a medication for opioid use disorder coordinator in the family planning clinic. The clinic continues to be a source of care and connection for people seeking recovery from opioid use disorder, and this grant will enhance the efforts.*

**3. Hire a new Senior Family Planning Aide and Nurse Practitioner so that we are fully staffed.**

*The Senior Family Planning Aide title was changed to LPN, and we were able to fill this position. The advantage is that an LPN can provide a greater scale of care and we secured a highly skilled experienced applicant. An enormous challenge has been that we have not been able to hire a nurse practitioner, despite advertising through multiple avenues; we have had a full-time opening since October of 2022. We continue to be a National Health Service Corps site, which provides student loan forgiveness after three years of employment. Despite spending \$8,600 on advertising through multiple state-wide and national outlets, we only received one serious applicant who then declined the position. In 2023 the UPSEU contract was renegotiated with substantial raises and a sign-on bonus, yet we are still unable to attract applicants.*

**4. Transition our quality assessment work to fully digital by all staff.**

*In 2023, the Public Health Quality Assurance Officer was able to work with our Electronic Medical Record (EMR) to make chart audits easier. Reports were built using a combination of billing and diagnosis codes, depending on what we were trying to query. Each chart can easily be entered through this report, and it will also be exported into an excel spreadsheet for editing. This paperless system has allowed us to all see and share the information with easier access and improve*

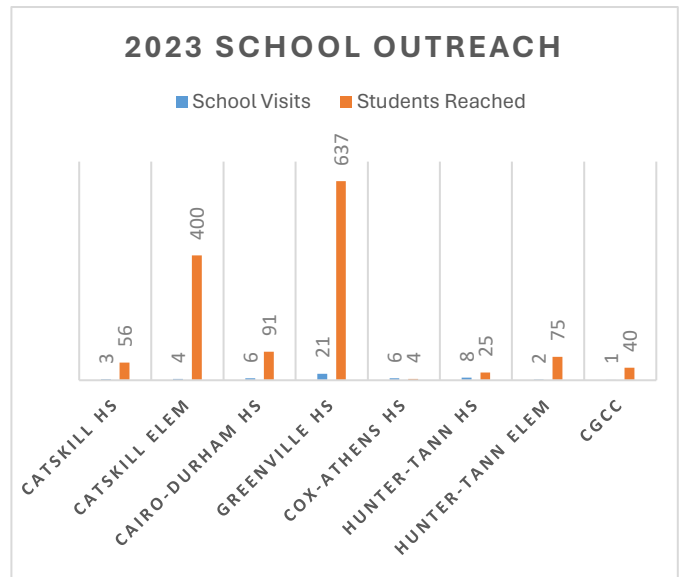
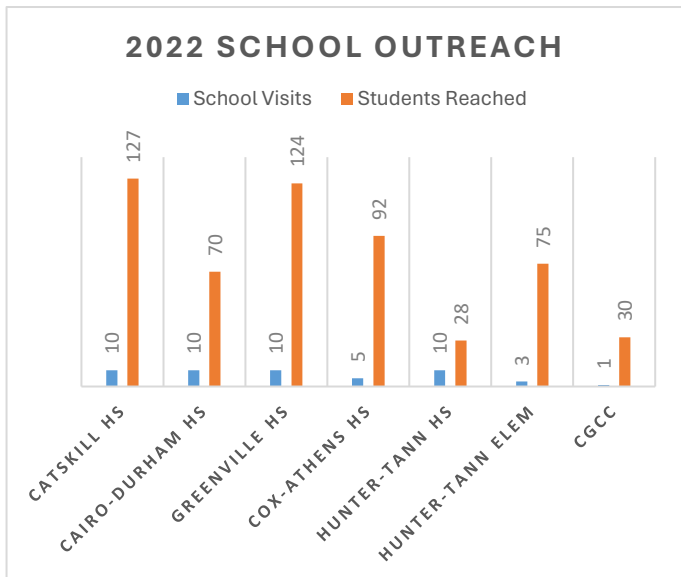
**5. Host a successful 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, which will increase community awareness of our services.**

*Family Planning celebrated our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary on June 2<sup>nd</sup> at the historic Catskill Point on the Hudson River. We had a great turnout from community members, current and former staff, and patients. Awards were*

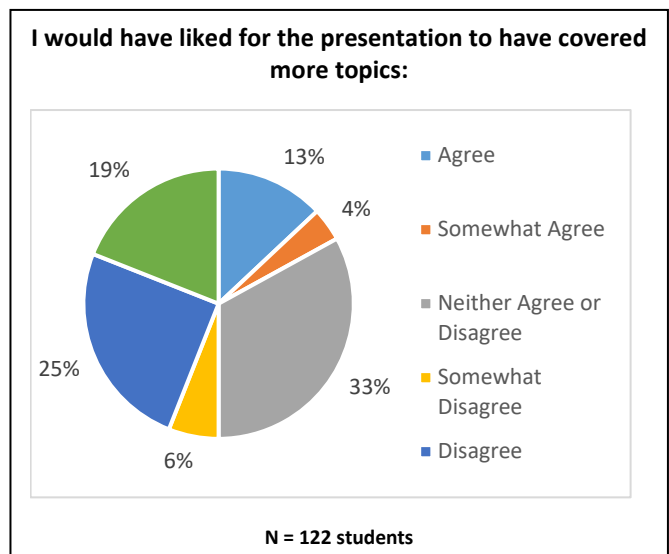
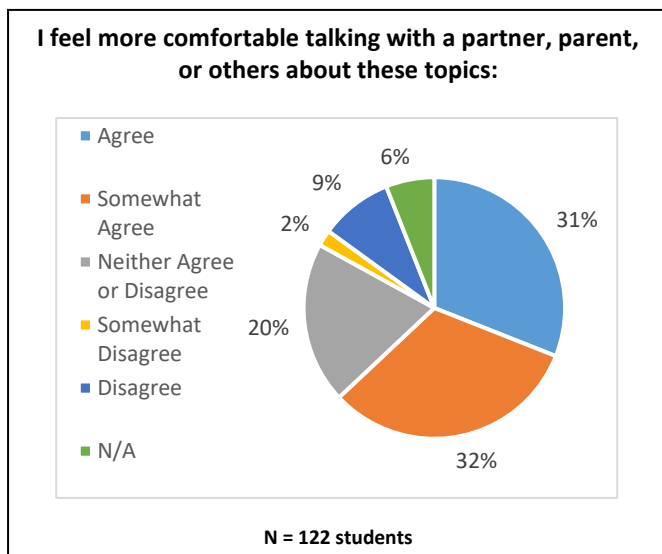
presented to Barbara Byrd who received the initial grant in 1973, Barbara Caldara who was the program administrator for many years, Dr. Perl who was the medical director for 20 years, John Konsul who has been the clinic pharmacist for 33 years, and Laura Churchill who has been the program administrator since 2009. Tickets were donation based so anyone could attend. There was live music with a buffet dinner, then a DJ and dancing. We had a quiz on reproductive health topics with several winners receiving prizes donated by the community.

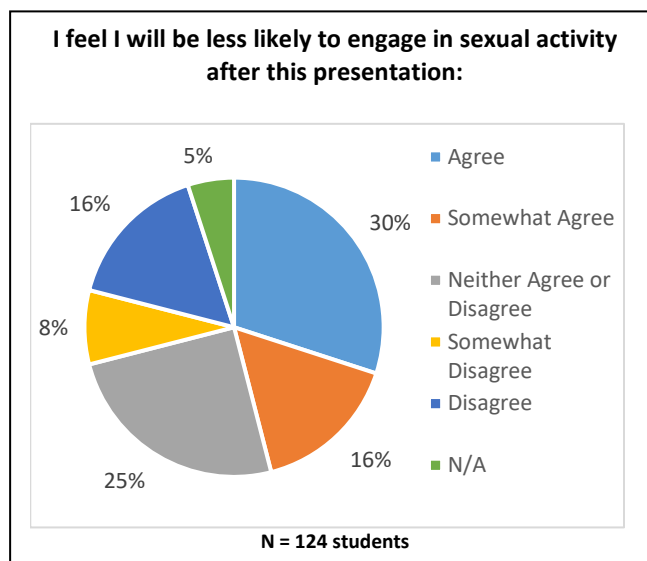
**School Outreach:**

Our health educator has done outreach in 5/6 school districts in Greene County middle school and high school classes. The surveys and feedback consistently reflect the students have learned how to protect themselves and are more likely to use condoms and birth control but are not less likely to initiate sexual activity. To decrease the barriers to teens accessing services, a QR code outreach form was given to the high school health teachers to hang in their rooms. The educators demonstrated the ease of scanning the link right to the page to schedule an appointment online. In 2023, 10.2% of our clients were under age 19. We did see a decrease in the number of students reached at the end of the year due to our full-time health educator leaving for another position.



- Students are presented with surveys to complete at the end of the session, which provide valuable information and help improve future presentations.





Greene County Family Planning was able to precept students from the Albany College of Pharmacy over the summer of 2023. We received great feedback from these students about how much they learned during their rotation in the clinic.

At its very core Family Planning is a public health program with the following goals:

**Prevent unintended pregnancies and promote and plan healthy births:**

We offer a range of effective to highly effective contraceptive methods with same day access, low cost, and counseling to plan a healthy pregnancy.

**Facilitate early detection and treatment of reproductive cancers:**

Family Planning screens for cervical, thyroid, breast, skin, endometrial, ovarian, and testicular cancers. Since we are a small clinic, our patients are followed to make sure they are seen and cared for by specialists. One of our Nurse Practitioners offers colposcopy on-site.

	2022	2023
Colposcopies	22	19
Pap Smears	213	290
Abnormal Pap Smears	84	42
Mammogram Referrals	102	125

**Prevent the spread of Sexually transmitted diseases and HIV:**

We offer testing and treatments for all the most common STD's including chlamydia and gonorrhea.

STD Testing		
	2022	2023
Chlamydia	1108	957
Gonorrhea	1110	954

HIV		
	2022	2023
Tests performed	525	487
Clients on pre-exposure prophylaxis	18	21

All at-risk clients are encouraged to be screened for HIV. In 2023, 40% of patients seen were screened for HIV.

We counsel on **abstinence as primary prevention**, then encourage the use of condoms and adoption of safer sex behaviors to reduce the risk of HIV and STD's. We also offer HIV PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) as a risk reduction measure to prevent the spread of HIV. PrEP is given as either a daily pill, or a bimonthly injection.

**Improve birth outcomes:**

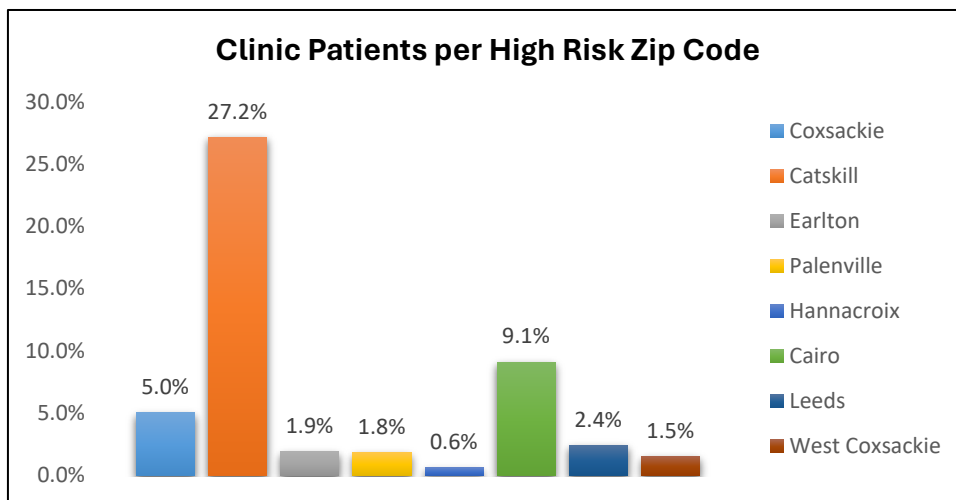
All clients are asked about their pregnancy intentions. This helps staff determine if we should be discussing effective pregnancy prevention methods, or preconception counseling. If someone born female desires a pregnancy we counsel and assist them to improve their health prior to conception by quitting smoking, avoiding illicit drugs, controlling diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity. We have a strong referral system with our Public Health Maternal Child Health nurse who follows ante- and postpartum people, and local OB providers to ensure they and their babies have the healthiest outcomes.

	2022	2023
Smoking Cessation Counseling	118	77
Prenatal Vitamin Scripts	54	34

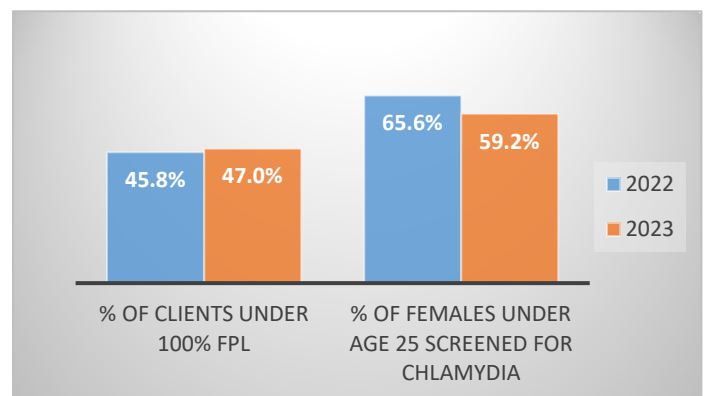
Medication for opioid use disorder has been proven to be effective at treating withdrawal and reducing opioid cravings. Continuing this treatment improves the chance that the fetus will grow normally and be carried to term. (Source: <https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/opioid-use-disorder-and-pregnancy>) We have had several individuals in our Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) program who became pregnant and were transferred to another MAT provider. They often did not go to the other provider and fell out of care. In 2023 we updated our malpractice insurance so that we can continue to provide MAT services for pregnant women.

Without these vital services, Greene County residents would have no access to low cost, sliding fee or free reproductive health care.

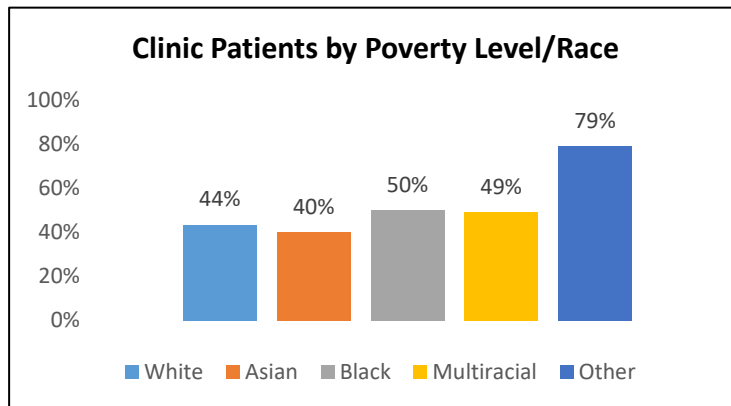
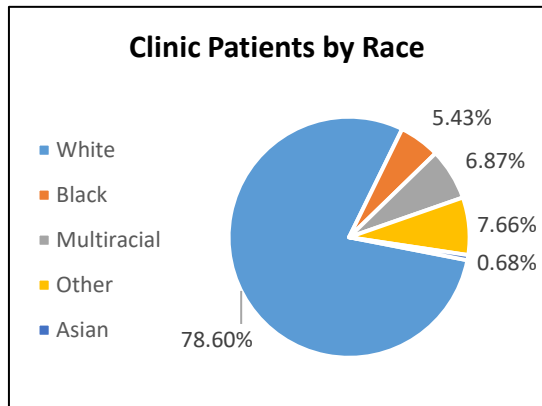
Our Family Planning grant specifically funds us to provide outreach and services to the following vulnerable populations in our community. The following performance measures are tracked on a quarterly basis to ensure we are reaching the intended population served



Chlamydia is the number one cause of infertility and often has no symptoms. Screening young women is an evidence-based strategy to reduce the burden of disease and improve birth outcomes.



**Racial/Ethnic minorities:** The clinic is in a predominantly Caucasian County; however, we serve a greater percentage of minorities than the county with the high-risk zip codes representing even higher percentages of minorities served. According to County census data, 89.8% of Greene County residents are white, 6.1% black and 6.3% Hispanic. In 2023, the average number of minorities served by the clinic increased to 21.14% which is the highest it has been in recent years. Lastly, 15% of our patients identified as Hispanic.



**LGBTQ population:** Family Planning staff has participated in training to be culturally sensitive when serving patients identifying as LGBTQ. Our EMR now includes a mandatory screen for a person to identify their gender and sexual preferences. Because of this, we see that our numbers of patients identifying as LGBTQ has increased from 5% in 2021 to 9.1% in 2022 to 16.6% in 2023.

**Individuals with limited English proficiency:**

- Our Medical Receptionist/Family Planning Aide is bilingual, which is a tremendous help for all our Spanish speaking patients. She assists them while checking in and out, with paperwork (in Spanish), and for questions. We continue to use the Language Line for in-clinic visits by the providers.
- In 2023, we created a commercial in Spanish with the help of our medical receptionist. This increased the Spanish speaking community’s awareness that we have someone here that they could communicate with. From 2022 to 2023 the percentage of patients who identified Spanish as their primary language increased from 2.9% to 4.4%. (see links below: **2023 Highlights #5**)

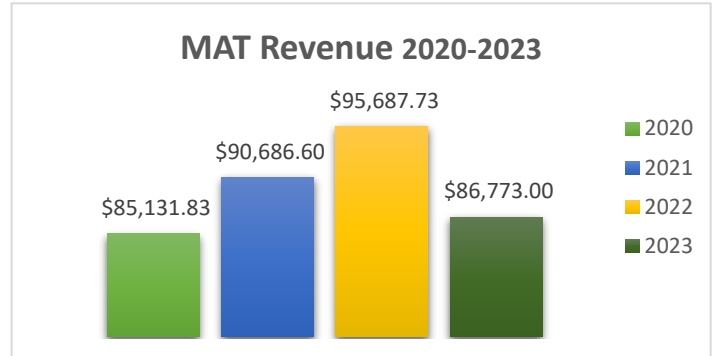
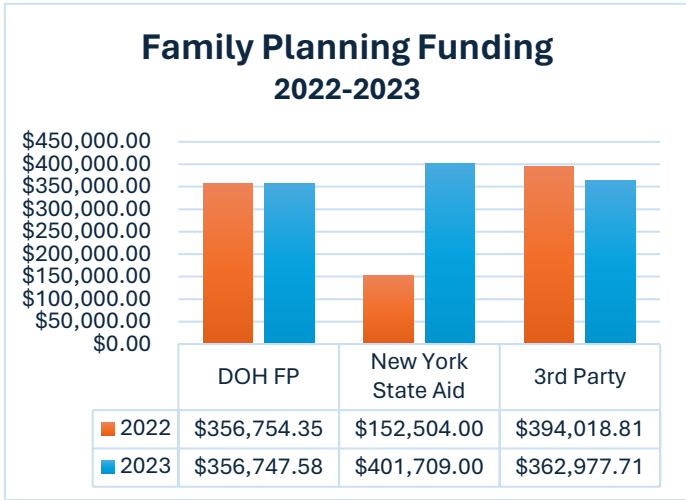
**Depression:** Since depression can lead to poor reproductive health outcomes, we screen all clients annually for depression. Those who screen positive are counseled about resources in our community and referrals for treatment and evaluation are expedited and followed up.

It has been especially helpful co-locating a social worker (MSW) from Greene County Mental Health in the clinic one day a week for referrals and consultations. In addition, the Mobile Crisis Assessment Team provides a 12-hour/day team of mobile clinicians who have come to the clinic for urgent assessments and follow up on any non-urgent cases through calls or home visits.

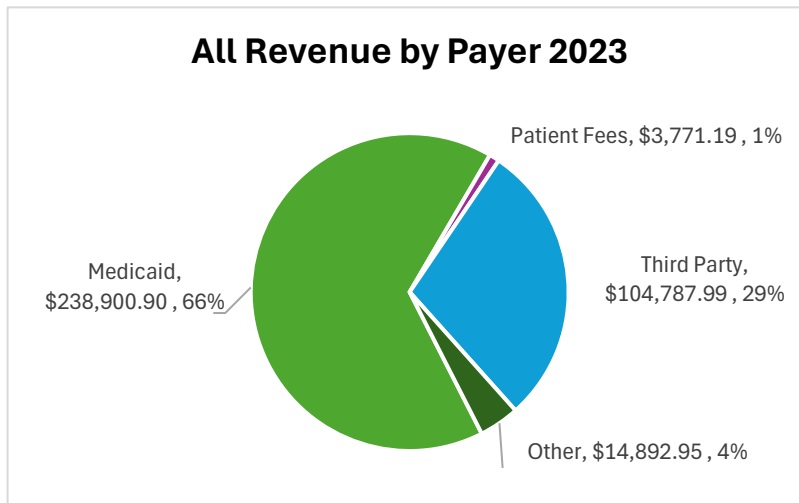
**People in active drug use and recovery** are at higher risk of having adverse reproductive outcomes which could include late or no prenatal care, polysubstance use during pregnancy, and inability to parent the child due to social and criminal history related to their substance use. Since 2019 our program has been offering direct Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorder by prescribing buprenorphine, sublingual and injectable formulations. Using our EMR reports we had 83 active clients receiving MAT at the end of 2023. A benefit to being treated in our clinic is that their reproductive intentions were discussed and access to highly effective contraceptives is supported if desired.

**Revenue:**

All revenue generated is used to offset the county share for our services. We are mindful of the costs to the taxpayers of Greene County and look for opportunities to remain sustainable.



The 2022 State Aid rolled over into 2023.



**2023 Highlights:**

- Greene County Public Health purchased a mobile health unit which Family Planning has started taking out into the community to increase access for underserved populations. In December of 2023 we got the van on the road and took it to the Youth Clubhouse, a peer-driven drop-in center funded by OASAS and operated by the Mental Health Association of Columbia and Greene Counties. Teens were seen for STI testing and contraceptive counseling. In 2024 the van will be scheduled there





on the first and third Thursday of every month from 2:30-4pm, when the kids are often hanging out there after school. We also plan to bring the mobile health unit to our county mental health department to access their patients as well as members of the Cairo community visiting the town park. There are other sites that we plan to visit to increase access to our services.



2. We are happy to report that in 2023 we were able to create an MOU with Columbia-Greene Community College to provide medical services for their students and staff. The college only has a nurse on staff with no medical director; this meant that she was unable to administer any vaccines or medications. Students would have to go to their primary care provider or urgent care for physicals and vaccines, which was often hard for them to navigate. The nurse will now be directing the students to book their physicals at our on-campus site. We will be able to provide a



comprehensive physical including cancer screenings when appropriate, testing for STIs, and contraception or preconception counseling. We plan to offer all methods of contraception, except for intrauterine devices. We also have emergency contraception on site, and their staff nurse can access this to distribute on days when we are not there. We had a soft opening in 2023 while awaiting approval of our operating certificate. We plan to have a grand opening in 2024.

3. WMHT, our local public broadcasting station, came to the clinic to film a short episode in a series they were doing about the opioid epidemic; the episode was regarding medication assisted treatment. They interviewed the Public Health Director, our Clinic Manager, and two patients in our program. Per WMHT: the video has 401 views on digital platforms (YouTube, Facebook, Instagram.) The video was also featured on two episodes of their weekly news program, *New York NOW*, and those episodes have a total of 1,030 views on YouTube. The podcast versions of those *New York NOW* episodes have 572 downloads on Podbean, their primary way to distribute podcasts. Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dd2GFh9XoMc>
4. To reach our Hispanic population we ran an advertisement through WTEN, which was narrated by our Spanish speaking receptionist. This advertisement ran for three months, and we received the following stats:
  - **DirectTV:** 60,146 Impressions, 96.28% Avg. Completion Rate
  - **YouTube TrueView:** 22,035 Impressions; 13,692 Completions, 62.14% Avg. Completion Rate<https://fb.watch/qZgftmFxPD/> (15 second video) <https://fb.watch/qZghlteZBq/> (30 second video)
5. We have struggled for years to increase our survey responses. The first half of the year we continued using paper surveys and had 49 completed. We then learned about a new survey company that would interface with our EMR. Well IQ is an automated patient survey that is sent to each patient, via text or email, upon completion of their appointment. The survey covers the entire patient journey to assess the patient experience at the organizational, departmental, and staff levels. Since the launching of Well IQ in July 2023, 723 surveys were sent out, 124 were opened, and 101 completed.



### **Sample of Reviews Received:**

- It's impossible for me to describe much this place has changed my life.
- They truly are superheroes I promise you if you're struggling with addiction You will not regret coming here I promise it will be the best decision you ever made.
- Great with my LGBTQIA+ teens!
- Such an amazing place with amazing staff. Very lucky to have this in Greene County!

One benefit of Well IQ is the data collected. Patient endorsements and written feedback are used to recognize and reward staff efforts and improve morale. Endorsements (or the lack thereof) and written feedback will inform recruiting, training, and organizational improvements.

Another benefit: post survey completion, patients are prompted to leave a Google review, which have greatly increased. Since implementation, we went from 9 Google reviews to 42 with an overall 4.9 star rating out of 5!

### **2024 Goals:**

- Hire a full-time nurse practitioner.
- Promote the Columbia-Greene Community College site through advertising and outreach.
- Utilize our new mobile health unit to reach high-risk zip codes.
- Promote telemedicine services to increase access to the rural areas of the county.
- Through the BJA grant, hire an MOUD coordinator to help people who use drugs connect to services.

In closing, we would like to thank the Legislature and County Administrator for all their support for this vital program.

Respectfully submitted,  
Wendy Johnson, MSN, FNP-BC, Family Planning Clinic Manager  
Laura Churchill, DNP, FNP-BC, Director of Public Health