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

“This pandemic has tested New York state government more than in any time in recent memory, but it was the hard work and dedication of a disciplined team of public servants that allowed us to beat back this virus and start the process of rebuilding the Empire State,” Governor Cuomo said. “I welcome these talented team members to their new roles and can’t wait to work with them to continue our economic recovery and deliver for the people of this great state.”

Christian Jackstadt has been promoted to Deputy Director of State Operations. He previously served as Director of Agency and Enterprise Operations. Prior to joining the Governor’s office, Mr. Jackstadt served in numerous roles in the New York State Office of General Services, including Associate Commissioner of Real Estate Services, Executive Director of Real Estate Services, and Deputy Director of Real Estate Services. Prior to joining New York State, he worked at Allstate Insurance Company and Farm Family Casualty Insurance Company. Mr. Jackstadt holds a Bachelor’s degree in economics from Syracuse University.

Angela Profeta has been appointed Deputy Secretary for Health. Prior to joining the administration, Dr. Profeta was Chief Strategy Officer for CityMD and Summit Medical Group, where she helped grow CityMD to over 140 urgent care centers and merge the two companies to form one of the largest independent physician organizations in the country. Angela led the design and development of the combined company’s integrated and innovative care model and digital transformation, and supported the clinical and operational response to the COVID-19 pandemic during which CityMD had over 3 million COVID-19 patient visits to date. Prior to Summit Health, Angela worked as a consultant for Gold Health Strategies supporting health systems and physician groups in strategy, managed care contracting and value-based transformation. She was a founding member of Manna Project International in Nicaragua and a fellow at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Angela holds a Ph.D. in Public Administration with a focus on health policy and economics from New York University, a Master of Public Health from Columbia University, and a B.A. from Vanderbilt University. Angela serves as an adjunct professor at Columbia Mailman School of Public Health.

Molly Reilly has been appointed Deputy Secretary for General Government and Technology. Ms. Reilly most recently served as Assistant Secretary for Upstate Intergovernmental Affairs and the Resiliency and Economic Development Program Manager. Ms. Reilly previously served as the Mayor of Sackets Harbor. She also served as a professional educator, during which time Governor Cuomo selected her as an Empire State Excellence in Teaching Awardee. Ms. Reilly holds a Certificate of Advanced Studies in Administration from SUNY Stony Brook University. She received a Master’s degree in Political Science from the Nelson A. Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy at SUNY Albany and a Bachelor’s degree in Political Science from Le Moyne College.

Christopher Tavella has been appointed Interim Deputy Secretary for Human Services and Mental Hygiene. Prior to joining the Governor’s office, Mr. Tavella served as executive deputy commissioner of the New York State Office of Mental Health, overseeing the day-to-day operations of the agency. He also served as deputy commissioner and director of the division of quality management at OMH. Prior to his state service, Mr. Tavella served in a series of roles at the Rockland Psychiatric Center, including executive director, chief operations officer and director for community services. He has taught at Mercy College, Marist College and Fordham University. Mr. Tavella holds Ph.D and Master’s degrees in clinical psychology from Fordham University and a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Queens College.

Blaise DiBernardo-Hover has been appointed Acting Deputy Secretary for Transportation. Prior to joining the Governor’s office, she served as Deputy Commissioner for Strategy and Innovation at the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles. Ms. DiBernardo-Hover has also served as Deputy General Counsel and Special Counsel for Ethics, Risk and Compliance at the New York State Thruway Authority and Chief Attorney for FOIL and research in the Governor’s office, among other roles. Ms. DiBernardo-Hover holds a J.D. from Albany Law School of Union University and a Bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of Rochester.

Tina Kim has been appointed Assistant Secretary for Health. Prior to joining the administration, Ms. Kim led New York City’s COVID-19 pandemic response operation, coordinating multi-agency efforts most recently as Chief of Staff for the New York City Test and Trace Corps. Prior to that, Ms. Kim was Senior Advisor for Health Care Delivery in the Office of the Mayor of New York City where she designed and implemented major health care, public health and health equity initiatives. Before joining the Mayor's Office, she was Director of Safety Net System Assessment and Design at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Prior to her service for New York City, Ms. Kim worked in several policy roles for the Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the San Francisco Department of Public Health. She holds a Master’s degree in public health from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and a Bachelor’s degree in women's studies from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Jane Wiesenber has been promoted to Assistant Secretary for Economic Development. She previously served as policy
advisor for economic development. Prior to joining the administration, Ms. Wiesenberg served in several roles, including director of scheduling, in the Office of U.S. Senator Cory Booker. She has also worked as a public finance analyst at Citigroup. Ms. Wiesenberg holds a Bachelor's degree in government from Colby College.

Rachel Baker has been promoted to Assistant Secretary for Health. She previously served as an Excelsior Service Fellow. As a fellow she provided critical support to the Deputy Secretary and Assistant Secretary for Health for initiatives including the Medicaid Redesign Team II, and the Administration's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to joining the administration, Ms. Baker worked at the Center for Policy Research in Syracuse and the Stamford Public Education Foundation. She holds a Master of Public Administration degree from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University and a Bachelor's degree in Asian Studies from Union College. She also studied at Tsinghua University in Beijing, China.

Charlene Cordero has been promoted to Assistant Secretary for Public Safety. She previously served as Senior Policy Advisor for Public Safety and Excelsior Service Fellow in the Executive Chamber and the New York State Intelligence Center. Prior to joining the administration, Ms. Cordero Matos worked in policy and management roles for the Human Rights Campaign and Senators Kirsten Gillibrand and Robert Menendez. She has also worked on the campaigns of Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney and State Senator Wendy Davis in Texas and on early-childhood education policy for the Foundation for Social Change and Fundacion ALAS. Ms. Cordero holds a Master of Public Administration and a Master of Arts in International Relations from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University.

Kyle Schneps has been appointed Special Advisor for Pandemic Response and State Operations. Prior to joining the administration, Mr. Schneps served as an Officer in the Central Intelligence Agency, Advisor to the Special Envoy for Guantanamo Bay Closure at the Department of State, and a Presidential Management Fellow in the Office of Management and Budget at The White House. Prior to his government service, Mr. Schneps worked for the Earth Institute at Columbia University and the Council on Foreign Relations. Mr. Schneps holds two Master's degrees in International Affairs and Public Health Emergency Management from Columbia University.

Michael Pellegrino has been appointed Special Advisor for State Operations. Prior to joining the administration, Mr. Pellegrino held senior operations roles at several early stage startups. He was the Director of Operations for Citi Bike, the largest and most successful micromobility program in North America, and he went on to launch similar programs in other cities around the country. He holds a Master's degree in applied economics from Johns Hopkins University and a Bachelor's degree in International Affairs from The George Washington University.

Steve Lukens has been appointed Special Advisor for Arts and Entertainment Recovery. Prior to joining the administration, Mr. Lukens worked as a Company Manager overseeing productions on Broadway and international tours. He has also served as a Foreign Service Officer in the U.S. State Department with postings in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, a public sector Consultant at Deloitte, and a Business Representative at Actors' Equity Association. He is also a member of Actors' Equity Association and the Association of Theatrical Press Agents and Managers. Mr. Lukens holds a Master's degree in Public Policy and Management from Carnegie Mellon University and a Bachelor's degree in Theatre from Northwestern University.

Shams Tarek has been appointed Deputy Director of Communications. Prior to joining the Governor's office, Mr. Tarek served in multiple roles at the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, including deputy communications director and as special liaison for the historic and successful effort to win approval for the critical Long Island Rail Road Expansion Project. He also served as communications director in the Nassau County District Attorney's Office, for Rep. Carolyn McCarthy and on numerous campaigns on the state and federal levels. Mr. Tarek holds a Bachelor's degree in English literature from Pace University and lives in Albany with his wife and son.

Jade Kraft has been promoted to Deputy Communications Director for Albany. Mrs. Kraft previously served as Deputy Press Secretary in the Executive Chamber, as well as Public Information Specialist for the New York State Liquor Authority. Mrs. Kraft holds a dual Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and Broadcast and Digital Journalism from Syracuse University.

Jason Gough has been appointed Deputy Communications Director for Economic Development. Prior to joining the administration, Mr. Gough worked as CEO of 518Sanitizer, a business that sells PPE. He previously worked as a meteorologist and forecaster, including 13 years at WNYT in Albany, and as a advocate for the Child Victims Act and the New York wine industry. Mr. Gough holds a Bachelor's degree in atmospheric sciences and meteorology from the University of Maryland.

Jeorge Cymon has been promoted to Deputy Communications Director for Transportation. He previously held the role of Deputy Press Secretary. Before serving in the Executive Chamber, Mr. Cymon worked at the public affairs firm BerlinRosen. He holds Master's degrees in public relations and international relations from Syracuse University and a Bachelor's degree in history from the University of Connecticut.
Jennifer Claire Scott, CSEP, has been appointed Senior Events Manager. Prior to joining the administration, Ms. Scott, a Certified Special Event Professional, served as senior production manager at Empire Force Events for nearly 14 years. She has also worked as special events manager at Grand Central Terminal, special events and group sales manager at ARAMARK/Meadowlands, special events manager at ARAMARK/Top of the World at the World Trade Center, and special events manager at the American Folk Art Museum. She has a Bachelor's degree in sociology based human relations from Connecticut College.

Seth Wolfson has been appointed Events and Advance Manager. Prior to joining the administration, Mr. Wolfson worked as a freelance production manager producing events for clients in New York and around the world. He has served as national advance and trip lead for the presidential campaigns of Elizabeth Warren, Michael Bloomberg and Hillary Clinton. Prior to his campaign service, Mr. Wolfson worked as a producer for entertainment publications, communications director and founder of Artists 4 Israel and creative director for Stanton Barrett Motorsports.

Michelle G. Pérez has been appointed Events and Advance Manager. She brings to the administration over 15 years of event production and operations experience, most recently as Executive Producer and President of MGP Productions. Prior to that, her experience includes Production Director at KCD Worldwide, Production Manager at Raul Avila Inc and Director of Retail Operations at Carolina Herrera. She studied Film & Media Studies at Hunter College.

Emily Badalamente has been promoted to Senior Policy Advisor for Human Services and Mental Hygiene. She previously served as an Excelsior Fellow for the human services and mental hygiene portfolio. Prior to joining the Governor's office, Ms. Badalamente served as a Center for Women in Government and Civil Society Fellow in the New York State Office of Children and Family Services and an intern in the Governor's office, for Congressional candidate Sean Eldridge and for U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. She holds a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Albany and a Bachelor's degree in political science from the State University of New York at Oneonta.

Katelyn O'Leary has been promoted to Senior Policy Advisor for Energy and Environment. She previously served in the administration as Policy Advisor for the Governor's Policy Team and the Lake Ontario Resiliency & Economic Development Initiative Team. Prior to serving in the Executive Chamber, Ms. O'Leary was Legislative Director and Research Analyst for New York State Senator David Carlucci and Legislative Assistant for New York State Senator Jeffrey Klein. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from the State University of New York at Oneonta.

Starina Peg Giordano has been appointed Special Assistant for Events and Advance. Prior to joining the administration, Ms. Giordano served as the Field Manager for Rep. Elaine Luria's campaign in Virginia Beach, VA, and as an organizer in Iowa, Nevada, and Missouri for the presidential campaign of Pete Buttigieg. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science and sociology from McGill University and has studied at the Paris Institute of Political Studies."