

Gateway Foundation Welcomes Maria Bruni, Ph.D., As Chief Strategy Officer

Newly created role will support growth, expanding access and strengthening Gateway Foundation's mission to save lives

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Gateway Foundation today announced the appointment of Maria Bruni, Ph.D., to the newly created role of Chief Strategy Officer. With more than 20 years of leadership in behavioral health policy, program development, and systems transformation, Dr. Bruni will be a key driver in advancing Gateway Foundation's mission to save lives through innovative, evidence-based treatment for substance use and mental health disorders.

As Chief Strategy Officer, Dr. Bruni will guide Gateway Foundation's strategic planning process and growth for expanding programs, forging new partnerships, securing critical funding, and advocating for policies that remove barriers to treatment. She will lead the organization's annual strategic planning process, ensuring every initiative strengthens Gateway Foundation's ability to deliver hope, healing, and long-term recovery for individuals and families.



Maria Bruni, Ph.D, Gateway Foundation Chief Strategy Officer

Dr. Bruni joins Gateway Foundation from Family Guidance Centers, Inc., where she served as Chief Program Officer and launched groundbreaking treatment pilots, advanced health equity, and secured major grants to serve underserved communities. Her career also includes leadership roles with the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services and the Illinois Department of Human Services, where she oversaw statewide initiatives to improve access to evidence-based care.

“Gateway Foundation’s mission is rooted in hope, healing, and opportunity—and Dr. Bruni embodies all three,” said Jeremy Klemanski, President and CEO of Gateway Foundation. “Her expertise, vision, and passion for serving others will help us break down barriers, bring treatment to more communities, and change the trajectory of countless lives.”

For Dr. Bruni, the work is deeply personal: “Every person struggling with substance use or mental health disorders deserves compassion, dignity, and a real chance at recovery,” she said. “Gateway Foundation’s dedication to evidence-based care and meeting people where they are inspires me. I’m honored to join this team and help create new pathways to healing for individuals, families, and communities.”

Dr. Bruni holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in Social Service Administration from the University of Chicago, with a concentration in health policy, and a B.S. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She serves on the Board of Directors of the Illinois Association for Behavioral Health and has received multiple awards for her leadership, including the IABH George Schwab Distinguished Service Award and Haymarket Center’s Visionary Award.

About Gateway Foundation:

Gateway Foundation is a national, nonprofit organization helping people build healthier lives by reducing substance use, other addictions, and improving mental health. We are one of Illinois’ longest standing and largest nonprofit treatment providers. Founded by nine individuals in 1968 on Chicago’s south side, Gateway Foundation’s purpose has remained steadfast: to give people struggling with substance use and co-occurring mental health disorders the ongoing care and support they need to recover and reclaim their lives. We operate residential, outpatient, and recovery home locations throughout Illinois, along with a range of corrections programs in Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, Texas, and Wyoming.

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