1777: Dr. Benjamin Rush, Physician General of the Continental Army, sends a written directive to all soldiers condemning the use of distilled spirits in response to increasing reports of drunkenness among the troops.

1800: Native American Handsome Lake, organizes a total abstinence movement among the Tuscorora, Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga and Oneida nations.

1808: Billy Clark founds the Union Temperance Society in Moreau, Saratoga County.

1827: New York City Medical Society creates Committee on Quack Remedies to curtail use of opium and alcohol in medications to treat addictive disease.

1830: Elisha Taylor writes in Schenectady about 26 “confirmed drunkards” who had taken the pledge not to drink as members of the Reformers Benevolent Temperance Society. Taylor documents 7 relapsed, concluding that total abstinence from all alcohol was required.

1831: Temperance society established in Norwich, Chenango County.

1841: Martha Washington Society formed in New York City, with the motto “Total Abstinence or No Husband!”

1844: John Gough, professional temperance evangelist, paid $170 nightly in New York City.

1845: John Gough relapses and is found unconscious in a house of ill-repute. Gough recovers and continues to lecture 8,600 times.

1851: Independent Order of Good Samaritans and Daughters of Samaria is formed in New York City. Group has the distinction of being the first racially integrated temperance group.
1864: The New York State Inebriate Asylum is opened in Binghamton, Broome County. The Asylum is the first state operated facility in New York and is funded by a dedicated tax from the sale of alcoholic beverages.

1870: American Association for the Cure of Inebriates, comprised of physicians and operators of asylums is founded in New York City. Declares “intemperance a disease”.

1872: Jerry McAuley opens Water Street Mission in New York City. Experienced religious conversion while in Sing Sing Prison and advocated Christian Salvation as a cure for alcoholism.

1879: Bellevue Hospital in New York City discontinues treatment of alcoholics and persons with mental illness in the “Insane Pavillion,” and creates new “Inebriate Ward” specifically for alcoholics.

1891: Dr. Jansen Mattison opens the Brooklyn Home for Habitues specializing in addiction to drugs other than alcohol.

1891: The King’s County Inebriate’s Home received 12% of all liquor license renewal fees as an operating subsidy.

1891: Dr. Leslie Keeley, founder of the Institute of Treatment of Inebriates in Dwight, Illinois opens a satellite clinic in White Plains, Westchester County. Treatment was with a medication known as “Double Chloride of Gold”.

1891: Salvation Army opens “Cheap Food and Shelter Depot” in New York City as part of street outreach ministry with alcoholics. Salvation Army founder William Booth declares alcoholism “a disease often inherited, always developed by indulgence, but as clearly a disease as ophthalmia or stone.”

1892: Keeley Leagues established. These were the forerunners of self-help groups. Clubhouse established in White Plains, Westchester County.

1895: Another Keeley location is established in New York State. This one is in Buffalo, Erie County.

1901: The Charles B. Towns Hospital for Drug and Alcoholic Addictions opens on 82nd St. in Manhattan, later moving to 293 Central Park West.

1909: Jackson Health Resort in Dansville, Livingston County claims their pure spring water could reverse the “systemic poisoning and accumulated waste matters produced by the over-indulgence in alcohol.”

1910: City of New York creates New York City Board of Inebriety to “develop a hospital and industrial colony for the care, treatment and occupation of inebriates.”
1912: New York City Board of Inebriety opens 697 acre farm colony in Warwick, Orange County. Farm houses 200 men with average length of stay of 2 years.

1918: New York State Narcotic Drug Control Commission created. One month later six private physicians and four pharmacists in New York City arrested by Federal authorities for writing prescriptions for morphine addiction in violation of the Harrison Act.

1919: New York City opens Morphine Maintenance Clinic. 3,300 addicts enroll during first week.

1925: New York City Committee on Drug Addiction sponsored research on the biology of narcotic addiction, in a study headed by Dr. Charles Doane.

1927: New York City Mayor James Waler appoints expert medical panel to assess treatments available for narcotic addicts housed in New York City Department of Corrections facilities.

1930: Dr. William Silkworth, future physician to Bill Wilson starts work at Towns Hospital in New York City for $40 weekly.


1932: Dwight Anderson gets sober at the Payne Whitney Clinic of the New York Hospital. Later goes on to become Director of Public Relations for the Medical Society of the State of New York using his position to propose the need to change the public perception of the alcoholic.

1934: Bill Wilson enters Towns Hospital in New York City after having taken his last drink.

1935: Alcoholics Anonymous created in Akron, Ohio. Later in the year AA meetings established in New York City.

1935: Bloomingdale Hospital in White Plains, Westchester County opens alcoholism treatment program.

1936: Charles Towns offers unemployed Bill Wilson a job as an alcoholism counselor at Towns Hospital in New York City. Wilson declines job offer.

1937: John D. Rockefeller Jr. underwrites Bill Wilson a $30 weekly stipend for his living expenses in Brooklyn.

1938: Alcoholic Foundation created. This is the forerunner of the Board of Trustees of AA World Services in New York City.


1939: Marty Mann enters Alcoholics Anonymous in New York City. She broke her own anonymity to talk publicly about the challenges of women in recovery.

1940: Disulfiram (Antabuse) prescribed for alcoholic patients at Meyer Memorial Hospital in Buffalo, Erie County.

1940: Deaconess Hospital, Poughkeepsie, Westchester County admits alcoholics to private rooms for detoxification.

1940: Bill Wilson brings 2 African-American men to New York City AA meeting and is criticized for attempts at racial integration by some attendees.

1941: Eastman Kodak Company of Rochester, Monroe County establishes first occupational alcoholism program for employees.

1941: First AA meeting held in a New York State Psychiatric facility in Rockland County. The site is now the Rockland Addiction Treatment Center operated by OASAS.

1944: Bill Wilson addresses the Medical Society of the State of New York on alcoholism.

1944: AA Grapevine, the first National newsletter for alcoholics begins publication in New York City.

1944: Marty Mann opens the National Committee for Education on Alcoholism in New York City on October 2nd, later to become the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD).

1945: AA ward created at Knickerbocker Hospital in New York City, combining a 19 bed medically staffed detoxification unit with AA members running meetings for patients.

1946: The National Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependence - Rochester Area (NCADD-RA) (Monroe County) forms.

1947: Charles Towns dies.

1947: First AA meeting held in Harlem.

1948: Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol & Substance Abuse forms.

1949: Prevention Network (Onondaga County Council) forms.

1950: Members of the East Harlem Protestant Parish begin ministering to addicts.

1951: Lois Wilson and Anne B. establish Al-Anon, for family members of alcoholics, in New York City.

1952: Riverside Hospital, a 141 bed treatment center for adolescent heroin addiction opens in New York City.

1952: R. Brinkley Smithers of New York City begins $37 million philanthropic career to combat alcoholism.


1956: Long Island Council on Alcohol & Drug Dependence (Nassau/Suffolk Counties) forms.

1957: New York City Demonstration Center created to provide community re-integration for heroin addicts returning from treatment at the Public Health Hospital in Lexington, Kentucky.

1957: The Addicts Rehabilitation Center opens in Manhattan, sponsored by the Christian Reformed Church.

1958: The Astoria Consultation Service sponsored by the Episcopal Church opens in Astoria, Queens.

1958: New York State Department of Corrections bans “cold turkey” 28 day heroin withdrawal procedure at Riker’s Island, New York City.

1959: Alcohol & Substance Abuse Council of Jefferson County forms.

1959: Metropolitan Hospital in New York City open 50 beds for the treatment of narcotic addiction.

1959: Dr. William Silkworth dies after a 50 year medical career having provided direct treatment services to over 50,000 alcoholics.

1960: Dr. E.M. Jellinek, with funding from Marty Mann and the Christopher Smithers Foundation, publishes "The Disease Concept of Alcoholism," identifying and defining alcoholism as a medical disease.
1962: Responsibility for the treatment of addictive disease transferred from the New York State Health Department to the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene. Bureau of Alcoholism created.

1962: New York State allocates beds for addiction treatment at state run psychiatric centers at Central Islip (Suffolk County), Utica (Oneida County), Buffalo (Erie County), Middletown (Orange County) and Pilgrim (Suffolk County).

1963: The American Public Health Association adopts an official statement on alcoholism, identifying it as a treatable illness.

1964: Daytop Village Therapeutic Community established in New York City.

1964: Dr. Marie Nyswander and Dr. Vincent Dole conduct significant research on the use of Methadone in the treatment of heroin addiction in New York City.

1965: Alcohol & Drug Council of Tompkins County forms.

1967: Narcotic Addiction Control Commission created by Governor Rockefeller.


1970: The Northpointe Council (Niagara County) forms.


1971: In a press conference given on June 18, 1971, President Richard Nixon declares drug abuse "public enemy number one." The message to Congress includes text about devoting more federal resources to the "prevention of new addicts, and the rehabilitation of those who are addicted", but rather than highlighting new monies forthcoming for prevention and treatment the media and press emphasize to the public the term "War on Drugs."

1972: Alpha House incorporates and provides services in Ithaca, Cayuga County.

1972: Alcoholism & Drug Abuse Council of Orange County forms.


1973: Eric Simon of New York University Medical Center is part of team discovering the existence of opiate receptors within human nerve tissue.
1973: Dr. Vernon Johnson of the Johnson Institute publishes "I'll Quit Tomorrow", identifying active defense mechanisms and presenting the dynamics of family and crisis intervention.


1974: John Wallace Ph.D. publishes on long term recovery from alcoholism.


1974: Chautauqua Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Council forms.


1975: Council on Alcohol & Substance Abuse of Livingston County forms.

1976: Public Intoxication removed from State Penal Law, requiring creation of sobering up stations for monitoring of intoxicated individuals.

1976: Employee Assistance Programs: The first NYS EAP was initiated in April 1976 at nine worksites within the Mid-Hudson region of the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene with funding provided by the New York State Division of Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse to the Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA).

1976: The National Council on Alcoholism conducts Operation Understanding, a ground-breaking news conference in Washington DC where 52 prominent individuals publicly acknowledge their recovery from alcoholism (including Congressman Wilbur Mills, Senator Harold Hughes, Buzz Aldrin, Mercedes McCambridge, Dick Van Dyke, Robert Young, Jason Robards, Garry Moore, Dana Andrews, R. Brinkley Smithers, James Kemper, Don Newcombe, etc.)


1977: Alcohol & Drug Abuse Council of Delaware County forms.

1978: Reorganization of State Department of Mental Hygiene into autonomous Division of Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse and Division of Substance Abuse Services.

1980: Marty Mann dies.

1982: New York State raises the drinking age for alcohol from 18 to 19.

1982: Advent of the national Chemical People Project with First Lady, Nancy Reagan, and renewed interest and growth in local citizen participation through community action groups.

1982: The LEAF Council on Alcoholism/Addictions (Otsego County) forms.

1982: National Association for Children of Alcoholics is created in New York City.

1983: George DeLeone of Phoenix House in New York City publishes evaluation study of therapeutic communities.

1984: The NYS Division of Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse (DAAA) contracts with the New York State Council on Alcoholism (NYSCA) to develop an ALCALLS 800 hotline and prevention/information referral service, and releases a public service media campaign entitles "It Hits You Right Where You Live."

1984: Chapter 595 of the Laws of 1983 is signed into law by Governor Mario M. Cuomo, an act to amend the insurance law mandating coverage of up to 60 outpatient visits, of which up to 20 visits can be made available for the family

1985: New York State raises the minimum drinking age for alcohol from age 19 to 21.

1985: A "Rural Funding" mechanism becomes available to the Division of Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse (DAAA), and the new funding formula provided funding where local assistance or fee-for-service was not available. At one point, DAAA funded, in total or part, some 45 Councils serving some 58 of the 62 counties throughout New York State.

1985: Schoharie County Council on Alcoholism & Substance Abuse forms.

1985: Student Assistance Services Corp (Westchester County) forms.

1986: Chapter 743 of the Laws of 1986 is signed into law by Governor Mario M. Cuomo, allowing Medicaid to pay for inpatient alcoholism treatment in free-standing treatment centers, not just hospitals.


1986: The NYS Division of Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse releases the "Five Year Statewide Plan for Comprehensive Services: Focus on Prevention."


1987: Seaway Valley Council for Alcohol/Substance Abuse Prevention (St. Lawrence County) forms.

1987: Mountain View Prevention Services (Lewis County) forms.

1987: New York State passes legislation entitled "Alcohol Awareness Program for Youth", signed by Governor Mario Cuomo, to combat underage drinking, fraudulent purchase, or possession with intent to consume alcohol.

1987: DAAA responds to the U.S. Department of Education call to commit to eradicate substance abuse on college campuses, with the Regional College Alcohol and Other Drug Consortia Project, and forms regional consortia.

1987: The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) founded and sponsors April as Alcohol Awareness Month. The New York State Council on Alcoholism and Drug Addiction (NYSCADA) sponsors Alcohol Awareness Month in New York State.

1987: The Partnership for a Drug Free America launches an anti-drug media campaign, most notably, "This is your brain on drugs."

1988: On July 25th, Gov. Mario Cuomo signed Chapter 311 of the Laws of 1988: “An act to amend the Mental Hygiene Law in relation to providing services to families of alcoholic persons”.

1988: U.S. Congress proclaims the first National Red Ribbon Week in October 1988, since then the campaign has been sponsored by the National Family Partnership.

1988: Tioga County Council on Alcoholism & Substance Abuse forms.

1989: “My Name is Bill W.” (television movie about the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous) airs on CBS. Actor James Woods wins an Emmy for his portrayal of Bill Wilson. James Garner played Dr. Bob.


1989: September 1989 marks the first National Recovery Month Campaign to promote the observance(s) that behavioral health is essential to health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people do recover from mental and/or substance use disorders when offered appropriate treatment options.
1989: "Youth Speak Out on Alcohol and Drugs" funded under a grant from the New York State Task Force on Integrated Projects for Youth and Chemical Dependency, were held in each region of the state; final report released in 1990 consists of 31 topics brought up by the youth themselves, resulting in 21 recommendations.

1989: DAAA inaugurates a "Safe Summer" theme, encouraging local councils on alcoholism as well as other grassroots organizations, to develop targeted activities that will promote the theme of a safe, health, and alcohol-free summer.


1990: DAAA expands the Regional College and Alcohol and Other Drug Consortia Project by developing the Statewide College Consortia Steering Committee.

1992: Congress establishes the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to make substance use and mental disorder information, services, and research more accessible and to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

1992: DAAA and DSAS merge into consolidated Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS).

1993: In October, the Association of Council Directors forms under the leadership of Betty Currier, to address concerns and issues affecting the practice of prevention, intervention, and treatment and issues of organizational and programmatic efficiency.

1996: The New York State Association of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Providers (NYSASAP) forms after a series of organizational meetings, "to work together to support organizations, groups and individuals that prevent and alleviate the profound personal, social and economic consequences of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse in New York State.... and to represent the interests of the largest group of alcoholism and substance abuse prevention, treatment, research and training providers in the country."


1998: The Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) launches the Recovery Community Services Program (RCSP) to help individuals in their communities get help for addiction and "once they are clean and sober, to sustain their recovery and get their lives back on track." Over 50 projects funded nationally, including the Syracuse Recovery Community Support Project in 2001; LGBT Voices for Recovery in New York in 2001; Group Ministries, Inc. in Buffalo in 2003; the AIDS Service Center of Lower Manhattan in 2003; and the Recovery Network of New York in Syracuse, in 2006.
1999: The Council on Addictions of New York State (CANYS) incorporates on December 12th

1999: OASAS encourages Councils and other prevention agencies to partner with the New York National Guard Counterdrug Task Force to deliver educational programming in schools and communities.

2000: In April, 2000, OASAS sponsored the Credentials Board Workforce Development Committee.

2000: Long Island Recovery Association (LIRA) founded

2001: “Moments – An Evening with Bill Wilson,” a one-act play about the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous begins a tour of New York State.

2002: Following the increase in addiction subsequent to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in New York City, SAMSHA releases 2 ½ year funding through OASAS for an Upstate Trauma and Addictions Prevention Center and a Downstate Trauma and Addictions Prevention Center.

2003: Drug Treatment Courts: Based upon results of a 2003 study of drug courts conducted by the Center for Court Innovation which demonstrated overwhelmingly positive results with drug court graduates, courts open throughout the country. (As of January 1, 2016 there are 141 drug courts in operation in New York State.)

2004: Friends of Recovery - Delaware and Otsego Counties founded on May 3rd

2004: Join Together in conjunction with the Boston University School of Public Health releases 15,000 copies of "Ten Policies that Saves Lives," a blueprint of effective local, state and national public policies to address addictions.

2004: The Finger Lakes Advocates is established


2005: OASAS receives funding from SAMSHA for Fetal Alcohol Syndrome programming, and creates the NYS Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Task Force.

2006: SAMHSA sponsors nationwide Town Hall Meetings for community-based organizations (together with youth groups, colleges and universities) to host events that will educate, empower and mobilize communities to reduce underage and high-risk drinking.

2007: The New York State Partnership for Family Recovery Training Plan is developed to encourage communities to strengthen cross-systems work between child welfare, substance abuse treatment, and family court in order to best support vulnerable families. Developed by the New York State Partnership for Family Recovery with support from the National Center for Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW).

2007: In May, OASAS creates the Bureau of Recovery Services to focus on the development of Recovery Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC) Certified Peer Advocates, Recovery Coaches, and Recovery Coach Training in collaboration with Friends of Recovery - New York (FOR-NY) and the Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR).

2007: Governor Elliot Spitzer and the NYS Legislature pass legislation creating the Governor's Advisory Council on Underage Drinking, later amended to be the Advisory Council on Underage Drinking and Youth Substance Abuse.

2007: “The Addiction Project” premieres on HBO.

2008: The Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA), a federal law assuring group health plans provide parity services consistent with medical/surgical benefits, passes. It is later amended in 2010 with the Affordable Care Act guaranteeing better access to treatment.

2008: OASAS hosts Recovery Community Focus Groups across the State.

2008: Friends of Recovery - New York (FOR-NY) is founded

2008: On September 27, the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD), in partnership with A&E Television, and in collaboration with NCADD Affiliates, and a wide variety of local and national organizations, including Faces and Voices of Recovery, hosts the 1st NYC Recovery Rally. More than 5,000 people walk across the Brooklyn Bridge from Brooklyn to City Hall Park in Manhattan. Singer Rufus Wainwright performs. A group of 50 Recovery Delegates, one from each state and all with more than 10 years in recovery, lead off the rally.

2008: OASAS funds a series of six Regional Prevention Resource Centers (PRCs) as a statewide project to support community coalition work throughout New York State. Each PRC covers a specific region.

2009: On September 12, the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD), in partnership with A&E Television, and in collaboration with NCADD Affiliates, and a wide variety of local and national organizations, including Faces and Voices of Recovery, hosts the NYC Recovery Rally. More than 10,000 people walk across the Brooklyn Bridge from Manhattan to Cadman Plaza in Brooklyn. Singer Smokey Robinson performs. Once again, 50 Recovery Delegates, one from each state and all with more than 10 years in recovery, lead off the rally.


2010: The New York Center for Alcohol Policy Solutions and the New York Alcohol Policy Alliance forms under the direction of Robert Pezzolesi, to address evidence-based alcohol policy issues in New York State.

2010: OASAS hosted seven regional recovery forums for prevention, treatment, and recovery providers; councils on addiction; alumni; advocacy groups; and individuals and family members in recovery.

2010: OASAS selected to receive $13.1 million grant over four years under SAMHSA’s Access to Recovery (ATR) initiative resulting in the creation of Recovery Community Centers (RCCs) in Brooklyn, Rochester, and Otsego/Delaware counties.

2011: SAMHSA launches the Bringing Recovery Supports to Scale Technical Assistance Center Strategy (BRSS TACS) to promote the widespread adoption of recovery-oriented supports, services, and systems for people in recovery from substance use and/or mental health conditions.

2011: SAMHSA awards a five year $ 8.3 million grant to provide SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment), for the military community in the Watertown area and STD clinic patients in NYC.

2012: The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) reprints the brochure "A Family History of Alcoholism - Are You At-Risk?"

2012: Governor Andrew Cuomo and the NYS Legislature pass a bill authorizing the New York State Justice Center, committed to protecting the health and safety of people with special needs and disabilities through advocacy, prevention of mistreatment, and investigation of allegations of abuse and neglect.


2013: Greg Williams, Producer, releases the documentary "The Anonymous People"
2013: SAMHSA awards NYS a five-year, $10 million SBIRT Cooperative Agreement to serve individuals on Long Island and Staten Island who were affected by Hurricane Sandy through a partnership among OASAS, CASA Columbia, and the Northwell Health System.

2013: The stage show “Pass It On: An Evening with Bill W. and Dr. Bob,” begins its national tour. (The show was created and produced by Unflappable Recovery Entertainment, NYC.)

2014: In May, following a series of 18 public forums held across the state, the Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction releases the "NYS Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction Final Report and Legislative Recommendations" and passed a majority of bills based upon some 25 recommendations presented in the report.

2015: The Family Recovery Network in Rochester, New York forms

2015: The National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACoA) Network enters into a collaborative agreement with the Special Program on Substance Abuse and Related Violence (SPSARV) of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, to provide community-based one-day educational seminars for clergy on understanding addiction and supporting recovery, and to facilitate the expansion of NACoA’s Celebrating Families Program throughout the country.

2015: Facing Addiction is founded. More than 700 organizations and tens of thousands of people converge on the National Mall in Washington, DC, on October 4, 2015, for the Unite to Face Addiction rally.

2015: ROCcovery forms in Rochester

2015: OASAS announces $10.5 million in new funding to support the creation of up to six Recovery Community and Outreach Centers (RCOCs) in communities across New York.

2016: In January, 2016, Governor Andrew Cuomo announces $1.6 million in annual funding to support seven Youth Clubhouses for adolescents in Recovery or at risk for a substance abuse disorder. The awards were made to: the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center in New York City, the HFM Prevention Council of Hamilton, Fulton and Montgomery Counties, Friends of Recovery - Delaware and Otsego in Central New York, HELP Services on Long Island, the YMCA of Yonkers, the Partnership of Ontario County in the Finger Lakes, and the Restoration Society in Western New York.

2016: In February, 2016, Governor Andrew Cuomo launches new public service announcement "Faces of Addiction - Faces of Hope" to educate New Yorkers about the disease of addiction and inform them that help is available.
2016: In September, 2016, NYS OASAS, the National Prevention Network, in conjunction with NASADAD, and others host the 29th National Prevention Network Conference at the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center in downtown Buffalo, New York.

To Be Continued......