

Atlanta Business Chronicle Health Care Hero:

Community Outreach



<https://bizj.us/1q3zwm>

Dorothy Leone-Glasser, executive director, Advocates for Responsible Care (ARxC)

- Education: City University of New York
- Years in healthcare: 48
- Best part of job: “Being the voice of those who are too sick to have their voices heard.”
- Most challenging part: “Dealing with special interest lobbyists.”

New York native Dorothy Leone-Glasser became a fearless fighter at an early age. At 19, as she prepared to enter nursing school, she was diagnosed with lupus. The condition kept her bedridden at first, then she used crutches and canes.

“I had a lot of problems with the school that didn’t think a nurse on crutches should be at a bedside taking care of people,” she remembers. “But I come from a long line of faith, strength and love, and everyone around me knew I would push through it. I did, and it taught me not to be afraid.”

Leone-Glasser overcame those early obstacles to become a registered nurse specialist and wellness counselor. In 2009, she created the healthcare nonprofit Advocates for Responsible Care (ARxC).

“We pride ourselves on being the voice of those who are too sick to have their voices heard,” said Leone-Glasser. “We empower patients to be health care advocates, and we do a lot of policy and legislative work to open access to drugs and medical treatment for children and adults, especially those who are chronically ill.”

The organization grew from a battle with Grady Hospital over a decision to close the out-patient dialysis clinic, she said. Leone-Glasser was working on wellness issues with

patients who were treated there, and took a stand that forced the hospital to design transitional care for those it would no longer serve.

“I organized students from Emory’s public health and social work departments in my home,” she recalled. “We demonstrated, reached out to the press, and got a pro bono attorney to take the case. We went to mediation and negotiated with Grady to cover these 62 patients, and about 19 are still living.”

In the aftermath, ARxC has continued to raise money for court challenges to patients’ rights to drug and care access.

“This year, we’re fighting to let patients and doctors, not people who aren’t medically trained, decide treatments that are best,” Leone-Glasser said, adding that the organization is advocating for four bills currently in the legislature. “We’re also working to get a hate crimes bill passed, since Georgia is one of the few states that doesn’t have one.”

Being part of the high-risk group for severe Covid-19 infection has not slowed Leone-Glasser, according to her husband, Ira Katz.

“Dorothy has systemic lupus and has survived cancer, a heart attack, two strokes, kidney failure and a coma,” he said. “She does this from her heart, and that is why she is effective.”

Being effective now means finding alternative ways to get involved, she said. For example, when St. Joseph’s Hospital was searching for supplies to take care of patients, Leone-Glasser and her husband traveled throughout the state to find bleach, wipes, swim goggles, head lamps, “everything we could,” she recalled. “We traveled over 700 miles to find supplies not just for St. Joe’s but for Emory and Grady [Hospitals], and we’ve been delivering supplies almost every week. We’ve also been coordinating meals for ER and ICU units at those hospitals.”

Prior to the pandemic, Leone-Glasser said going up against special-interest lobbyists was the toughest part of her job. Now, she’s given the top challenge award to Covid-19.

“It’s very challenging to see our healthcare workers who don’t have the equipment they need and who are risking their own lives,” she said. “Our lives depend on their sacrifices, yet we’re not equipping them. I’m trying to be as careful and sensible as possible, but at the same time, I feel I have to do this.”

— ***Written by H.M. Cauley***

<https://www.bizjournals.com/atlanta/c/2020-health-care-heroes/12194/community-outreach-dorothy-leone-glasser-advocates-for-responsible-care-arxc.html?b=1589503624%5E21674022>

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