

# Newsletter

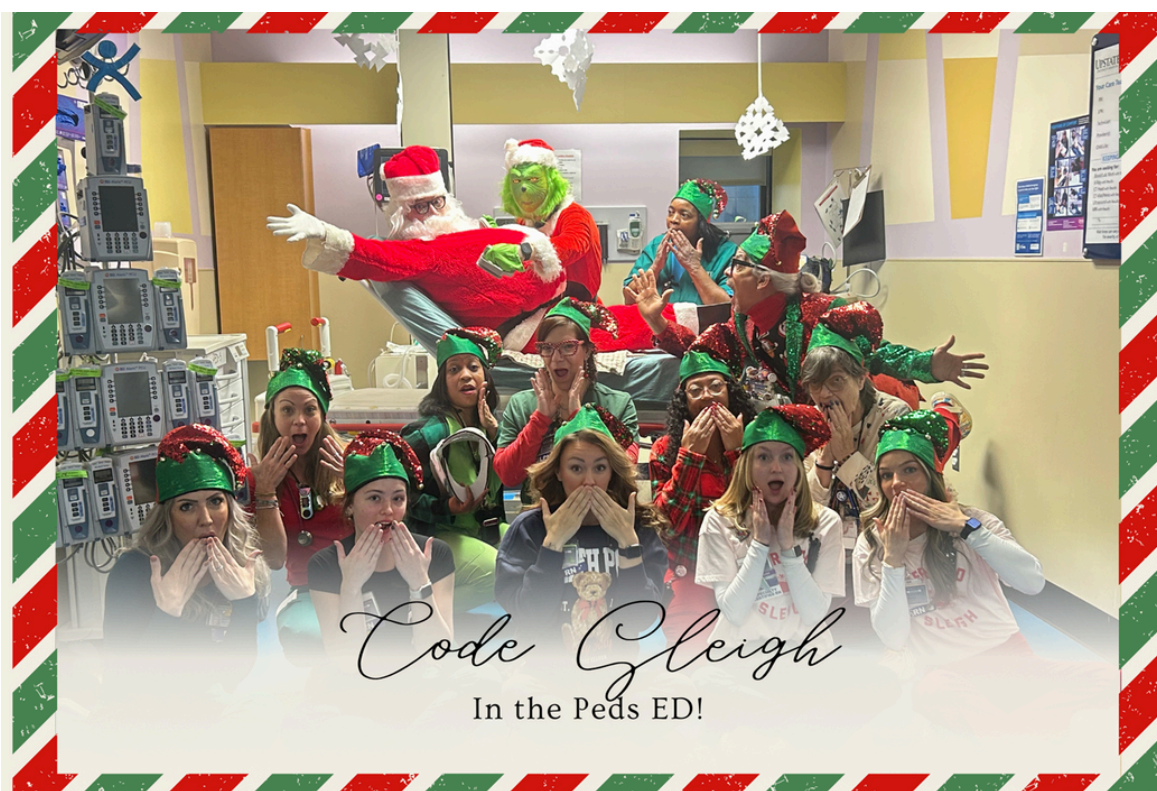
STAY IN THE LOOP WITH UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS!

## Announcements

*Warmest wishes to you and your families for a happy holiday season and a joyful New Year!*



*Peds ED was the winner of the Holiday Card Contest!*



## Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital (UGCH) Strategic Plan



Innovation	Quality of Care
<p><b>Goal 1: Increase education for staff and the community</b></p> <p>Initiative: Educate primary care providers to help expand psychology services</p> <p>Initiative: Increase clerical and nursing education</p> <p>Initiative: Provide preventive care in the community</p> <p><b>Goal 2: Develop new and expand existing residency programs</b></p> <p>Initiative: Apply for GME funding for pediatric neurology residency program</p> <p>Initiative: Create Med Peds residency</p> <p>Initiative: Increase pediatric residency by 1-3 residents per year</p> <p><b>Goal 3: Adopt advanced technology to assist in patient care</b></p> <p>Initiative: Establish virtual nursing for pediatrics</p> <p>Initiative: Expand drone program for UGCH</p> <p><b>Goal 4: Create new and unique programs and partnerships</b></p> <p>Initiative: Develop dedicated pediatric sedation teams</p> <p>Initiative: Establish additional in-house child abuse services</p> <p>Initiative: Become active partners in Golisano Children's Alliance</p>	<p><b>Goal 1: Eliminate preventable harm in UGCH</b></p> <p>Initiative: Implement additional tools to prevent harm for patients and staff</p> <p>Initiative: Further secure Children's Hospital for patient and staff safety</p> <p><b>Goal 2: Continue to build Safety Culture in partnership with Solutions for Patient Safety</b></p> <p>Initiative: Develop safety coach program</p> <p>Initiative: Implement revised Error Prevention training</p> <p>Initiative: Increase use of and optimize process for Proactive Safety Plans</p> <p><b>Goal 3: Obtain highest level accreditations and certifications</b></p> <p>Initiative: Grow UGCH Transport Team</p> <p>Initiative: Maintain all current accreditations and certifications</p> <p>Initiative: Prepare for Level 1 Children's Surgery Verification</p> <p><b>Goal 4: Improve data integrity and reporting systems</b></p> <p>Initiative: Improve UGCH ambulatory and inpatient dashboards</p>
Sustainability and Growth	Upstate Experience
<p><b>Goal 1: Expand existing programs</b></p> <p>Initiative: Establish a pediatric surgical center with representation from all subspecialties</p> <p>Initiative: Expand behavioral health services</p> <p>Initiative: Grow palliative care program</p> <p><b>Goal 2: Improve patient access</b></p> <p>Initiative: Decrease autism diagnostic waitlist</p> <p>Initiative: Improve third next available appointment</p> <p><b>Goal 3: Launch and grow pipeline programs</b></p> <p>Initiative: Grow GCSN psychology internship program</p> <p><b>Goal 4: Expand physical space</b></p> <p>Initiative: Expand Golisano Center for Special Needs suite</p> <p>Initiative: Find opportunities for additional Pediatric Cancer Center capacity</p>	<p><b>Goal 1: Improve communication and collaboration</b></p> <p>Initiative: Improve relationships amongst care teams</p> <p><b>Goal 2: Upgrade physical spaces needing improvement</b></p> <p>Initiative: Complete assessment of current space and plan for renovations as needed</p> <p><b>Goal 3: Improve patient and family experience</b></p> <p>Initiative: Launch pediatric discharge hospitality center</p> <p>Initiative: Relaunch patient experience committee for UGCH</p> <p><b>Goal 4: Improve staff experience</b></p> <p>Initiative: Launch additional staff recognition and wellness initiatives</p> <p>Initiative: Strengthen UGCH brand and identity</p>

Over the last several months, the Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital (UGCH) leadership team has been developing the attached strategic plan for the next few years. This plan was developed based on feedback from team members including comments submitted in the survey conducted in December of 2024. The plan has been approved by Hospital Leadership and aligns with the Upstate strategic pillars.

This plan does not include all the incredible work we are doing and plan to do, but it is meant to guide us forward and to help us achieve our higher-level goals. We do recognize that this plan needs to be flexible, and we will continue to review these goals and initiatives as time goes on.

We will be tracking progress on the initiatives on a quarterly basis and will share updates with you all along the way. Initiative owners will receive a separate email with instructions on how to submit updates.

As part of the tracking process, we will be launching quarterly forums to provide updates and to hear from our teams across the Children's Hospital on the work they are doing. **Our first forum will be held on January 29th from 8-9am on Webex. Please add the time to your calendar.**

The meeting can be accessed through this link: <https://upstate.webex.com/upstate/j.php?MTID=mf9f1f41334944269fc20ac29de05eb5e>

If you have any questions, please reach out to Kali Kearns at [kearnsk@upstate.edu](mailto:kearnsk@upstate.edu).

## Magnet Designation!



Congratulations, Upstate Team, on our successful 2<sup>nd</sup> designation as a Magnet® organization! It was announced from the ANCC Commission on Magnet® Chair that Upstate achieved Magnet® designation with 3 Exemplars! Wonderful job to everyone! [Story here!](#)

- **Exemplar:** Exemplary Professional Practice: Surgical Errors outperformed the benchmark and comparison cohort provided by the national database for the majority of eight quarters in 100% of the ambulatory care settings/units
- **Exemplar:** New Knowledge, Innovations, and Improvements: Innovation in the organization: Pediatric Stroke Pathway, Burn Program Virtual Reality Initiative, and a highly successful Hospital at Home Program

- **Exemplar:** Structural Empowerment: Transitional Care Program, Inclusive Health, Med to Bed opt in Program, Food Bank of Central NY Collaboration with Upstate Medical University, screening patients for food insecurity, Emergency Department American Sign Language Class for the ED Team, and the culturally and socially sensitive care delivered by the Centers for International Health

## Important Reminders

### Patient Experience Survey

We encourage you to complete the UGCH Patient Experience Survey by December 26, if you haven't already. [Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital Patient Experience Survey](#)



## 2025 Brightspace Education

As we approach the end of the year, please take a moment to ensure you've completed all required education in Brightspace. If you have any questions, contact Tracie Wildner.

## The Outpatient Pharmacy at Nappi

Located on the first floor of the Nappi Wellness Institute, is now open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. and Saturday/Sunday from 1 to 11 p.m. Questions? Call 315-464-4380.

## Holiday meal offered to staff working on Dec. 25

- With just an Upstate ID Employees working one shift Dec. 25 are eligible for a complimentary meal with a valid Upstate ID at Upstate University Hospital and Community cafeterias. No meal tickets are needed. The schedule is below. Happy Holidays to all.
- Breakfast 5 to 8 a.m., Lunch 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Dinner 4 to 8 p.m

## Interprofessional staff with a formal leadership or project leadership role



Interested in learning more about quality improvement? You're welcome to join the Quality Scholars Course the second Wednesday of the month at noon in 12405A Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital. The program runs for seven months beginning Jan. 14. Applications are due Dec. 31. For more, visit:






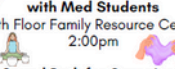





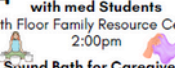











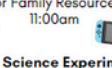




<https://forms.office.com/r/w5za7d8GSu>. Questions? Email [SchaferM@Upstate.edu](mailto:SchaferM@Upstate.edu) or call 315-427-3743.



# Upcoming Events

Child Life Calendar of Events: ([January link here](#))

December 2025				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
22	23	 <b>Family Lunch</b> Chik III A 11th Floor Performance Center 12:00pm	25	26
29	30	 <b>Noon Years Eve Party</b> 11th Floor Performance Center 11:45am-12:45pm	1	2

January 2026				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
29	30	 <b>Noon Years Eve Party &amp; Lunch</b> 11th Floor Performance Center 11:45am-12:45pm	1  <b>HAPPY NEW YEAR</b>	2  <b>Friday Movie</b> 11th Floor Performance Center 2:00pm
 <b>Family Lunch</b> 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:45am-12:30pm	 <b>Gaming Group</b> 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am	 <b>Slime Making with Med Students</b> 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm  <b>Sound Bath for Caregivers</b> 12th Floor Solarium 2:00pm	 <b>Art Group</b> 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm	 <b>Music Group</b> 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm
 <b>Family Lunch</b> 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:45am-12:30pm	 <b>Gaming Group</b> 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am	 <b>Slime Making with med Students</b> 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm  <b>Sound Bath for Caregivers</b> 12th Floor Solarium 2:00pm	 <b>Pet Therapy</b> Short visit in your room Between 11am and 1pm  <b>Art Group</b> 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm	 <b>Music Group</b> 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm
 <b>Family Lunch</b> 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:45am-12:30pm	 <b>Gaming Group</b> 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am	 <b>Medical Play Group</b> 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am	 <b>Pet Therapy</b> Short visit in your room Between 11am and 1pm  <b>Art Group</b> 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm	 <b>Music Group</b> 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm
 <b>Family Lunch</b> 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:45am-12:30pm	 <b>Gaming Group</b> 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am  <b>MOST Science Experiments</b> 11th Floor Performance Center 2:00pm	 <b>BINGO</b> 11th Floor Performance Center 2:30pm-3:30pm	 <b>Art Group</b> 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm	 <b>Music Group</b> 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm

**\*All events are subject to change and your/your child's ability to participate depends on everyone's health and safety. Please ask your nurse before attending any events.**

# Inpatient Updates

## Pediatric Quality & Safety

The December newsletter can be found here: [PQS December Newsletter](#).

# SPS Shine Report

Solutions for Patient Safety (SPS) publishes an annual SHINE Report (Sharing Hospital's Innovations for Network Engagement). This reflects quality data from May 2024 - April 2025. Hospitals are included if submitting (nearly) complete outcomes data, having statistically significant outcome rates or having a 12-month rate of 0 (with minimum denominator criteria).

This year, we were included in the transparency report section for **12-month hospital rate of 0 / hospital center line of 0** for **CLABSI (PICU)** and **Pressure Injury!** [Full report here.](#)

## Safe Kids Corner

[Link here](#)



### Holiday Safety

QUICK TIPS FOR A SAFER SEASON



Whether in the car or an airplane, make sure every child has the right car seat and is buckled in for every ride.



Turn pot handles in, keep hot drinks out of reach, and keep children away from stoves, ovens, and slow cookers.



Keep small foods like nuts, grapes, and candies away from toddlers. Cut food into safe sizes and supervise young children while they eat.



Pick age-appropriate toys and keep magnets and button batteries out of reach.



In unfamiliar spaces, do a quick scan to ensure medicines, cleaners, firearms, and small objects are up and out of reach.



Keep candles, cords, and decorations out of kids reach, and check lights for damaged wires.



Babies sleep safest on their backs, in their own sleep space, on a firm flat surface with no pillows, blankets or toys.



Lithium-ion batteries are used in products like toys, e-scooters, e-bikes, smart phones and computers, and can potentially cause fires. Buy only lab-tested products, charge devices according to instructions, and recycle responsibly.

Wishing you a safe, fun, and joyful holiday season at home, on the road, and everywhere in between.



## WELCOME

### Inpatient:

- Munira Mohamed, MHTA: BBHU
- Alissa Zwelling, RN: PICU

### Ambulatory:

- Lillian Brooks, Front Desk  
Scheduler/Registrant: Peds Pulmonary
- Danielle Peplinski, RN: Cancer Center

### Providers:

- Suzanne Burns, NP: GCSN Child Development and Diagnostic Teams
- Kevin Carr, PA: Peds Hospitalist Team
- Shaylee Cealie, PA: Peds Hospitalist Team
- Ian Laih, PA: Adolescent Medicine
- Meera McMahon, PsyD: Feeding Specialist, GCSN
- Maysarah Mohamed, Licensed Behavior Analyst: GCSN consult team
- Chelsea Munger, Genetic Counselor: CDBG
- Jessica Rosario-Falero, MD: Peds Nephrology

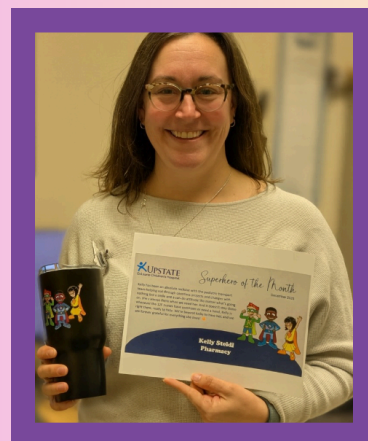
## Celebrating Anniversaries!



- Katie Todeschini, Team Leader at GCSN - 2-year anniversary
- Lisa Tennial, RN Clinical Leader at the BBHU - 1 year anniversary



*Kelly Steidl from  
Pharmacy is our  
December Superhero  
of the Month!!*



**Kelly** has been an absolute rockstar with the pediatric transport team-helping out through countless projects and changes with nothing but a smile and a can-do attitude! No matter what's going on, she's always there when we need her. And it doesn't stop there-whenver the 12F nurses have questions or need a hand, Kelly is right there, ready to help. We're beyond lucky to have her, and we are forever grateful for everything she does!

Don't forget to vote for the  
Superhero for next month!



Special shoutout to  
**Mary Padgett** from  
11E for earning the  
Most Improved  
Individual award in the  
SwipeSense Hand  
Hygiene Competition  
this month!



## Upstate Foundation

**Miracle Family Requests**—Do you know a charismatic, funny patient eager to share their story? Recommend them for our Miracle Family program! We're seeking new families to represent the Upstate Foundation and UGCH at our 2026 community events. Nominations: check with the family & send their contact info: David Bartell at [BartellD@upstate.edu](mailto:BartellD@upstate.edu).

**Donor Dollars at Work Submissions Requested** - Do you have something exciting in your program funded by donors? We want to highlight you! Send photos and impact descriptions to David Bartell at [BartellD@upstate.edu](mailto:BartellD@upstate.edu). If you have a project idea needing funding, talk to your supervisor and watch for the Allocations application opening in September. Details are coming soon!

## Social Media Highlights

Interested in being featured on our social media?

If you have something interesting that you think the community would love to see, we'd love to interview you! Please contact Mary Melice at [melicem@upstate.edu](mailto:melicem@upstate.edu).

Just some of our incredible stories on our social media platforms!

- [Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital and Upstate Cancer Center have received a \\$50K St. Baldrick's Foundation Infrastructure Grant to support expanded pediatric cancer clinical trials and improve access to advanced care for children in our region.](#)



- [On Extraordinary Work Team Recognition Day, we share our thanks to our incredible teams here at Upstate Golisano.](#)
- [The annual heroes parade brought law enforcement and first responder agencies together at Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital to share lights, sirens and holiday wishes with patients and families spending the season in the hospital.](#)
- [SU Football partnered with the Lally Foundation to provide holiday gifts for children and their families!](#)
- [A new \\$10,000 grant will help us bring even more games and technology to our patients!](#)

Some of the other amazing social media shoutouts from our community (there are many more, please check them out!)



🎉 **Shoutout to ALL STAFF!** "Thank you all for always doing your absolute best for kids and families at their absolute worst. From my son and our family THANK YOU" [More comments here.](#)

🎉 **Shoutout to Peds GI!** "I was involved with ICN for several years while working as a nurse in peds GI at Upstate. Upstate is extremely fortunate to belong to this collaborative! I have seen the results that are shown on this chart firsthand! The patients are receiving the absolute best IBD care available!!! Keep up the great work team Upstate!!!" [More comments here.](#)

🎉 **Shoutout to our 3N!** "Great girls!! Took amazing care of my son for the multiple surgeries he has had! Thankful for you all" [More comments here.](#)

? What would you like to see on social media? We want to hear it! Tell us what you'd love to see featured on our social media platforms—your ideas could be next! Email Mary Melice at [melicem@upstate.edu](mailto:melicem@upstate.edu).

## Additional Highlights

	<p><b>SHOUT OUT to APPs!</b></p> <p><b>Melanie Dunham, NP</b> completed the CHAMP education program. Her and Dr. Jan Bach are the only 2 CHAMP active network members from Onondaga County.</p> <p><b>Kim Wise, NP</b> was accepted to and attended the AAP Emerging Leaders conference.</p>
	<p><b>GCSN Patient Praise for Erin Blair, MSN, CPNP-PC!</b> "Overall a great team of wonderful people that have a great interest in caring for others. My 10-year-old daughter looks forward to seeing <b>Erin (Blair)</b> now and my daughter doesn't open up and trust people. She was the only person she felt comfortable with to be left alone to talk and open up. I was IMPRESSED!" ~ Mother of patient</p>

# Gaming program continues to power healing at Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital

Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital's gaming and technology program helps ease anxiety and pain for pediatric patients by bringing video games into the hospital setting. Recently, the program received a \$10,000 grant from BJ's Wholesale Club Foundation, adding to support from Spirit Halloween and Child's Play. Gaming specialist Brad Taylor visits patients daily with consoles and games tailored to their needs, and also uses 3D printing for medical models and adaptive controllers. "Programs like this make a children's hospital a place designed to truly care for kids," said Child Life manager Gina Lozito. [Full story here.](#) (**Brad Taylor** plays video games with a patient at UGCH.)



## Fellowship Match for our Residents—Congratulations!

Joshua Baldwin - PICU at Nicklaus in Miami  
Maxence Gilles (Chief) - PICU at Children's Hospital LA  
Ibrahim Habib - Cardio at Univ. Of Arkansas  
Anna Hrbac - Heme/Onc at Stanford  
Mubasshira Khan - Allergy at Rochester  
Pranjali Muppidi - GI at Baylor  
Jamal Obeid - Sleep Medicine at Baylor  
Abimbola Olufayo-Aluko - PEM Children's Mercy in Kansas City  
Chetana Pasam - PEM at Children's Hospital Michigan  
Yasmika Rasakumar - Heme/Onc at Buffalo  
Stephanie Tom - Child Abuse at Upstate  
Lauren Waichenberg (Chief)- PEM at Upstate

## Special Recognition!

Dr. Karen Teelin received NYS Department of Health Commissioner's Special Recognition Award for her commitment, contribution, and response to improve and promote the health and well-being of all New Yorkers. Congratulations!

## Podcasts

[Rising exposure of kids to medications: attempts at self-harm?](#) (by Dr. Vincent Calleo)

[Upstate provides behavioral, mental health services in Syracuse city schools](#) (by Dr. James Demer)



**November Question: What year did the Thanksgiving Day football game tradition begin and between what teams?**

*Football games have been played on Thanksgiving since 1876, starting with a game between Yale and Princeton.*



**December Question: December is recognized as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) Awareness Month. What is the common medical abbreviation for the form of depression that occurs during the fall and winter months due to reduced sunlight?**

*Answer will be shared in the next newsletter.*



January is National Cervical Health Awareness Month, Nation Blood Donor Month, Thyroid Awareness Month, and National Winter Sports TBI Awareness Month!



### Good Things at Golisano!

Please feel free to share some good things that happened this week using this link:  
<https://redcap.upstate.edu/surveys/?s=NDTP978CC3J9RCA7>.