

Newsletter

STAY IN THE LOOP WITH UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Announcements



Upstate Golisano's First Open Forum!

All staff are encouraged to attend our first open forum on Thursday, January 29th, from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. A Teams link has been emailed out. The UGCH leadership team will be reviewing our Upstate Golisano Strategic Plan ([here](#)) and the team at the BBHU will be presenting about their first full year of patient care.

Congratulations to 12E and 12F on their Beacon Awards!

Units are recognized by bronze, silver, and gold awards. 12E has received the **Gold** Level Beacon Award. 12F has received Beacon for the second year in a row at **Silver** Level.



This award compares us to other medicine units nationwide specific to:

- Patient Outcomes: CAUTIs, CLABSI, pressure injuries, falls, barcode administration, collaborative care
- Work Environment: staffing, turnover, travel nurses, nursing wellbeing,
- Nursing Workforce: nursing experience, certifications, professional organization, membership, conference attendance

UGCH Patient Experience Survey

Thank you to everyone who completed the patient experience survey in December. Our UGCH patient experience committees are reviewing the data to determine ways to address the suggestions that were made. Please stay on the lookout for ways to continue to provide your feedback on the patient experience.

Upcoming Events

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

January 2026

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

19  Family Lunch 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:45am-12:30pm	20  Gaming Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am	21  Medical Play Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am	22  Pet Therapy Short visit in your room Between 11am and 1pm Art Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm	23  Music Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm
26  Family Lunch 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:45am-12:30pm	27  Gaming Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am MOST Science Experiments 11th Floor Performance Center 2:00pm	28  BINGO 11th Floor Performance Center 2:30pm-3:30pm	29  Art Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm	30  Music Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm

February 2026

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

2  Family Lunch 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:45am-12:30pm	3  Gaming Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am	4  Sound Bath for Caregivers 12th Floor Solarium 2:00pm	5  Pet Therapy Short visit in your room Between 11am and 1pm	6  Music Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm
9  Family Lunch 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:45am-12:30pm	10  Utica Zoomobile 11th Floor Performance Center 2:00pm	11  Slime with Med Students 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm	12  Art Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm	13  Music Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm
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*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.

Syracuse Crunch! Pediatrics Night January 30th!

We invite you to Pediatrics Night at the Syracuse Crunch game on January 30th at 7pm. Dr. Sura and one of her patients will be dropping the puck! Our Safe Kids, Pediatric Trauma and Center for Surgery Verification teams will be tabling too. Discounted tickets are available to purchase here: www.syracusecrunch.com/UGCH.



Chat with Patient Advocacy February 13th in the KPC!

Families are invited to our first Hot Cocoa and Chat with Patient Advocacy event, where they can discuss their children's care at Upstate Golisano. Staff are encouraged to attend as well!



Cystic Fibrosis Teaching Day

All are welcome to attend on March 11th, 2:00pm-5:45pm in the Kinney Performance Center.

[RSVP here](#) by 2/23 or scan below. Questions? Email Annette Borchert at MalecA@upstate.edu



Inpatient Updates

Pediatric Quality & Safety

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

Staffing



Inpatient:

- Brianna Chasten, BBHU MHTA
- Samantha Knapp joining 12E from Peds Support Pool
- Amariah Sellers, BBHU MHTA
- Donovan Smith RN, 12E
- Niasia Watkins, BBHU MHTA

Ambulatory:

- Lauren Calloway, RN - Upstate Peds
- Trissa Case, LPN - Upstate Peds
- Chrissy DiCarlo, RN - Peds GI
- Myah Freeman, RN - Peds GI
- Latoya Dupre, Administrative Assnt 1, Peds Surgery

Incoming Fellows:

- Dr. Hayden Pollard - Pediatric Hospital Medicine
- Dr. Stephanie Tom-Brophy and Dr. Zoe Warczak - Child Abuse Pediatrics
- Dr. Lauren Waichenberg and Dr. Melissa Butler - Pediatric Emergency Medicine

Providers:

- Suzanne Burns, Nurse Practitioner in Diagnostics Program - GCSN
- Meara McMahon, Licensed Psychologist in Feeding Program - GCSN
- Emily Vercelloni, LMSW - GCSN

Happy Retirement

We say farewell to Dr. Joseph Domachowske, who retired from his faculty role after 36 years in the Division of Infectious Diseases. He continues his connection to Upstate Medical University as Professor Emeritus as he begins a new chapter as Global Medical Director for the RSV franchise in the Vaccines group at Sanofi. Best of luck!

Anniversary

Jess Petrick, NP for BBHU and GCSN - 1 year

Gina Martin, Behavior Tech at BBHU - 1 year

Katherine Weigand, SLP at GCSN - 1 year

Adanna Harper, SLP at GCSN - 3 years



Kaleigh McLoughlin, RN

in the PICU!

**January Superhero
of the Month!!**



Kaleigh consistently demonstrates clinical excellence, compassion, and leadership during her shifts in the PICU. Her ability to connect with patients, families, and orientees even in high-stress situations sets her apart as an exceptional nurse and teammate. Kaleigh is an excellent preceptor and has been known to be extremely patient when working with the newest nurses on 12F. Kaleigh often steps up to help other nurses in the unit without being asked. Kaleigh is a valuable member of the PICU team. We are lucky to have Kaleigh in 12F! Congratulations Kaleigh!

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



Perfect Attendance Awards! Way to go!



Karen MacVittie, RN - 11E

Brenda Walser, Secretary, Upstate Peds

Robin Jodoin, Office Assistant, UPAC

Lisa Kozma, Administrative Assistant, UPAC

Jennifer Frank, RN, UPAC

Katherine Graham, RN, UPAC

Shannon West, RN, UPAC

Upstate Foundation

Dollars at Work: Over 35 projects were approved for funding in allocations this year! Do you have donor dollars at work? E-mail BrightD@upstate.edu.

Radiothon: Do you have a patient who would be a great fit to be interviewed? Radiothon for Kids 2026 is happening on February 10 & 11, 2026 & we'll be looking to share stories of hope and courage throughout the two days. E-mail BrightD@upstate.edu if you have a patient in mind.

Calling all volunteers! To sign up to help with Radiothon, visit

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0A45ABA6F5C07-61555675-radiothon/156314639#/>.

For more information about Radiothon, visit <https://www.upstatefoundation.org/GCHRadiothon>.

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.

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

- [2025 Year Recap Video!](#)
- [Paige's Childhood Cancer Donation](#)
- [Cancer Center patient highlight - Judy Coates](#)
- [Syracuse Men's Basketball visit](#)

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

Shoutout to Kaleigh McLoughlin!

"Congratulations! You so deserve this! You helped us feel at ease during the three most difficult weeks of our lives and gave the most excellent care. I'll never forget Seamus not letting go of your finger. We consider you one of the reasons Seamus is still here with us today." [More comments here](#)

 **Shoutout to ALL Staff!** "Happy Holidays and thank you for all you do. We were there a couple years ago during the Easter holiday and y'all go above and beyond to make the holiday seasons special for the kiddos in your care who are missing out at home. Sending so much love, and I hope you all have a great Christmas". [More comments here](#).

Shoutout to our Critical Care Transport Team!

"This team saved my daughter a few times! Thank you all for your dedication to children and saving lives and being there in the most vulnerable moments. Jessica, personally made a huge impact on my family. I'll never

forget what you did for us. Thank you." [More comments here.](#)

Shoutout to ALL staff! [Annual Heroes Parade.](#)

"Thank you to everyone who does this every year! It means SO MUCH to families when we are there during the holidays. The joy on my son's face waving the rainbow "sword" as he called it is forever etched in my memory. You make it possible for joy and fear to co-exist every single year."

❓ 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.

Additional Highlights



Sarina Burkett and Andrew Lyon at GCSN received lots of praise on a patient satisfaction survey!

"Sarina and Andrew at the front are so welcoming and warm to all of us. Communicating and scheduling with them is so easy. They help make our experience in your office pleasant." Great job!



Amariah Sellers at BBHU received a team shout-out for excellence in patient care. "This evening she went above and beyond to make sure her patient was cared for and safe. I really appreciate the way she was able to work as a team and anticipate what might be needed in a difficult situation." Awesome!



Dr. Comito and the St. Baldrick's Grant

Upstate was among 20 institutions to receive St. Baldrick's Infrastructure grant. Dr. Melanie Comito has been awarded a \$50,000 grant by the St. Baldrick's Foundation. These one-year grants provide Upstate the staffing to open, coordinate, and treat more children on clinical trials, making it possible for more children to access these trials close to home. [In Upstate News](#).

Dr. Blatt on HebB

Our very own Dr. Steve Blatt was featured on CNY Central to discuss changes for the Hepatitis B vaccine for babies. [CNY Central News Story](#).

Podcasts

[Toxic positivity; good sleep habits; toddlers and sleep](#) (by Dr. Holly Vanderhoff)

[Studying Adolescent Sleep](#) (by Dr. Jason Carbone)

[Teens harming themselves; top-level trauma care; mental health care for schools](#) (by Dr. Vincent Calleo)



December Question: December is recognized as Seasonal Affective Disorder 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: SAD (*Seasonal Affective Disorder*)



January Question: True or False: It's safer for kids to keep their coats ON while buckled in a car seat during winter.

Answer will be shared in the next newsletter.



February is Children's Dental Health Month, National Cancer Prevention Month, and Black History Month. In February, we also celebrate Ambulatory Care Nurses Week!



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>.