

STAY IN THE LOOP WITH UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Announcements

The Children's Pavilion Playground is Now Open!

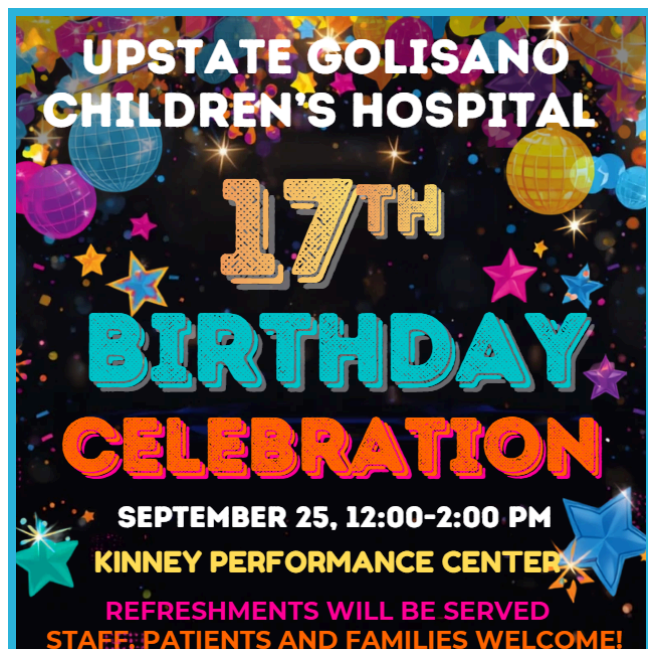
We are happy to announce the opening of the new Children's Pavilion Playground for the BBHU and Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Designed for accessibility and inclusion, the playground provides children of all abilities a safe and engaging space to play and connect. Thank you to The Upstate Foundation and our generous donors and community partners for making this project possible. [More pictures!](#)



Upstate Golisano's 17th Birthday Celebration!

🎉💫 Dust off your dancing shoes and mark your calendars! We'll be celebrating 17 years of making a difference during Birthday Week, September 21–25, with a disco-themed Birthday Party on September 25th! 🎉💫

All units, clinics, and programs are encouraged to submit a September social media highlight ([form](#))! Please email completed forms or questions to melicem@upstate.edu.



[Print here!](#)



[Print here!](#)



[Print here!](#)



[Print here!](#)

🎉 UGCH Apparel Sale is Back Open! 🎉

The first ordering window will close on **August 28**. Orders from this batch will be shipped directly to your home and are estimated to arrive around 9/18 before our Birthday Week celebration.

The store will reopen after this ordering period closes; however, items ordered during later sales are not expected to arrive before Birthday Week.

 Shop here: Bonfire-UGCH Birthday Sale

Upstate Golisano Apparel Sale!

New items added!



CLICK FOR STORE



Store is open until August 28th!

T-shirts will be mailed to you directly at the end of the sale



Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital Earns National AHA Resuscitation Awards



Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital has been recognized by the American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines®-Resuscitation program with a Gold Achievement Award for Pediatric Resuscitation, a Bronze Achievement Award for Infant/Neonate Resuscitation, and the Target: CPR Award. These awards recognize hospitals that demonstrate a sustained commitment to delivering high-quality, evidence-based resuscitation care and continuously improving outcomes for patients who experience in-hospital cardiac arrest.

The Resuscitation Awards recognize hospitals that consistently meet rigorous performance standards in the care of children experiencing cardiac arrest. The Target: CPR Award recognizes excellence in delivering timely, high-quality CPR, one of the most important factors influencing survival and neurologic recovery after cardiac arrest.

Although pediatric cardiac arrests are relatively uncommon, they are among the most critical emergencies encountered in a children's hospital. Outcomes depend on rapid recognition, effective teamwork, high-quality CPR, and adherence to evidence-based guidelines. The American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines® Resuscitation program helps hospitals track performance, benchmark outcomes, and implement best practices that improve survival and recovery.

These honors reflect the dedication of our providers, nurses, respiratory therapists, pharmacists, and support staff who work together every day to ensure the highest level of care for our patients and families. Congratulations to all team members whose commitment to quality and excellence made this national recognition possible. [f Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital](#)

🎉🎉🎉 We celebrated Matthew Byrne for 30 years of volunteer service at Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital! 🎉🎉🎉



Please join us in celebrating **Matthew Byrne's** 30 years of volunteer service at Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital. With more than 7,500 volunteer hours, Matthew has shared his time, kindness, and compassion with generations of children and families. His commitment exemplifies the spirit of volunteerism, and we are grateful for the positive impact he continues to make on our hospital community. [Surprise Party!](#)

UGCH Renovations

Our **Family Spaces** are getting a refresh! Renovations on the 11th and 12th floors are underway as we work to create comfortable and inviting areas for families to rest, recharge, and connect. Thank you for your patience as we make these improvements.

Expansion of the **Golisano Center for Special Needs** into the remainder of the Madison Irving Medical Center third floor is underway!



Three **treatment rooms** on the 11th and 12th floors now feature walls decorated with whimsical scenes of children at play, climbing and fishing, as well as a colorful solar system, in keeping with each floor's theme.



Shoutouts & Celebrations!

🎉 Congratulations to our August
Inpatient and Ambulatory Superheroes! 🎉



Inpatient Superhero of the Month

August 2026

Amanda is always there for anyone. She goes above and beyond for both her patients and colleagues. Her patient care is above and beyond. She's always a person you can confide in when shifts get rough. She brings a light to the unit that we all need and love. Amanda Bo Banda is such an amazing nurse and is so deserving of superhero of the month!



Amanda Semmel, RN
PICU





Ambulatory Superhero of the Month

August 2026

Dr. Bach is so compassionate and intelligent. She has excellent patient care and bedside manner. She is also always happy to help with any triage questions.



Dr. Janice Bach,
Upstate Pediatrics & Adolescent Center





Nominate a Superhero!

Do you have a coworker who represents UGCH PEDS?

Uplifting
Genuine
Compassionate
Hardworking
Patient/Family Centered
Empathetic
Dedicated
Supportive



Anyone can be nominated both Inpatient and Outpatient!



Scan QR
code or
click [here](#)
to vote!

Dr. Conners Named SUNY Distinguished Faculty

Gregory Conners, MD, MPH, MBA, was one of only three faculty members to receive SUNY's highest academic title of SUNY Distinguished Faculty. He'll be honored at the Upstate Convocation **on Wednesday, Sept. 9 at 4 p.m.** in Weiskotten Hall. The campus community is invited to attend. [More details.](#)

2026 Pediatric Hospital Medicine Excellence in Clinical Care Award

A photograph of Dr. Jessica Allan, a woman with blonde hair, smiling and holding a dark wooden award plaque. The plaque has gold lettering that reads "PEDIATRIC HOSPITAL MEDICINE EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL CARE AWARD 2026" and "Jessica M. Allan, MD".

Congratulations to Dr. Jessica Allan on being recognized with the 2026 Pediatric Hospital Medicine Excellence in Clinical Care Award!

This prestigious honor highlights Dr. Allan's dedication to providing exceptional care to hospitalized children and families, as well as her leadership and commitment to advancing pediatric healthcare.

Look at All These DAISY's!

Congratulations

To our DAISY Honoree for June 2026

Sabrina Naylor, BSN, RN
Family Member Nomination

“
I am alive today because of my sister.

UPSTATE
Nursing

 **The DAISY Award**
FOR EXTRAORDINARY NURSES
IN MEMORY OF J. PATRICK BARNES

A photograph of Sabrina Naylor, a woman with long brown hair, smiling and holding a green DAISY Award plaque. The background features large, colorful flowers.



Perfect Attendance!



🌟 Congratulations to **Kathy Valentino**, Peds Business Services, on earning the Perfect Attendance Award! Thank you for your dedication, dependability, and commitment to excellence throughout the year.

Promotion! 🎉 Congratulations Katie Todeschini 🎉

Congratulations **Katie Todeschini** on her promotion to Office Manager at GCSN! The change is a result of a recent reorganization of administrative leadership in Ambulatory Services.

Congratulations - Newly Certified Peds Pulmonary Team Members!

From left to right: **Amanda Zuccaro, RN, AE-C**, and **Emily Johnson, RN**, have earned their **Certified Pediatric Nurse (CPN)** certification, demonstrating their specialized knowledge and commitment to excellence in pediatric nursing. **Alissa Rinn, RN, AE-C**, Peds Pulmonary Asthma Navigator, has earned the Asthma Educator-Certified (AE-C) credential, which recognizes her advanced expertise in asthma education and management.



🎉 Patient & family praises to our staff from Press Ganey surveys! 🎉

Inpatient 11E - Night Nurses 11E - Cam 11E - All Staff 12E- Gabby 12E - Shabella 12E - Eva 12E - Child Life 12E - Dr. Allan 12E - Brian - MRI 12E - Mary 12E - Jenna 12F - Beth Outpatient CDBG - Entire Staff CDBG - Dr. Garg CDBG - Dr. Black	Peds Cancer Center - Dr. Sima Peds Cancer Center - Shawn Peds Cancer Center - Registration Peds Cancer Center - Dr. Scott Peds Cancer Center - Dr. Kennedy Peds Cancer Center - Brooke Peds Cancer Center - Dr. Dvorak Peds Cancer Center - Becca Peds GI - Dr. Fakhri Peds GI - Dr. Rivera Peds GI - Front Staff Peds GI - Dr. Hartman Peds GI - Dr. Justinich Peds Rheum - Dr. Sura Peds Rheum - Dr. Sura's Resident Peds Rheum - Dr. Hannan Peds Surgery - Dr. Wallenstein Peds Surgery - Front Desk	GSCN - Erin UPAC - Dr. Berry UPAC - Dr. Teelin UPAC - Melanie UPAC - Kat UPAC - Dr. Blatt Upstate Peds - Entire office Upstate Peds - Dr. Feeney Upstate Peds - Olivia Upstate Peds - Dr. Sveen Upstate Peds - Dr. Kresel Peds Pulm - Amy Peds Pulm - Dr. Gill Peds Pulm - Dr. Batool Peds Pulm - Courtney Peds Pulm - Anna Peds Pulm - Olivia Peds Pulm - Tootie Peds Pulm - Front Desk
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Strategic Plan Updates

Quarterly Update

If you missed our previous quarterly update on 7/30, you can find the recording here:

[UGCH Quarterly Update Meeting July 30 2026.mp4](#).

The next Quarterly Update meeting will be 10/29 at 12:00 p.m.

Inpatient Updates

Pediatric Quality & Safety August newsletter [here](#).

Getting to Know Our UGCH Team



Who am I?

I'm **Jess Giannino-Woodward**, Director of Pediatric Neurodevelopmental Services for the Golisano Center for Special Needs and the Biobehavioral Health Unit. I started at the Golisano Center for Special Needs six years ago as a Team Leader and have been fortunate to grow into my current role, supporting our teams.

What attracted me to this role?

I earned my bachelor's degree in psychology and became interested in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) during my undergraduate studies. While I quickly realized I wasn't meant to be a direct provider, I discovered that my strengths were better suited to operations and leadership. This role allows me to support our providers so they can focus on delivering outstanding care to our patients and families.

What do I enjoy most about my job?

What I enjoy most is working alongside team members who are genuinely passionate about helping children and families. Seeing the dedication, compassion, and expertise they bring every day is so rewarding, and I'm grateful to play a role in supporting the work they do.

Fun fact about me:

Outside of work, I spend most of my time with my five-month-old son, who is just the sweetest! When I'm not with him, I also enjoy doing HYROX races. This October I'll be doing my fourth HYROX, which is also my first solo race.

Upcoming Events

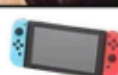
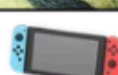
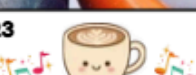
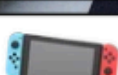
Child Life Calendar of Events: ([print September here](#))

August 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
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24  Family Lunch 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:45am-12:30pm	25  Gaming Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am  MOST Science Experiments 11th Floor Performance Center 2:00pm	26  BINGO 11th Floor Performance Center 2:00pm	27  Pet Therapy Short visit in your room Between 11:00am and 1:00pm  Art Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm	28  Music Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm
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September 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
31  Family Lunch 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:45am-12:30pm  Double H Ranch 12th Floor Family Resource Center 1:00pm-4:00pm	1  Gaming Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am	2  Sound Bath for Caregivers 12th Floor Solarium 2:00pm	3	4  Movie on the Big Screen 11th Floor Performance Center 1:00pm
7  Family Lunch 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:45am-12:30pm	8  Gaming Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am  Ulica Zoomobile 11th Floor Performance Center 2:00pm	9  BINGO with Cornell Baseball 11th Floor Performance Center 1:00pm	10  Pet Therapy Short visit in your room Between 11am and 1pm  Art Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm	11  Music Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm
14  Family Lunch 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:45am-12:30pm	15  Gaming Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am	16  BINGO with Cornell Baseball 11th Floor Performance Center 1:00pm	17  Art Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm	18  Music Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm
21  Family Lunch 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:45am-12:30pm	22  Gaming Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am	23  Coffee House Karaoke 12th Floor Family Resource Center 12:30pm	24  Pet Therapy Between 11am and 1pm  Art Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm	25  Music Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm
28  Family Lunch 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:45am-12:30pm	29  Gaming Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am	30  BINGO 11th Floor Performance Center 2:30pm	1  Syracuse Common Council Story and Activity 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am	2  Movie on the Big Screen 11th Floor Performance Center 1:00pm

*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.

Upstate Foundation Updates

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 and send their info to Cassandra Rucker.

Upcoming events (Thank a UGCH Partner!):

3 Rivers Car Cruz-In – May through mid-September, Wednesday evenings, 4:00 PM until dusk (weather permitting), 8871 Gaskin Road, Clay.

Love's Travel Tops - Collecting donations at the Binghamton and Waterloo locations from 8/21 - 9/25 at the register. National Coffee Day, \$1 donated to UGCH for every coffee purchase.

Spirit of Halloween - Collecting donations from 9/1 - 10/31 at all CNY locations for UGCH.

Matthews Auto Walk-a-Thon - Join us on October 3 for the Matthews Auto Walk-a-Thon - benefiting GCH!

 Walk anywhere! Take a stroll around your neighborhood, hit your favorite trail, walk on your treadmill, or join us in person at the Rail Trail in Vestal, NY between 7:30 am - 6:30 pm.

 **Pledge to walk** - For every mile you walk on October 3, Matthews Auto will donate \$10 to help support children and families at UGCH. Pledges are all on the Honor System.

- Pledge the miles you will walk on October 3
- Choose your Charity of Choice listed as - "Upstate Golisano Binghamton/Syracuse". This event benefits other children's charities as well.

 Here's the challenge: Register yourself and recruit 10!  Invite your friends, family, neighbors, cousins, mailperson, Amazon delivery person, the family dog—anyone who wants to put up some miles for the kids!

Click here to register: www.matthewsauto.com/walkathon

Welcome to the Team!



Child Life:

Olivia Suissa (Peds ED)

Peds Administration:

Katherine Towle, Inpatient
Resident Coordinator

Peds ED:

Jessica Martin, RN
Kayla Blackmon, TN
Rosemond Yeboah, TN
Rachel Zegarelli, RN
Meghan Anthony, RN
Kareem Williams, UST
Bailey Williamson, RN
Kaylin Battista, RN
Katie Phillips, RN
Susannah Toussant, LPN
Sandra Hervias, TN
Evan Simmons, TN
Emily Musa, RN
Morgan Carroll, TN
Samantha Meeks, TN
Maxwell McCumskey, TN

Inpatient:

11E:

Olivia Hackett, RN
Gabriella Wlad, RN

11G

Madison Hysick, RN

12F:

Rachel Haskell, RN
Robert Wyman, TN

BBHU:

Marie-Renee Bondo, MHTA
Audrey Jump, MHTA
Julianna Pinkston, MHTA
Kashindi Mashauri, MHTA
Kaniyah Thomas, MHTA
Nchindo Mwilima, MHTA
Koren Johnson, RN

Peds Float Pool

Curtaria Oneal, UST
Shannon Dooley, HCT
Ashely Davis, HCT

Peds Hospital Medicine:

Michael Hartnett, MD

Peds Support Pool:

Lauren Avery, RN
Amelia Adams, RN

Ambulatory:

3NOR:

Erin Harmon, TN
Molly Veator, RN

GCSN:

Simonie Grabowski, PsyD -
Diagnostic Team

Peds Endocrine:

Simrat Veera, DO

Peds GI:

Cameron Chow, MD

Peds Pulmonary:

Alissa Rinn, RN, AE-C, Asthma
Navigator

UPAC

Britawnie Dickerson, LPN



Welcome to the team Dr. Veera!

Join us in welcoming a new member of the Divisions of Endocrinology & Diabetes,

Simrat Veera, DO.

Dr. Veera joined the department on August 3rd. She received her Osteopathic Medicine Degree from Touro College in New York. From there, she completed her pediatric residency at Goryeb Children's Hospital-Atlantic Health in Morristown, NJ. She most recently completed her pediatric endocrinology fellowship at NYU Langone Health.

"My name is **Michael Hartnett** and I am excited to be a part of the PHM group at SUNY Upstate. I grew up in Massena, NY for the first 10 years of my life before moving to Manlius, NY. I attended SUNY Upstate for medical school and did my Med-Peds residency at Albany Medical College.

I currently live in Syracuse with my fiancé. When I'm not working you can find me fixing my house, running around the neighborhood, or cheering on the New York Knicks."



Welcome PHM Faculty Dr. Michael Hartnett!



Welcome Dr. Lindsay Urbinelli to Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital!

Dr. Urbinelli joined the Peds Cardiology team in September 2024, returning to the practice that first inspired her to pursue pediatric cardiology during her medical training at SUNY Upstate.

A CNY native from Manlius, she completed her undergraduate studies at Cornell University, attended medical school at Upstate, and went on to complete pediatric residency and cardiology fellowship training at Columbia/New York-Presbyterian, followed by advanced cardiac imaging training at Cincinnati Children's Hospital.

She spent eight years in Portland, Oregon, providing inpatient and outpatient cardiology care and working in cardiac intensive care before returning to Syracuse with her family.

Dr. Grabowski brings extensive experience working with children and adolescents across psychological assessment, neurodevelopmental evaluation, behavioral health, and interdisciplinary pediatric care.

Most recently, she completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital, where she provided comprehensive evaluations and worked with children and families in medically complex, feeding, diabetes, and outpatient settings.

Dr. Grabowski will provide comprehensive evaluations in collaboration with our multidisciplinary team. We are excited to welcome Dr. Grabowski and look forward to the expertise and perspective she will bring to GCSN!



Please join us in welcoming Dr. Simonie Grabowski, Psy.D., to the GCSN Diagnostic Team!



Join us in welcoming Dr. Chow to the Division of Gastroenterology!

Dr. Cameron Chow joined the department on August 17th. He received his medical degree from St. George's University in Grenada, West Indies. From there, he completed his pediatric residency at SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University in Brooklyn, NY. He most recently completed his pediatric gastroenterology fellowship at Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla, NY.

New Division Director of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology

We are pleased to announce the next Division Director of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology, **Joel Thompson, MD**, who will join the department on November 2nd. He is currently at Children's Mercy Hospital, University of Missouri-Kansas City, where he is the Co-Medical Director for Quality and Safety and an Associate Professor of Pediatrics in the Division of Hematology/Oncology Bone Marrow Transplant. We are excited to have Dr. Thompson join the Department of Pediatrics leadership team.

Social Media Highlights

Interested in being featured on our social media? Have something interesting you think the community would love to see? We'd love to interview you! Email melicem@upstate.edu.

Some of our incredible stories on our social media platforms!

- [Back-to-school season with Dr. Jaclyn Sisskind](#)
- [Lillian's - Make-A-Wish Central New York - Libbie Rubenstein Caring for Children Fund](#)
- [Dr. Sisskind - The Power of Reading](#)
- [World Breastfeeding Week, with Jen Ockenfels, Lactation Consultant](#)
- [National Immunization Awareness Month, with Dr. Steven Blatt](#)
- [National Sisters Day- Social Workers Najah Johnson \(HealthySteps and UPAC\) and Najier Johnson \(Joslin Diabetes Center\)](#)

Upstate Health launches new TikTok channel

Upstate Health's new [TikTok account](#) is dedicated to health tips, advice, and a little fun. With experts across Upstate's departments and campuses, the new channel is designed to help keep our community and beyond healthy, one tip at a time. Watch for more information on how Upstate Golisano can be a part of it!

Additional Highlights

Podcasts

[Drug for childhood leukemia shows positive results, Dr. Melanie Comito](#)

[Vitamin K Shots for Newborns, Dr. Steven Blatt](#)



July Question: What is the most common birth month in the United States?

Answer: **August!**



August Question: True or False: A child's brain reaches about 90% of its adult size by age 5. *The answer will be shared in the next newsletter.*



September is National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, National Suicide Prevention Month, Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, and Baby Safety Month.

AND - Upstate Golisano's 17th Birthday Celebration!

**** Have a great idea to highlight one of these? Let us know!**



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>.

