Children’s Hospital Attracts Two Pediatric Surgeons
In a year when only 30 pediatric surgeons across the nation completed training, two members of this elite group have been recruited to Upstate: Kim Mendelson MD/PhD, from St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children in Philadelphia and Tamer Ahmed MD, from Arkansas Children’s Hospital in Little Rock.

Key Breast Cancer Researcher Joins Upstate
Recently appointed Professor of Pharmacology Debashis Ghosh PhD, internationally acclaimed for discovering the structure and mechanism of the enzyme which converts androgen to estrogen, has joined the Upstate Cancer Research Institute.
Two pediatric surgeons with specialization in numerous areas, including oncology, neonatal, trauma and intestinal disorders have joined Upstate Golisano Children’s Hospital. Kim Mendelson MD/PhD and Tamer A. Ahmed MD will also join the faculty at Upstate Medical University.

Michael Ratner MD, Upstate’s pediatric surgery division chief, said Upstate’s ability to attract two physicians from this year’s graduating class of pediatric surgery residents, about 30 individuals nationwide, speaks volumes. “Everyone at Upstate, from our new surgery chair, to the outstanding pediatrics faculty and health care team, in addition to this outstanding facility, played a key role in landing these talented pediatric surgeons.”

Drs. Mendelson and Ahmed said their decisions to join Upstate were in part influenced by the presence of the Upstate Golisano Children’s Hospital. Both surgeons have worked at children’s hospitals previously.
“The presence of a children’s hospital — and the doubling of its pediatric surgical beds — underscores a community’s commitment to providing extraordinary care for children and their families,” Dr. Mendelson said. “I’m delighted to have the opportunity to care for children and their families in such a first-rate facility.”

Dr. Ahmed said he was impressed by the facility, but also the medical staff. “Upstate Golisano Children’s Hospital is a remarkable facility in its design, but more impressive is the dedication of the medical team that cares for kids in this fine facility,” he said. “I look forward to caring for children from all across this region.”

**Three Fellowships**

Dr. Mendelson, who was raised in the Boston area, specializes in pediatric surgical oncology as well as prenatal surgery, neonatal surgery, minimally invasive pediatric surgery and surgery for intestinal disorders.

She most recently completed her pediatric surgical residency at St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children in Philadelphia, a 189-bed hospital affiliated with Drexel University College of Medicine and Temple University School of Medicine. Dr. Mendelson also completed a pediatric surgery research fellowship (2007-2008) at St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children.

She also completed a pediatric surgery fellowship (2005-2007) at the University of Louisville, a fetal surgery fellowship (2004-2005) at the Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center and a general surgery residency (1998-2004) at...
University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina
Pitt County Memorial Hospital/Brody School
of Medicine at East Carolina University.
Dr. Mendelson earned her medical degree and
PhD at Tufts University School of Medicine.

She holds board certification from the American
Board of Surgery.

Dr. Mendelson’s research interests are varied. She has published and presented her research on
inflammatory bowel disease, liver disease and
minimally invasive pediatric surgery.

Texas Native
Dr. Ahmed, a native of Texas, is a pediatric
surgeon specializing in neonatal surgery,
general pediatric surgery, minimally invasive
surgery, pediatric trauma and surgery for
intestinal disorders.

He most recently served as a fellow in pediatric
surgery at Arkansas Children’s Hospital (ACH),
part of the University of Arkansas for Medical
Sciences in Little Rock. With 316 beds, ACH is the
sixth largest children’s hospital in the country.

Prior to 2008, Dr. Ahmed was administrative chief
resident in general surgery (2007-2008) at Milton
S. Hershey Medical Center in Hershey, Pa., where
he completed his surgical residency (2001-2008).
Dr. Ahmed earned his medical degree at the
University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.

Additionally, Dr. Ahmed served as a research
fellows at the Penn State Hershey Medical Center,
investigating growth hormone resistance in sepsis,
a severe illness in which the body is overwhelmed
by infection. He also served as co–principal
investigator on several studies assessing the effects
gastric bypass surgery on gastrointestinal
physiology, taste sensitivity and food preference.

Dr. Ahmed is a member of the American College of
Surgeons, the Association for Academic Surgery
and the Association for Surgical Education.

Drs. Mendelson and Ahmed will be part of the sur-
gical team at the Olivia Louise Pietrafesa Center for
Children’s Surgery at Upstate Golisano Children’s
Hospital, which opened in 2003 and performs
about 2,300 pediatric surgical cases annually.

Upstate Golisano Children’s Hospital opened
in 2009 and is a two–story, 71–bed facility, part of Upstate University Hospital, located in
Syracuse, N.Y.
### FIRST YEAR IN REVIEW

#### STATISTICS OF INTEREST

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<th>AUG-JULY 2008-09</th>
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<tr>
<td>Beds</td>
<td>56</td>
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<td>O/P Surgeries</td>
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Upstate pediatric chair Thomas Welch MD, center, with residents and medical students at the Upstate Golisano Children’s Hospital.

The Upstate Golisano Children’s Hospital opened one year ago.

Multidisciplinary pediatric patient rounds include nurses, child life specialists, therapists, social workers, spiritual care staff, and other health care professionals.
Moving forward with its drug development agenda, the Upstate Cancer Research Institute has recruited Debashis Ghosh PhD, an NIH-funded, world-renowned research scientist from the Hauptman-Woodward Medical Research Institute, Roswell Park Cancer Institute and Buffalo University.

Last year, in the journal *Nature*, Dr. Ghosh published his groundbreaking discovery of the three-dimensional structure of aromatase, the enzyme that converts androgen into estrogen. His laboratory is also credited with determining the structure of the two other enzymes involved in controlling estrogen levels.*

Since 70 percent of breast cancer is estrogen-dependent, Dr. Ghosh and his Upstate research team plan to translate their insights into a new hormonal therapy for breast cancer. Their goal is to develop new aromatase inhibitors—compounds that compete with aromatase, stop androgen from converting to estrogen and thus stop estrogen from feeding breast cancer tumors.

**Exclusivity vs. Affinity**

“We have identified 10-15 compounds that are more precise than the three aromatase inhibitors now on the market,” Dr. Ghosh reports. “Our goal is a drug with fewer side effects. We want the drug to do only the intended job and nothing else.”

**“A Long Pipeline”**

Dr. Ghosh acknowledges that “There is an ocean of difference between laboratory findings and an actual drug. It’s a long pipeline, from bench to bedside. But now that we have the science, we need the collaboration with clinicians.”

At the Upstate Cancer Research Institute, Dr. Ghosh found the interest, and infrastructure, to support his translational research.

“What brings me to Upstate? We share a similar philosophy about translational research — taking our laboratory discoveries to the bedside. I want to have an influence on the new drugs — to be involved from the ground up. Upstate has the best
of both worlds: the Upstate Cancer Research Institute, where we answer the intellectual questions, and the Upstate Cancer Center, where we collaborate with clinicians to translate our discoveries into new treatments.

“Our goal is to test these compounds in cellular and animal studies at the Upstate Cancer Research Institute, conduct Phase 1 trials at the Upstate Cancer Center, then collaborate with pharmaceutical companies for subsequent trials,” he explains.

“The building of the Upstate Cancer,” Dr. Ghosh adds, “was a big factor in my decision to move my research to Upstate.”

Decades-Long Quest

Prior to joining Upstate, Dr. Ghosh says he and his research colleagues “dedicated years to unraveling the chemistry of the remarkable molecule known as aromatase.”

“The connection between aromatase and estrogen was made 40 years ago,” he notes. “But it has taken decades of intense research to discover its structure and how this molecule works — how Mother Nature made it so perfect.

“Scientists worldwide have been trying for 35 years to crystallize and visualize this membrane-bound enzyme. We were the first to succeed, by developing a revolutionary method to purify and crystallize aromatase from human placenta.

“Now that we know the structures of all three key enzymes implicated in estrogen-dependent breast cancers,” Dr. Ghosh continues, “our goal is to have a personalized cocktail of inhibitors customized to the specific treatment needs of each patient.”

*estrone sulfatase and 17beta-hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase type I.*