



UPSTATE PHYSICIAN RESPONDERS AVAILABLE FOR EMERGENCIES

Members of Upstate’s EMS (Emergency Medical Services) and Disaster Medicine Physician Response Team carry pagers 24 hours a day. They take turns being on call, driving the team’s white Ford Expedition whenever summoned by the Onondaga County 911 Center. It’s a community service that Upstate provides without charge to individual patients.

While overseeing patient care, the physicians — all of whom are professors at Upstate — provide real-time feedback to paramedics and emergency responders, explains Derek Cooney MD, the team’s medical director.

The team may be activated for crises large or small. Four physicians responded to the scene of the 2010 Megabus crash on the Onondaga Lake Parkway, which killed four and injured 23 people. Physicians have been called to car wrecks to assess whether limb amputations were necessary. (They haven’t been.) Physicians have also been called to the scene of psychiatric emergencies, in which someone is refusing medical care.

“It can help law enforcement and EMS get on the same page if the physician comes out,” Cooney explains.

The team was among the Central New York rescuers who participated in a “Symphony of Disaster” drill this summer, sponsored by the

Syracuse Central New York Urban Area and paid for with a \$425,000 grant from the Department of Homeland Security.

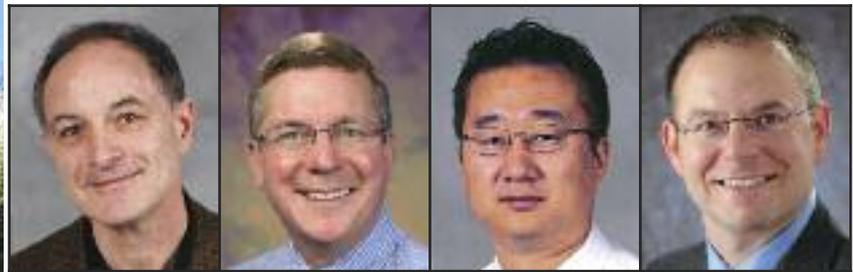
The drill took place simultaneously at the airport, at a Syracuse building slated for demolition and at Upstate University and Crouse hospitals. At the airport, 100 volunteers portrayed victims and family members. Rescuers doused flames from a burning aircraft before turning attention to victims spread out on the tarmac. Ambulances transported victims. At the hospital, staff worked through the challenges of the drill, deciding where and how to care for make-believe patients.

“We challenged people to do things beyond their comfort level. We call it a high stress/low frequency event,” said Syracuse Fire Department Capt. Terry Krom during the debriefing.

Upstate’s Physician Response Team staffs the infirmary at the NYS Fair and provides medical oversight at the Ironman 70.3 Syracuse, the Empire State Marathon and other large events. The team responds primarily within Onondaga County, but can be sent to adjacent counties when needed.

Their truck contains equipment and medications not available on ambulances. Cooney says, “We’re providing services that nobody else can.” ■

Photo: Physician responder Christian Knutsen MD points to a patient-actor at a disaster drill, held last August.



Bariatric surgeons Howard Simon MD, Robert Cooney MD, Taewan Kim MD and Matthew McDonald DO.

BARIATRIC SERVICES EXPAND, RELOCATE

Upstate's Bariatric Surgery Center — recipient of a five-star HealthGrades rating — has relocated to expanded offices on the Community campus to accommodate a significant increase in cases. Surgeons expect to perform more than 500 weight-loss surgeries this year.

Patients will come to the new location at 4900 Broad Road, Syracuse, for pre- and post-operative appointments with physicians, nurse practitioners, dietitians and others. Bariatric procedures, however, will be done at both of Upstate's hospital campuses. Surgical options include laparoscopic adjustable gastric-banding, Roux-en-Y gastric bypass and gastric sleeve resection.

The new location features eight exam rooms, three consult rooms for dietitians and a 4,500 square foot waiting area. The center can accommodate about 40 bariatric patient appointments daily. Some of the space will be shared with Upstate's urology, general surgery and thoracic surgery practices.

Upstate's Bariatric Surgery Center remains the volume leader in Central New York and is honored for its quality outcomes, earning HealthGrades' 2012 and 2011 Bariatric Surgery Excellence Award.

It remains the only center of its kind in the region to have earned accreditation as a Level 1A center by the American College of Surgeons' Bariatric

Surgery Network. This signifies that the hospital's high volume practice can "manage the most challenging and complex patients."

For its 2012 report, "Choosing Bariatric Surgery to Improve Overall Health," HealthGrades analyzed 201,821 bariatric surgery patient records from 478 hospitals in 19 states where the data is publicly available. HealthGrades found patients were 72 percent less likely to experience in-hospital complications and on average spent half a day less at 5-star hospitals than at 1-star hospitals. Upstate has five stars.

"This and other recent accolades confirm Upstate's status as a leader in bariatric surgery," said Howard Simon MD, director of Upstate's Bariatric Surgery Center. "It's a reflection of our talented medical team—surgeons, nurse practitioners, nurses, dietitians, therapists, counselors—and our focus on improving the lives of the patients we see every day."

In addition to causing significant long-term weight loss, bariatric surgery has been shown to reverse common complications of obesity, including type 2 diabetes, sleep apnea, hypertension and hypercholesterolemia. These benefits improve patients' quality of life and overall health, and reduce their risk of heart disease, stroke, and early death. Bariatric surgery may also reduce future healthcare costs. ■

To learn more about bariatric services at Upstate, call at 464-9852 or 1-866-349-4592.



DIVE TEAM PARTNERS WITH HYPERBARIC MEDICINE PHYSICIANS

STAR leader Mark Knowles, left, oversees divers with Upstate's Drs. Monica Morgan, Marvin Heyboer and Shane Jennings.

Upstate physicians board-certified in undersea and hyperbaric medicine provide medical oversight to Jefferson County's dive rescue team.

That means if a rescue diver is injured — as happened during a drill last spring — an Upstate doctor is immediately available for emergency response. The dive team has a portable hyperbaric oxygen chamber, but using it for hyperbaric oxygen treatment requires physician oversight. Depending on the circumstance, the Upstate doctor may respond to the scene by helicopter, or the doctor may ask that the patient be brought to Upstate in Syracuse for treatment.

“In the past, we crossed our fingers a lot,” dive commander Mark Knowles says. Knowles is a physician assistant at Watertown Urgent Care who volunteers as leader of the STAR Team, short for Special Tactics And Rescue.

The team responds to about three calls per week. It comprises nine volunteers, all experienced divers, some from the military and some civilians.

Several of Upstate's on-call physicians are also dive certified. Three attended a STAR Team drill over the summer in Cape Verde including Marvin Heyboer, medical director of Upstate's Hyperbaric and Wound Care Center, Monica Morgan, and Shane Jennings. Jennings is doing a fellowship in Undersea and Hyperbaric Medicine at Upstate, one of fewer than 20 programs in the country. The

hyperbaric medicine physician on call will respond if a team member experiences decompression sickness or any other problem related to a dive. They also plan to provide medical evaluations for members of the dive team.

Heyboer says the physicians are in discussion with the New York State Police to provide the same medical direction to its recovery divers. “Nothing is finalized, but we are participating in their dive exercises and have made ourselves available if they have dive-related issues or emergencies.”

During a STAR Team drill in the spring, a diver ran out of air 60 feet below the surface of Lake Ontario. He had rapid ascent and developed decompression sickness. He was treated at Upstate, has recovered well and has since rejoined the dive team.

That situation showed the need for a partnership between the dive team and Upstate physicians.

Upstate University Hospital already is the hospital of choice for treatment of decompression sickness and other dive related injuries in Upstate New York because it has a hospital-based hyperbaric oxygen chamber available for emergencies around the clock. Most chambers throughout the state are used during business hours and only for scheduled therapy. Heyboer says he is not aware of additional emergency chambers from Albany to Buffalo. ■



FREE HEALTH MAGAZINE EDUCATES PATIENTS

Upstate publishes a magazine about healthy living that is perfect for waiting rooms. “Upstate Health” showcases people and issues important to Central New York.

It contains stories about medical care and wellness, and advice on caregiving, food and leisure activities. There are articles about important work throughout the region and at the Upstate campus. The publication is free to fitness centers, medical offices and businesses that want to offer it to clients and patients.

The editor of “Upstate Health” is Amber Smith, a veteran health journalist who joined Upstate after a 23-year career at Syracuse’s daily newspaper.

People on the magazine’s most recent covers have included pediatric neurosurgeon Zulma Tovar-Spinoza MD, psychologist Richard O’Neill PhD, oncologists Bernie Poiesz MD and Michael Poiesz MD, and emergency medicine doctor Jeremy Joslin MD.

Two ways to subscribe

- Email your name, mailing address and number of copies you would like for your office to whatsup@upstate.edu with “Upstate Health” in the subject line.
- Call Upstate Connect at 1-800-464-8668 and ask to join the mailing list. ■

“APP” PROVIDES EASY ACCESS TO UPSTATE INFO

Some of the most requested information from Upstate’s website is now available for smartphones and tablets via a new mobile web application. The Upstate App – which is free – connects physicians, patients and potential patients who are increasingly accessing information on mobile devices. The Pew Research Center says half of adults in America own a tablet or a smartphone. By 2014, more people are expected to access the Internet on mobile devices than on desktop computers.



Upstate’s app provides:

- one-button access to Upstate Connect, the call center that arranges referrals and registrations and provides health information 24 hours a day;
- quick access to “Find a Doc,” a database of Upstate medical providers that is searchable by name, disease, specialty or treatment;
- directions to both hospital campuses and other outpatient locations;
- the latest issue of “Upstate Health,” the quarterly healthy lifestyle magazine;
- connections to Upstate’s Facebook and Twitter feeds and the YouTube Channel;
- access to the Caring Bridge website;
- a library of “HealthLink on Air” radio interviews; and
- explanations of the “alphabet soup” of letters after some healthcare provider’s names, so patients can better understand who is involved in their care. ■

How to get the app

Download the app at www.upstate.edu/app

Create an app icon by saving it to your phone or tablet’s home screen.

BREAKING GROUND FOR UPSTATE CORD BLOOD BANK

The Upstate Cord Blood Bank— now under construction — will collect, process and store umbilical cord blood for medical treatments and research. A \$15 million state building grant enables Syracuse to have one of only two public cord blood banks in New York. (The other is the National Cord Blood Program in Long Island City, NY.)

Umbilical cord blood — blood that remains in the placenta and umbilical cord after childbirth — is a rich source of hematopoietic stem cells that have the potential of being used to treat dozens of diseases, including cancer and sickle cell.

“The opportunity to bring a public cord blood bank to Upstate New York is significant,” said Upstate President David Smith MD. “Through cord blood donations from families all across our region, we’ll have the ability to save lives through transplantation and further fuel biomedical research that may move us closer to breakthroughs for dozens of diseases. Developing this cord blood bank and making it a community resource speaks to the core of the mission of Upstate Medical University.”

The two-story building will be located on Upstate’s Community campus, 4900 Broad Road, Syracuse. Upstate provides obstetric services on the Community campus, and is home to the Regional Perinatal Center, which offers advanced care to patients throughout Upstate New York.

“Syracuse will have one of only 27 public umbilical cord blood banks in the country,” said Senator John DeFrancisco. “Across the country, cord blood stem cells have been used to treat leukemia, myelodysplastic syndromes, lymphomas, inherited red cell abnormalities and other cancers. Now, doctors in Upstate New York will be able to use the umbilical cord, and its stem cells—that would otherwise be discarded as medical waste—for



Architect's rendering of the Cord Blood Bank, opening in 2014.

valuable life-saving treatments and research.”

New York’s Department of Health plans to develop a program to make expectant mothers and the public more aware of umbilical cord blood banking.

The designation of Upstate Cord Blood Bank as a public blood bank is important in that there is no cost to donate, and donated cord blood is available to anyone who needs it. Once donated, the cord blood will be stored in the bank and made available to transplant centers in the United States and throughout the world for patients needing life-saving transplants. Cord blood units will be listed on the Be The Match registry (marrow.org), which maintains a large listing of cord blood units available for transplant. Units that are not suitable for transplantation will be made available to researchers, at Upstate and around the country.

In contrast to public banks, private banks are for-profit organizations that charge fees and store umbilical cord blood for the exclusive use of the families who make the donations.

Upstate will work with hospitals in the Upstate region to develop guidelines and agreements to enable mothers who deliver in this area to donate their cord blood for free. Cord blood that is not donated is discarded as medical waste.

Upstate officials hope the cord blood bank will receive donations from 10,000 births a year, representing 50 percent of the births in Central New York. The Upstate Cord Blood Bank will begin accepting donations once it opens in fall 2014. ■

NEW FACULTY-PHYSICIANS AT UPSTATE

NEW PEDIATRIC SURGERY CHIEF NAMED

Andreas Meier MD, MEd, a pediatric surgeon with special interest in minimally invasive pediatric surgery, joined Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital as division chief of pediatric surgery and director of the Olivia Louise Pietrafesa Center for Children's Surgery. He also serves as an associate professor of surgery and pediatrics at Upstate Medical University.

His academic interests focus on novel approaches to surgical education, including the use of simulation in surgical curricula and team training.

Meier succeeds Michael Ratner MD, who retired from clinical practice last summer.

Meier comes to Upstate from Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, where he was an associate professor of surgery and pediatrics, chair of pediatric surgery and medical director of the Surgical Skills and Research Laboratory.

He acquired his medical degree from Ludwig Maximilian University School of Medicine in Munich, Germany, and a doctoral degree in medicine from Technical University School of Medicine in Munich, Germany. He completed his residency in general surgery at Stanford University and a fellowship in pediatric surgery at Emory University in Atlanta. Meier also completed research fellowships in surgical oncology and advanced technology in surgery at Stanford University.

Meier has contributed extensively to the scientific literature, writing about surgical specialty techniques for both the pediatric and adult patient.



**Andreas Meier
MD, MEd**

UROLOGY DEPARTMENT ADDS RECONSTRUCTIVE AND FEMALE UROLOGY SPECIALIST

Dmitriy Nikolavsky MD, joined Upstate as a reconstructive urologist and assistant professor of urology. Nikolavsky completed his fellowship at the University of Colorado in reconstructive and female urology and his residency at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Mich.

He completed several rotations in the United States and abroad in trauma and reconstructive urology and complex genitourinary fistula repair.

Nikolavsky received his medical degree from Wayne State University School of Medicine, Detroit, Mich. He specializes in the treatment of urethral stricture diseases, male and female incontinence, pelvic organ prolapse, genito-

urinary fistulas, pelvic mesh complications, and voiding dysfunction. Nikolavsky is a member of the American Urological Association, the Society of Genitourinary Reconstructive Surgeons, and the Society of Urodynamics, Female Pelvic Medicine and Urogenital Reconstruction.

Nikolavsky helps strengthen an already strong urology department at Upstate, which includes Drs. Gennady Bratslavsky (chair), Rakesh Khanna, Zahi Makhuli, Imad Nsouli, Jonathan Riddell, Oleg Shapiro and J.C. Trussell.



**Dmitriy Nikolavsky
MD**

Refer patients to Upstate doctors is by calling MD Direct — available 24 hours — at 464-4842 or 800-544-1605.

EXPERIENCED ANESTHESIOLOGIST LEADS DEPARTMENT

James Foster MBBS, MBA is the new professor and chair of anesthesiology. He cares for adult and pediatric anesthesia patients, and oversees research in anesthesiology.

Foster worked at Women and Children’s Hospital of Buffalo, with privileges at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry. He earned his medical degree at the University of London and completed his residency at the University of Toronto.

“I spent most of the last 19 years doing pediatric anesthesiology,” Foster says. The difference between pediatric and adult? “By and large, adult anesthesia is dealing with the consequences of patients’ lifestyle choices, diseases related to

smoking, drinking and weight. In peds you usually deal with illnesses kids are born with.”

Caring for children sometimes means departing from anesthesiology dogma, Foster adds.

“No one wants to put a child to sleep who has eaten two hours before an operation,” he explains. On the other hand, a child with a seizure disorder needs to take medication before surgery. If the child only takes medication with applesauce, the doctor has to decide how to manage those risks.

Foster says he is delighted to join Upstate because “it’s an institution that’s going somewhere.” ■



James Foster
MBBS, MBA

LEADERSHIP AWARDS TO UPSTATE CAREGIVERS

CANCER CENTER MEDICAL DIRECTOR EARNS NATIONAL AWARD

Leslie Kohman MD received the national State Chair Outstanding Service Award from the American College of Surgeons’ Commission on Cancer. The award recognizes individuals who exhibit outstanding leadership and innovation, and make significant contributions to the improvement of cancer care in their state or region.

“These individuals are experts working to improve the quality of cancer care,” writes the American Cancer Society. “We are well aware of the quality of Dr. Kohman’s work and her dedication to the elimination of cancer as a major health problem, and are delighted that her work has been recognized with this honor.”



Leslie Kohman MD

STATE AWARD GOES TO PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT ANTONINI

Thomas Antonini is New York State’s Physician Assistant of the Year, an honor bestowed by the NYS Society of Physician Assistants.

Known as a gifted problem-solver with a knack for maintaining a friendly and cooperative stance, Antonini works in the Adult Cardiac Surgery Unit of Upstate University Hospital.

“He mentors many people in physician assistant, nurse practitioner, medical residency and fellowship programs,” wrote Eleanor Abel PA, an Upstate colleague.

Antonini graduated from Emory University School of Medicine’s physician assistant program. He also holds an MBA. He is certified in the use of robotics in cardiovascular surgery. ■



Thomas Antonini PA