



## Commencement 2023

The Norton College of Medicine awarded 189 degrees at Commencement 2023 on May 7, which included 164 doctor of medicine and 11 master of public health degrees and three certificates in public health. Six students received MD/MPH degrees, and five students received MD/PhD degrees.

Upstate also awarded an honorary degree to Patrick O. Brown, MD, PhD, a physician-scientist who helped define

the mechanism by which HIV and other retroviruses incorporate their genes into the genomes of the cells they infect. He also founded Impossible Foods to focus on replacing animal agriculture with plant-based foods. Dr. Brown now serves as chief visionary officer of Impossible Foods, Inc., founder and president of the Impossible Foundation, and professor emeritus of biochemistry at Stanford University.



## Cynthia Taub, MD, Named Chair of Department of Medicine

Cynthia C. Taub, MD, MBA, chief of cardiovascular medicine of Dartmouth Health's Heart and Vascular Center at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, professor of medicine at the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth, has been named the Edward C. Reifstein Professor of Medicine and chair of the Department of Medicine at Upstate Medical University, effective August 2023.

"We are pleased to welcome Dr. Taub to Upstate," says Lawrence Chin, dean of the Norton College of Medicine. "Her proven excellence in clinical care, research, and education will be instrumental to advancing our vital missions at the Norton College of Medicine, and her leadership will inspire a new generation of students as they shape the future of healthcare."

As chair of the Department of Medicine, Taub will oversee the largest clinical, research, and education department at Upstate. The 12 divisions that comprise medicine have made advances that help with both common and rare conditions and reach underserved communities across 16 counties in Central New York. The divisions are: general internal medicine; cardiology; dermatology; endocrinology, diabetes and metabolism; gastroenterology; hematology/oncology; hospitalist medicine; infectious disease; nephrology; clinical pharmacology; pulmonary/critical care; and rheumatology.

Taub has served in a variety of leadership positions, including as director of non-invasive cardiology, section head of non-invasive cardiology and cardiovascular imaging, and, most recently, chief of cardiovascular medicine. In addition to Dartmouth, she has held faculty positions at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and the University of Connecticut.

Taub is known internationally for her work in clinical applications of advanced echocardiography technologies, valvular heart disease, heart disease in women, and disparity in healthcare delivery, with more than 110 peer-reviewed manuscripts. A dedicated educator, she has trained more than 100 cardiology fellows and mentored many leaders in cardiology, including echocardiography lab directors and sonographers, over her academic career.

Taub received her medical degree from Beijing Medical University, master's degree in biology from Dartmouth College, and an MBA (healthcare track) from Yale School of Management. She completed clinical cardiology training at Hartford Hospital, University of Connecticut, and an Advanced Echocardiography fellowship from the Massachusetts General Hospital. She is board certified in cardiovascular diseases and holds additional certification in adult comprehensive echocardiography.



Cynthia Taub, MD

## Michel Nasr, MD, Named Chair of the Department of Pathology

Michel Nasr, MD, HS '07, has been named chair of the Department of Pathology, effective June 1, 2023.

"I am proud to welcome Dr. Nasr as chair of the Department of Pathology," says Lawrence Chin, dean of the Norton College of Medicine. "Under his interim leadership, he has set a foundation for expanded services throughout the region, while embracing expanded uses of technology in this rapidly changing field that will benefit our patients, clinicians, students, and residents. I am pleased to have him remain in this important leadership role, now as chair."

The Department of Pathology is the only academic regional pathology laboratory serving the Central New York community. It employs approximately 300 employees, including more than 30 faculty who provide testing, interpretation and consultation services for the hospital and its associated clinics.

Nasr joined Upstate in 2018 as medical director of clinical pathology and genomics, having served previously on the faculty at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada.

He is author of numerous peer-reviewed journal articles, including one on the development and validation of diagnostic assays for detecting SARS-CoV2 in the *Journal of Molecular Diagnostics*, and is coauthor of the widely used book *Lymph Node Pathology for Clinicians* (Springer, 2019).

As interim chair of pathology, Nasr implemented several initiatives, including the establishment of the SPOR laboratory to provide efficient, high-quality histology and digital pathology laboratory services to Upstate researchers, external academic collaborators as well as the private sector (pharma/biotech companies).

Nasr earned his doctor of medicine degree from the Kursk State Medical University, Kursk, Russia, and completed residencies at American University of Beirut Medical Center and Upstate Medical University, and fellowships in hematopathology and molecular genetic pathology at the University of Iowa.



Michel Nasr, MD, HS '07





Robert Gregory, MD

## Innovative Mental Health Program Receives National Award

Upstate Medical University's Psychiatry High Risk Program (PHRP) has received the American Psychiatric Association's Silver Achievement Award.

The Psychiatric Services Achievement Awards recognize creative models of service delivery and innovative programs for people with mental illness or disabilities. The Silver Award, the second highest award, comes with a \$2,000 prize, but what's most important is that the recognition comes at a time when mental health struggles of youth and adolescents are at an all-time high.

Robert Gregory, MD, director of the Psychiatry High Risk Program and director of the Center for Suicide Prevention, says that recent studies reveal startling statistics. A recent study published in the *Journal of American Medical Association* (JAMA), indicated that emergency department visits for suicidality among youth increased five-fold in the last decade. Over the same period of time, the rate of suicide among adolescents climbed 62 percent.

"There is a national crisis of suicide, particularly among youth," Gregory says. "That is why this award

was given to a suicide prevention program instead of other types of psychiatric programs. This award also acknowledges that Upstate is on the cutting-edge of national efforts to prevent suicide, and that other institutions across the country should consider trying to replicate Upstate's innovative Psychiatry High Risk Program model of suicide prevention in their own communities."

Gregory started Upstate's PHRP in 2017 for suicidal youth and young adults, an innovative program focused on transformational healing and recovery, using an evidence-based treatment called dynamic deconstructive psychotherapy, which was also developed at Upstate. The program has served more than 600 individuals and has demonstrated more than a 90-percent reduction in hospitalizations and other outcomes and is the only program of its kind in the country. The PHRP was recently awarded the designation as "a best practice in suicide prevention" by the National Suicide Prevention Resource Center.

## Upstate Receives Top Accreditation for Emergency Care of Older Adults

Upstate Community Hospital's Emergency Department has achieved the gold standard of accreditations for its care of older adults.

Upstate's Geriatric Emergency Medicine Unit (GEM) at Community Hospital earned a Level 1 Designation—the highest possible.

The accreditation comes from The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP), with support from the Gary and Mary West Health Institute and John A. Hartford Foundation. The group recognizes emergency departments that provide excellent care for older adults with its Geriatric Emergency Department Accreditation (GEDA) program.

Jay Brenner, MD, HS '08, medical director of the Community ED and GEM Care Unit, says Upstate is the only hospital in Central New York with a Level 1 accreditation.

"That means this is the destination," he said. "This is where all of us would bring our senior friends and family members to seek care because we know they are getting optimal emergency care. This means that Upstate is recognized as a senior-friendly organization. We are not just compliant, we are committed."

Upstate created GEM Care in 2013 to meet the complex needs of older adults. The unit is a dedicated section of the emergency department at Community Hospital.



### The Upstate Department of Pediatrics held its annual

**Welton M. Gersony Lecture on June 7:** "Kawasaki Disease: Past, Present and Future," presented by Jane Newberger, MD, MPH. Dr. Newberger is professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School and associate chief for academic affairs in the Department of Cardiology at Boston Children's Hospital.

The Welton M. Gersony Lecture is presented annually by the Department of Pediatrics and the Upstate Medical Alumni Foundation, which administers the series, through funding given by Welton M. Gersony, MD '58, who had a career as a pediatric cardiologist in New York City with appointments at Columbia University and Weill Cornell Medical College. He received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Upstate Medical Alumni Foundation in 2008.

**Photo caption:** At dinner the evening before the lecture, Gregory Conners, MD, chair of pediatrics; Linda and Willard Cohen, MD '56; Welton Gersony, MD '58; and Mantosh Dewan, MD, president of Upstate Medical University.



New York Governor Kathy Hochul, center, flanked by Sam and Carol Nappi, cuts the ribbon to officially open the Nappi Wellness Institute.

## Upstate Opens Nappi Wellness Institute

**O**n June 2, 2023, Upstate Medical University held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially open the Nappi Wellness Institute.

The new five-story, 209,615-square-foot building is the centerpiece of Upstate's outpatient care, bringing key ambulatory services under one roof. The innovative floor plan features 240 exam and consult rooms with workstations located to facilitate provider interactions.

The building is named for Sam and Carol Nappi, whose \$8 million gift to the Upstate Foundation is the largest monetary gift in the hospital foundation history.

"The Nappi Wellness Institute is a transformative healthcare facility that we are proud to have as part of our campus," says Upstate Medical University President Mantosh Dewan, MD. "Wellness is indeed its middle name for healing and wellness is reflected throughout the facility, in its design, in its mechanics, in its operations, in the way our health care professionals work, and in the way our patients will be cared for."

The Nappi Wellness Institute houses an array of services, practices, and programs, including adult and pediatric primary care, geriatrics, radiology, laboratory services, behavioral health, family medicine, pediatrics, the Center for International Health, Inclusive Health Services, and the Joslin Center for Diabetes (adults and pediatrics). The building also features several supportive ancillary services and Connect Care to ensure seamless post-acute follow-up for patients.

A key feature of the building will be the expansion of Upstate's Center of Excellence for Alzheimer's Disease, which has its clinical site within Geriatrics. Several clinical services will collaborate to enhance the care to these patients including a cognitive neurologist, additional space for neuropsychological testing, physical therapy and convenient space for families to drop off and pick up patients.

"The Greater Syracuse area has the highest concentration of older adults in New York state, so we are excited to amplify the services we can offer to this expanding population," says SUNY Distinguished Service Professor and Geriatric Medicine Chair Sharon Brangman, MD '81. "We anticipate that we will see patients with dementia and Alzheimer's disease in greater numbers. This facility will ensure that we have the space to care for patients, consult with families and provide us immediate access to other specialists."

In addition to the gift from the Nappis, funding for the \$158 million project came from a \$70.6 million grant as part of the State Department of Health's Capital Restructuring Financing Program and Essential Health Care Provider Support Program. An additional \$70.6 million in matching bonds was issued by New York state.

Upstate broke ground on the project in early 2020.

## Nappi Wellness Center Built for Wellness

**W**ellness isn't just the purview of practitioners at the Nappi Wellness Center; the building itself is defined by wellness.

The facility has been built to WELL Building Standards with design features to address air, comfort, fitness, light, mind, nourishment, water, movement, sound, and community. Once certified, the Nappi Wellness Institute will be the first WELL-certified building in Central New York.

"The goal in pursuing WELL certification for the Nappi Wellness Institute is to create world-class health-care facility that promotes the health of all those it serves and those who work there," says Marylin Galimi, Upstate's chief operating officer.

For instance, lighting was a priority of the design ensuring that enough natural light spills into the workplace; acoustical separations have been installed for greater privacy and for sound absorption in different areas; staircases are bright and more colorful with each landing listing the number of steps; and air and water quality will be tested regularly with access to results through QR codes, among other features.

And when the in-house café opens, healthy food options will be the only items on the menu to meet nutritional benchmarks.

Upstate officials say the wellness aspects of the design shows the institution's commitment to the wellness of both patients and staff.

The building boasts generous public spaces and patient waiting areas, a plaza with gardens and a covered traffic circle for ease of dropping off and picking up patients. Bridges connecting the building to the parking garages and Upstate Cancer Center are major features and provide patients and staff with access to Upstate University Hospital and other campus buildings without having to step outside.

About 75 pieces of art from more than 50 artists decorate the building, adding a sense of calm and well-being that contribute to the healing process.

