

Upstate Medical University Seeks Approval to Acquire Crouse Health

IN APRIL, SUNY UPSTATE Medical University announced its intention to acquire Crouse Health, a plan to bring the two healthcare systems together to enhance care delivery to Central New Yorkers.

The proposed combination includes all of Crouse Hospitals' inpatient and outpatient services, which will be renamed Upstate Crouse Hospital. Crouse Medical Practice will remain intact and will be branded as Upstate Crouse Medical Practice.

The combined entity will have more than 13,000 employees, 1,200 licensed inpatient hospital beds and offer more than 70 specialties. Upstate said the deal is not expected to result in any job cuts and employees at both hospitals will continue to be represented by the same unions.

Crouse, which has 3,200 employees, has been operating in Syracuse for 135 years. It delivers more than 3,800 babies annually, more than any other hospital in the region. It cares for high-risk obstetric patients referred by smaller hospitals throughout the region. It also operates a neonatal intensive care unit.

Upstate Medical University is the region's largest employer with nearly 11,000 employees. Its hospital system is known for specialized services such as burn and trauma care, cancer care, stroke care, and pediatric services provided through the Golisano Children's Hospital.

Upstate is part of the State University of New York. It has 1,600 students studying medicine, nursing and other health professions. Upstate also conducts more than \$40 million in funded research annually.

As neighbors on the University Hill, Upstate and Crouse have long discussed ways to more closely align to improve care for the community and region. During the pandemic, Upstate and Crouse worked collaboratively to meet the challenges created by COVID-19.

"There has been a natural progression in our relationship over the years. Between the two organizations, there are many clinical services that complement each other. Formalizing the relationship with Crouse—and making it a key component of our University Hospital system—would allow these services to flourish," says Robert Corona, DO, CEO of Upstate University Hospital.

"Discussions between Crouse and Upstate have always revolved around creating the best environment possible for patients, medical professionals



Crouse Hospital and Upstate Medical University are longtime neighbors on University Hill.

and dedicated staff," adds Patrick A. Mannion, Crouse Health board chair. "The Board determined that integration with a local partner was the best option for Crouse, and given our history, Upstate was the preferred choice, one that the community will embrace."

Mantosh Dewan, MD, president of Upstate, believes the combined expertise will benefit patient care while preserving jobs and the economic health of the region. "Building upon our combined strengths will be a significant step in shaping the future growth of the region's only academic medical center as we expand educational and training opportunities for the medical professionals of tomorrow," he says. "Moving forward, our exceptional medical staffs will continue to provide great value to our community as we work together to enhance patient care for our region."

Both institutions are currently engaged in obtaining regulatory approvals, including a Certificate of Need from the New York State Department of Health, which is expected to take several months. During this time, the two institutions will remain independent, and their respective focus will continue to be on patients, employees, medical staff, faculty, and students.

Lawrence Chin Named to Administrative Board of AAMC Council of Deans

LAWRENCE CHIN, MD, dean of the Alan and Marlene Norton College of Medicine at Upstate Medical University, has been named to the administrative board of the Council of Deans for the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC).

The Council of Deans (COD) is the only organization of its kind, convening deans of the 172 AAMC member medical schools in the U.S. and Canada to address issues affecting academic medicine and develop strategies to achieve excellence in medical education, research, and patient care.

The 14-member administrative board oversees and manages the affairs of the council. Chin will serve on the board through 2024.



Lawrence Chin, MD

Upstate Students Host Health Justice Conference

Upstate Medical University students hosted the third annual Health Justice Conference, "Avenues for Advocacy: Investing in our Future," held on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The annual conference focuses on ways Upstate students and healthcare professionals can serve as social advocates both personally and professionally.

This year's conference, held virtually due to COVID-19, emphasized ways technology can be utilized for advocacy and innovation,

especially in the context of the pandemic. Keynote speaker Heather Irobunda, MD, an obstetrician-gynecologist practicing at NYC Health and Hospitals shared how social media can allow healthcare providers to put out information in a way that makes it free and more accessible to everyone.

The conference also included a demonstration by Sunny Aslam, MD, associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Upstate, of using online polling to find out what

an audience knows, or thinks it knows, so that information can be tailored to better inform.

This year's conference was co-chaired by medical students Nadia Debick '24, Egypt Vlymen-Williams '25, and Tianfang "Alan" He '24.

Although the event was held virtually, all presentations were done live. "It was crucial to have that live interaction, back and forth," Debick says. "Some great ideas came out of that."



Nadia Debick '24



Egypt Vlymen-Williams '25



Tianfang "Alan" He '24

Stephen Thomas Awarded Liberty Medal

Stephen Thomas, MD, Upstate Medical University professor of medicine, microbiology and immunology and director of the Institute for Global Health and Translational Science, has been recognized with the Liberty Medal—the highest civilian honor awarded by the New York State Senate. The award was given for Dr. Thomas's work related to the COVID pandemic.

The award was announced from the Senate floor by state Senator John Mannion on January 13. "[Dr. Thomas] is at the forefront of critical advancements related to both vaccine development and large-scale testing implementation," Mannion said. "Make no mistake, the work of Dr. Thomas and his team has saved untold millions of lives around the world through safe and effective vaccination. There are not enough words to express our gratitude to him."

Thomas also has become one the nation's leading and most authoritative voices regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, offering his perspective of the pandemic in both local and national media, updating the public on vaccines, masking, treatments, and clinical trials since the pandemic was declared a global outbreak in March 2020.

In November 2020, Thomas was tapped as lead principal investigator for the world-wide Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine trial and Upstate became one of the study's global phase 3 vaccine trial locations. Thomas also led the team coordinating the University's initial response to the pandemic in March 2020.



Stephen Thomas, MD



CARING FOR THE CAREGIVERS.

Upstate's Gold Humanism Society and Alpha Omega Alpha teamed up to sponsor the first Wellness Fair for students on March 11 in the Campus Activities Building. Featuring events including yoga, art therapy, massage, and dog therapy, the Wellness Fair aimed to help students explore what wellness means on a physical, emotional, and mental level, and to leave relaxed and energized to tackle the everyday stresses that come with being a medical trainee.

Upstate Helps Develop Urban Family Medicine Residency

UPSTATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY is partnering with the Syracuse Community Health Center (SCHC) to develop an Urban Family Medicine Residency Program. The new residency program aims to increase the number of primary care providers trained to support the needs of urban patients and to attract diverse residents, especially those from traditionally underrepresented groups.

The SCHC, a state-licensed Diagnostic and Treatment Center serving more than 30,000 patients in the Greater Syracuse area, received a grant from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) that is making the collaborative program possible.

The program will be developed in conjunction with Upstate's Department of Family Medicine and the first class of residents will begin the program in July 2024.

"It is critical that we attract, support, and develop a diverse group of primary care providers that understand the unique needs of urban communities and this program will focus on that challenge," says Mark Hall, president and chief executive officer at Syracuse Community Health Center. "We are extremely grateful for this grant and are very enthusiastic about our

partnership with Upstate Medical University to develop this very unique program."

The development of the program requires creating a comprehensive curriculum focused on urban medicine and obtaining ACGME accreditation.

"SCHC has a proven commitment to providing complex and necessary care for the entire Central New York community, as well as the underserved inner city," says Mantosh Dewan, MD, president of Upstate Medical University. "Upstate's mission is to improve the health of the communities we serve through biomedical research, patient care, and education. This partnership with SCHC will create an excellent training opportunity for family medicine residents and further Upstate's commitment to serve our inner-city community."

Syracuse Community Health Center is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). As a FQHC, it is a non-profit community-based health center dedicated to providing comprehensive primary care, dental, and mental health services to area residents, especially to those who might have limited access to health care.



The Central New York Biotech Accelerator at Upstate Medical University

Upstate's CNYBAC Wins \$625,000 in State Funding

The Central New York Biotech Accelerator (CNYBAC) at Upstate Medical University has been awarded \$625,000 renewal of funding as a NYS Certified Business Incubator.

According to Kathi Durdon, CNYBAC executive director, the funding renewal will continue to support innovation programming including the regional NYSTAR partner events, the NEXT Innovation Conference and Manufacturing Workshop, as well as CNYBAC's Virtual Concept to Commercialization Monthly Series.

Most importantly, the funding supports the highly successful CNYBAC Medical Device Innovation Challenge (MDIC), an intensive mentorship program supporting early-stage innovation, which has graduated 26 teams to date. The funding

also provides stipends to the Innovation Law Center at Syracuse University, whose students perform commercialization research for MDIC teams and due diligence reporting of applications, and will support the purchase of equipment and supplies for CNYBAC client shared use, and for salary support to manage programming.

The CNYBAC, a 52,000-square-foot building, includes state-of-the-art wet labs, shared equipment, a TED-enabled 200-seat theater, and the National Grid Creation Garage with 3D-printing hardware. CNYBAC staff promote matching assistance to Upstate's experts, facilities, and equipment and to an expansive innovation ecosystem including other NYSTAR assets.

It's a Match!

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THREE YEARS, members of the Upstate community were able to gather for a communal Match Day celebration. At noon on March 18, 2022, fourth-year students from Upstate Medical University's Alan and Marlene Norton College of Medicine joined graduating medical students from across the country in learning where they will spend their residency training in their chosen specialty. One hundred percent of the Class of 2022 matched in the process.

AT UPSTATE:

52 percent (78) of students will enter primary care specialties including family medicine, psychiatry, internal medicine, pediatrics, and Ob/Gyn.

47 percent of students will remain in New York state: 12 for preliminary positions and 59 for full residency training.

24 students will remain at Upstate Medical University: seven for preliminary positions and 17 for full residency training.

Three students will be at St. Joseph's Hospital Health, two for transitional years and one for full residency.

Four students matched with the U.S. Armed Forces.





William F. Paolo Jr., MD

William Paolo Named Chair of Emergency Medicine

William F. Paolo Jr., MD, associate professor of emergency medicine and public health and preventative medicine, was named chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine in November. Paolo served as interim chair of Emergency Medicine since March 2021.

"Dr. Paolo is the right leader for this unprecedented time in medicine," said Lawrence S. Chin, MD, dean of the Norton College of Medicine. "He has led this busy department with great aplomb through the challenges of the pandemic. Upstate is fortunate to have his continued leadership at this time."

Paolo joined Upstate as assistant professor in 2009 and became associate professor (with tenure) in 2015. He has numerous peer-reviewed publications and received the President's Teaching Award and Alpha Omega Alpha teacher of the year honor. He has served

as residency program director for emergency medicine since 2012.

Paolo has played an integral role in developing the medical school curriculum at Upstate. He was the designer and director for the Foundations in Clinical Reasoning course for first- and second-year medical students as well as the March into Residency course for fourth-year students. His university service includes membership on the Upstate Graduate Medical Education committee, Residency Administration Committee, and Upstate Trauma Committee, among others.

Paolo earned his medical degree with distinction in infectious disease research from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. He did his residency in Emergency Medicine at NYU/Bellevue from 2005 to 2008 and served as chief resident in 2009.



David Lehmann, MD, PharmD

Onondaga County Medical Society Honors Three From Upstate Community

THE ONONDAGA COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY has honored three members of the Upstate Medical University community with its most significant awards for their efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic.

David Lehmann, MD, PharmD, SUNY Distinguished Service Professor, received the Distinguished Service Award.

Dr. Lehmann, along with Mia Ruiz-Salvador, created Housecalls for the Homeless in 2018. This street medicine program provides basic medical, psychiatric, and addiction care services for men and women experiencing homelessness in Syracuse and Onondaga County, both to those residing at area shelters, and through In My Father's Kitchen, a mobile program providing food and basic necessities for individuals living outdoors. Knowing that the COVID-19 health crisis could quickly spread in shelters and onto the streets, Lehmann prioritized symptom screenings and provided guidance maintaining sterile environments in the shelters, which created a new demand for patient care.

Lehmann's service work is extensive. In 2016, he traveled to Haiti as a member of an International Medical Relief (IMR)

team following the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew that left nearly 176,000 people living in shelters. He also traveled with IMR in 2017 to Puerto Rico, and in 2019 to the Bahamas to provide medical support in the wake of Hurricane Maria, and Dorian, respectively.

Stephen J. Thomas, MD, received the Onondaga County Medical Society's Adeline Fagan MD Physician Service to the Community Award.

Dr. Thomas is the interim chair of microbiology and immunology and director of the Institute for Global and Translational Science at Upstate Medical University. He is also one of the nation's leading and most authoritative voices regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. In November 2020, he was named coordinating principal investigator for the world-wide Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine trial. Over the past five years, Dr. Thomas and his team have significantly

expanded the number of clinical trials Upstate offers aimed at addressing significant and relevant health problems from COVID to sepsis to opioid addiction.

Medical student **Elana Sitnik '24** received the Jerry Hoffman Advocacy Award.

Sitnik was honored in part for her work serving as clinic coordinator for Upstate's mobile vaccine clinic. The mobile vaccine clinics offered COVID-19 vaccines to Syracuse residents who might otherwise have trouble accessing the shot. A team of medical students, mentored by Sunny Aslam, MD, Upstate associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, approached homeless people, visited shelters, and went door-to-door in some of the city's poorest and most vulnerable neighborhoods from May until mid-August.



Stephen J. Thomas, MD



Elana Sitnik '24