

Christopher Morley, PhD, Elected to Board of National Association for Schools and Programs of Public Health

Chris Morley, PhD, chair of the Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine at the Upstate Medical University Norton College of Medicine, has been elected to the board of directors of the Association for Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH), for a three-year term as a member-at-large. Dr. Morley is the first Upstate faculty member to be elected to the nine-person ASPPH Board, which includes representatives from Stony Brook University, the University of California-Davis, Georgia State University, the University of Maryland, and others.

"I am so pleased to welcome Dr. Morley to our board of directors," says Laura Magaña, PhD, MS, ASPPH president and CEO. "His experience, wisdom, and leadership on matters of academic public health will serve our association well."

In addition to Upstate, ASPPH represents 146 schools and programs of public health from across the country and globally, and more than 25,000 academic public health members. The mission of the ASPPH is to "advance academic public health by mobilizing the collective power of our members to drive excellence and innovation in education, research, and practice."

The organization's goals for the coming year include addressing solutions for the critical public health challenges facing society; championing the development of a diverse and exceptional public health workforce; and advancing excellence and innovation in teaching, research, and practice, among others.

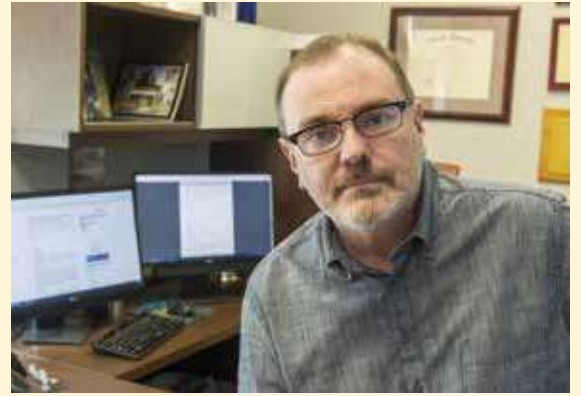
Morley and the Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine took a lead role during the COVID-19 pandemic by monitoring, interpreting,

mapping, and communicating pandemic data in real-time to county, state, and SUNY officials, and to health care providers and the public.

In recognition of this work, Morley and the department were honored in April 2022 for Outstanding Leadership in Public Health in New York State at the annual meeting of the New York State Public Health Association. The award came from that organization, as well as the New York State Association of County Health Officials, the New York State Association for Rural Health, and the New York State Conference on Environmental Health Directors.

Morley is recognized as a leading medical social scientist with principal interests in health disparities, health workforce development and medical education, health communication and cancer prevention, and several other areas, in addition to conducting surveillance of COVID-19 and other respiratory infectious diseases.

In addition to his faculty appointment as a professor of public health and preventive medicine, Morley also holds appointments in family medicine, and in psychiatry and behavioral sciences.



Christopher Morley, PhD



FRATERNAL BONDS. On February 24, 2024, the Tau Chapter of Phi Delta Epsilon was rechartered at the Upstate Medical University Norton College of Medicine, an effort led by founding members Brendan Maloney '26, Bridgette Nixon '26, Dan Mahoney '26, Febronía Mansour '26, and Andrew Williams '26. Phi Delta Epsilon is an inclusive medical fraternity with a mission to develop physicians of integrity who positively impact the world, inspire others to greatness, and lead by example. Originally chartered at the College of Medicine in 1919, the chapter fell inactive and eventually disbanded. In the first three months of its reorganization, members have held two fundraisers, raising money to support the chapter, donating \$1,000 to Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital, and delivering more than 300 CandyGrams Care packages for patients. In addition, the organization hosted a food and clothing drive in collaboration with the pre-medical New York Nu Chapter at Syracuse University and donated collected items to Vera House and the Salvation Army. The current executive board includes Estelle Khairallah '27, Ché White '27, Nyaari Kothiya '27, Estee Wu '27, and Tara Patale '27.

Sherard Tatum Named President of the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery



Sherard Tatum, MD

Sherard Tatum, MD, professor of otolaryngology–head and neck surgery and professor of pediatrics, was installed as president of the 2,200-member American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (AAFPRS) and its Educational and Research Foundation on October 28, 2023.

The Educational and Research Foundation supports education, research, and humanitarian efforts, most notably, Face to Face. The program that provides low-to no-cost surgical procedures to children abroad with facial deformities, domestic violence survivors in the United States, and veterans and active-duty military members who were injured while serving in the United States Armed Forces.

Tatum has been a member of the Upstate faculty for more than 30 years serving on numerous committees,

including the Cancer and Trauma Committees, several chair search committees, the Medical Student Advisor Program, and as a scientific reviewer for the Institutional Review Board. He has been included on many top doctor lists through the years, including Best Doctors in America, America's Best Physicians, and America's Top Plastic Surgeons, among others.

He earned his medical degree from the University of South Florida in 1985 and did postgraduate training in general surgery and otolaryngology at Eastern Virginia Medical School; craniomaxillofacial surgery at University of Eppendorf, Hamburg, Germany; and facial plastic and reconstructive surgery at University of California-Davis Medical Center.

Medical Student Nneka Onwumere '25 Receives New York Senate Commendation

Nneka Onwumere, a third-year student in the Norton College of Medicine, has been awarded a New York Senate Commendation by State Sen. Rachel May in recognition of Onwumere's organization of the area's first brain cancer research walk.

The Central New York Walk for Brain Cancer Research at Upstate was first held May 8, 2022, and again on May 21, 2023. Money raised by the walk benefits Debbie's Brain Cancer Research Fund within the Upstate Foundation.

May recognized Onwumere for coordinating the walk while juggling the demanding requirements of being a medical student. "When someone can do remarkable volunteer intervention in the community, that is pretty incredible," May said. "We are here to recognize her for being who she is, and for being able to raise awareness of brain cancer and the need for more research in this area."

Onwumere held the inaugural walk on Mother's Day in tribute to her mother, Elsweta Gordon, who helped spark her interest in the field of neurology and whose health issues solidified her resolve to become a doctor.



Upstate medical student Nneka Onwumere '25 receives a New York Senate Commendation for her brain cancer advocacy work. Flanking her are State Sen. Rachel May and Upstate President Mantosh Dewan, MD.

"My mother's experience reminded me of what I could be," Onwumere says. "It reminded me of what I should be trying to do. It reminded me that I could possibly make a difference instead of giving up. I am very grateful Upstate gave me a chance."

Medical Students Lead Efforts for Accessible Emergency Contraception

SUNY Upstate Medical University became the first campus in the SUNY system to provide an on-campus access point for birth control with an emergency contraceptive vending machine. Installation of the vending machine on campus, which is located on the first floor of Upstate's Health Sciences Library, was spearheaded by third-year medical students Serena Schmitt and Olivia Preston.

Schmitt and Preston worked with the New York Birth Control Access Project (NYBCAP), a nonprofit organization that works to combat disparities in contraceptive access. The vending machine carries boxes of My Way, a 1.5 mg levonorgestrel tablet, along with pregnancy tests, acetaminophen, Advil, and Benadryl. The vending machine also includes QR codes that link to Upstate's student health portal and information about emergency contraception from the World Health Organization.

The vending machine sells the emergency contraceptive for \$10, much lower than the \$30 to \$60 average cost at a pharmacy. "We believe that this is an equity issue because price and affordability can be a barrier to access to contraception," said Rochelle Rodney, the co-director of the New York Birth Control Access Project.

To bring the vending machines to Upstate, Schmitt and Preston joined the associate board at NYBCAP in 2022, where they learned how to implement the project. From there, they proposed the project to Upstate administration and collected more than 200 signatures from students to demonstrate interest.

"When we started getting signatures of support from our peers, it became clear this was a service that students at SUNY Upstate wanted," Preston says. "This project is a great way to not only increase access on



campus to emergency contraception, but also to help normalize talking about reproductive health."

The vending machine was soft-launched in December 2023 and officially opened at a ribbon-cutting ceremony on January 18, 2024. Schmitt hopes that Upstate can serve as an example for other SUNY schools across the state to implement emergency contraceptive vending machines in the future.

"We're the first SUNY school to do this," she says. "Hopefully, more SUNY schools will follow suit and we'll take the lead and show them how we did it and how they can do it too."

Medical students Serena Schmitt '25 and Olivia Preston '25 cut the ribbon celebrating the opening of the new campus contraceptive machine.



JANICE P. NIMURA, author of *The Doctors Blackwell*, a finalist for the 2022 Pulitzer Prize in biography, visited Upstate Medical University on February 7, 2024, for Elizabeth Blackwell Day, which commemorates the anniversary of Blackwell earning her medical degree from what is now Upstate Medical University. "She really believed that by proving to the public what a woman could do, she would help to change the way women felt about themselves and thereby unleash the potential of women and raise humanity to a new level," said Nimura of Elizabeth Blackwell, MD, in her public lecture. Nimura signed books following the lecture.



Upstate medical students Abha Japi '26 and Katie Farkouh '25 had their poems published in the most recent volume of *The Healing Muse*, selected out of more than 1,000 submissions worldwide.



BANNERS depicting notable women physicians were installed on the light poles throughout the Weiskotten Hall courtyard as Upstate celebrates 2024 as the 175th anniversary of Elizabeth Blackwell's graduation from medical school and Upstate becoming the first coed medical school in the country.

Healing Muse Publishes 23rd Edition

The 23rd edition of Upstate Medical University's journal of literary and visual arts, *The Healing Muse*, features the work of Upstate physician Jaclyn Siskind, MD '09, HS '12, and Upstate medical students Abha Japi '26 and Katie Farkouh '25, selected out of more than 1,000 submissions from around the globe.

Published by Upstate's Center for Bioethics and Humanities, *The Healing Muse* features fiction, poetry, narratives, essays, memoirs, and visual art, typically focused on themes of medicine, illness, disability, and healing.

"My goal is to provide a space for quiet reflection," says editor Deirdre Neilen, PhD, associate professor of bioethics and humanities. "That's what writing does for the writer. And then that's what writing does for the reader."

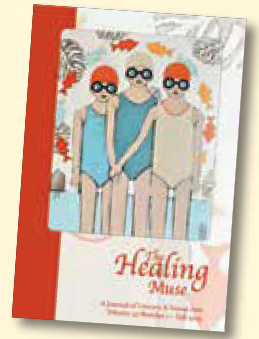
Both Dr. Siskind, a pediatrician, and Japi, a second-year medical student, are the recipients of Dearing Writing Awards, a competition open to all Upstate students and employees. Siskind won for her poem "Apart" and Japi won for her poem "We'll Laugh Until Our Ribs Get Tough."

Japi grew up as an avid reader who always kept a journal and did both creative writing and journalism in high school. Now her goal is to combine literature and writing with medicine.

Farkouh, who had her poem "Ego" published in this year's edition, also journals regularly to help deal with the stress of medical school. The poem is her first published piece.

"It is absolutely crucial to find time to pursue your hobbies during medical school," she said. "While we all love medicine, we need a balance in our lives, so must be intentional about making time to explore other hobbies and outlets."

To purchase a copy of *The Healing Muse* go to: thehealingmuse.org.



Students Gain Specialty Advice at Career Advisory Dinner

More than 75 first- and second-year medical students had the opportunity to network with faculty members and Central New York physicians representing a full array of medical specialties at the annual Career Advisory Dinner, sponsored by the Upstate Medical Alumni Foundation on January 8, 2024.

Over a casual meal held in the New Academic Building, students were able to rotate among tables representing different specialties to speak with physicians practicing in those fields. Forty-two physicians volunteered to participate in the event, sharing their experience and career advice regarding their respective specialties.

“Our students are very appreciative to have the opportunity for direct interaction with physicians practicing in fields they are interested in outside of an academic or shadowing environment,” says Paul Norcross, executive director of the Upstate Medical Alumni Foundation. “We are thankful to our alumni and faculty who volunteer their time to help guide our students.”

To learn more, visit medalumni.upstate.edu/career-mentor.

