The holiday season got off to a good start for us. At the annual Upstate Gala in December, the success of the Children’s Hospital Campaign was celebrated in a big way. Tom Golisano, the well-known philanthropist with a great interest in children and in health care, announced his $6 million gift to the campaign, and made a “down payment” on it. It was this incredibly generous gift which put our campaign well over the top.

As you read this, the construction diagrams are out for bidding. Construction should be underway later this year.

While the Children’s Hospital, with the associated expansion of the rest of the hospital, is the major construction project on tap for the coming years, there are actually more. Construction has already begun on the Setnor Academic Building. This five-story structure will provide state-of-the-art teaching facilities for our medical students and residents. We are also in the early stages of planning for a new ambulatory building. This facility, which will house all of Upstate’s outpatient activity, will be located across the street from University Hospital. If all goes well, construction should be starting on this building as we are winding down construction of the Children’s Hospital.

As always, however, we are not standing still awaiting construction. The department continues to grow, and add to its services for children. Several of these are featured in this edition of KidStuff.
The Center also conducts a robust program of clinical trials which contribute significantly to the treatment, management and long-term care of children living with HIV. The Center provides comprehensive care which includes clinical management of HIV, case management, developmental testing, mental health assessment, medication adherence and nutritional counseling. The Center also facilitates the transition to adult HIV care.

The Pediatric Designated Aids Care Center team works to help their young patients with as normal life as possible while coping with chronic illness. Events such as family zoo day at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo in Syracuse, a holiday party and involvement in summer camp assists families and patients in creating a social support network.

The Pediatric Designated Aids Care Center team includes three pediatric HIV specialists, two pediatric nurse practitioners, social worker, dietician, family therapist, a developmental psychologist, data managers, and a project administrator. An adult HIV specialist is also available to provide support and to work with adolescent patients as needed.

In 2003 the Pediatric Designated Aids Care Center received a $1.2 million dollar grant from the Aids Institute of the New York State Department of Health. Along with this award, the Center received the designation of “Center of Excellence in Pediatric and Adolescent HIV Care”. This five-year award allowed us to further expand our services in the area of developmental psychological testing, family therapy, nutritional services and transition to adult HIV care. Furthermore, and of great importance, this grant allows the Center to strengthen its links with community resources thus leading to improved use of programs that meet the daily needs of patients and families. The grant also provided for a new expanded facility within University Hospital designed for the Center’s adolescent patients. Improved communication with local and regional obstetrical and perinatal care providers have been strengthened as a result of this program.

The Pediatric Designated Aids Care Center Team provides 24-hour pediatric HIV physician coverage, outreach educational programs and coordination of the multidisciplinary provider teams necessary for the continuum of care for these complex patients.

To speak directly to a pediatric HIV specialist or to refer a patient, call 315-464-6331. Patients can also be referred to the Pediatric Designated Aids Center by contacting MD Direct at 800-544-1605 or 315-464-4842.

New Referral Service

For some time, we have heard from referring physicians that some type of electronic system for non-urgent medical questions would be a big time saver. We have been working on this for several months, and are about to roll out a very innovative program.

Basically, this will be a web-based system to which referring physicians can link from the Children’s Hospital website. After initial registration, they will be assigned a username and password; this is to assure that the system is used only by health professionals, and not the general public. Once in the system, users can type in questions of a non-urgent nature. The questions are reviewed and triaged in the department offices, and sent on to the most appropriate faculty member for response. Our goal will be to respond within one working day.

At this point, the system is in a testing phase, to be sure that we have all the bugs out before it goes live. We hope to have it fully implemented within a few months.

Growth in Neurodevelopmental Program

Our program in developmental pediatrics will have new leadership this summer, with this will come a new focus which should be very welcome in the community. Greg Lippek, MD will be joining us from the University of Rochester as director of the division of neurodevelopmental pediatrics. Greg is a nationally known figure in the field of child development, and has a particular interest in autism.

One of Greg’s tasks upon coming to Syracuse will be to work with a number of existing providers to coordinate and enhance services for children with autism in our region. Syracuse already has a number of programs and specialists with expertise in this disorder. Some of these are already at Upstate, while others are at Syracuse University, the Developmental Evaluation Center, and other venues. With Greg’s leadership, we hope to make Syracuse a model community for the care it provides to these children and their families.

Faculty Recognitions

Ann Botash MD, director of our CARE (Child Abuse Referral and Evaluation) program, has been elected to two prestigious national organizations the American Pediatric Society and the Society for Pediatric Research. These Societies accepted Ann into membership on their basis of her long-standing national reputation in the field of child abuse. Ann will be inducted into both societies at their annual meetings in San Francisco this spring.

Victoria Meguid MD was recently selected as a member of the Helfer Society. This is another selective society which recognizes contributions to the field of child abuse.

Once we do, a more complete article in KidStuff will describe the system and how it can be accessed.