



Gary Johnson, MD

### Gary Johnson, MD, named Chair of Emergency Medicine

**G**ary Johnson, MD, interim chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine since October, was appointed to the permanent position as of January 1. He succeeds John McCabe, MD '79, who accepted the position of CEO of University Hospital and senior vice president for Hospital Affairs.

As chairman of the Department of Emergency Medicine, Dr. Johnson leads the emergency room at Upstate University Hospital, one of the area's busiest, receiving about 56,000 visits annually.

Johnson has been a member of the university's emergency medicine faculty since 1990, after completing a residency in emergency medicine at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. He has authored numerous publications, and has served on the New York ACEP's (American College of Emergency Physicians) Board of Directors and serves on numerous Upstate and statewide committees.

### Upstate Partnership to Aid North Country Education Efforts

**I**n late January, Upstate Medical University became the third partner institution in Jefferson Community College's Higher Education Center initiative, which aims to provide increased access to bachelors, masters and professional certifications for residents in New York State's North Country region. The partnership with Upstate will help meet workforce needs in the healthcare field as well as provide several in-demand educational opportunities for current healthcare professionals in the region.

"Dr. Smith and Upstate Medical University have long been supporters of the higher education center concept," said Carole A. McCoy, president of Jefferson Community College. "They recognized the critical shortage of nurses, physicians and other healthcare professionals in the Jefferson County area and the need for advanced education programs for those currently working in the field."

Initially, Upstate will offer four programs on JCC's campus in Watertown: a master of science degree in family health nurse practitioner, a master of science degree in family mental health nurse practitioner, a bachelor of science degree in respiratory therapy, and a bachelor of science degree in medical technology. Classes for both master's programs began in the fall 2009 semester and enrollment continues for Summer and Fall 2010 start dates.

The partnership between Jefferson and Upstate Medical University will have a direct impact on the North Country medical community's ability to serve the needs of the region. A comprehensive needs assessment undertaken by the Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization (FDRHPO) identified that the single greatest limiting factor in the delivery of quality healthcare is a critical shortage of health care professionals and a lack of educational pathways to support local workers in health occupations.

"The link between our two campuses is not new," says Upstate President David R. Smith, MD. "For years, Jefferson students have been among our very best recruits. This agreement allows us to expand that relationship in ways that help the region and support the healthcare needs of the next



**Career Advisory Network Dinner.** In January, the Medical Alumni Association sponsored two Career Advisory Networking Dinners for second- and third-year medical students, providing an opportunity for them to learn more about the career paths they are interested in pursuing from faculty, staff and alumni. The dinners were held in Syracuse and on the Binghamton campus. Pictured clockwise from the bottom left at the Binghamton dinner are: Daniel Sperry, '11, Joseph Morgan, '11, Stephen Gomez, MD, and Natalie Roney, MD '04

generation. We are very proud to ‘co-brand’ our campuses and look forward to a long and productive relationship with Jefferson Community College.”

Upstate continues to work with many partners in the Watertown, Fort Drum, and North Country region to establish a full branch campus for its College of Medicine. While a medical school branch campus would oversee students in the region’s healthcare facilities, the Higher Education Center will provide a home for student and administrative support resources.

### Upstate Unveils New Bone and Joint Center

In February, Upstate unveiled the new 92,000-square-foot Upstate Bone and Joint Center. Located on Fly Road in East Syracuse, the \$19.2-million facility accommodates a complete range of orthopedic services for patients and houses the SUNY Upstate Department of Orthopedic Surgery, as well as physical therapy and pain management services. A highlight of the facility is a state-of-the-art 6,000-square-foot conference and training center.



The new state-of-the-art Upstate Bone and Joint Center

### New System Increases Heart Attack Positive Outcomes

University Hospital has purchased the LIFENET System, the first web-based system that reduces treatment time for patients who experience a dangerous form of heart attack known as STEMI (ST elevation myocardial infarction).



### CELEBRATING SARAH LOGUEN FRASER DAY

Upstate Medical University celebrated its sixth annual Sarah Loguen Fraser Day in February, honoring one of the nation’s first African-American women physicians, and an 1876 graduate of the Geneva College of Medicine (a precursor to Upstate). A variety of events were planned for the day, including the Sarah Loguen Fraser, MD, 1876 scholarship presentation. Pictured above are Nakeia Chambers, Upstate Director of Multicultural Resources, 2009 scholarship recipient Farah Daccueil ’12, and Bruce Simmons, MD ’79.

STEMI poses a serious threat to the heart muscle. The quicker patients receive treatment, the more likely they are to have a positive outcome.

Studies show that the time from onset of symptoms to treatment—usually stent placement or angioplasty—is critical to improving survival and outcomes for these patients. Having this new system will enable University Hospital to better meet the guideline of treatment in 90 minutes or less, as recommended by the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology.

The LIFENET System goes beyond just transmitting a 12-lead ECG to the hospital. It helps manage care for STEMI patients by alerting care teams and transmitting diagnostic-quality ECGs via a secure web-based STEMI alert system to everyone involved in the patient’s care. University Hospital personnel can prepare for the patient’s arrival while the patient is being transported so door-to-ballon (D2B) time is reduced and heart muscle can be saved. (D2B is the amount of time between a heart attack patient’s arrival at the hospital to the time he or she receives percutaneous coronary intervention, such as angioplasty.)

The *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* (2006) reported that mortality for acute cardiac events has been shown to increase 40 percent if D2B time stretches from 90 minutes to 120 minutes.

## Upstate Observes 25th Elizabeth Blackwell Day Celebration



N. Lynn Eckhert, MD, MPH, DrPH

The Upstate community celebrated its 25th observation of Elizabeth Blackwell Day with a lecture on global health priorities and a dramatic presentation of the life of Elizabeth Blackwell.

On February 9, N. Lynn Eckhert, MD, MPH, DrPH, president of the Association of American Medical Colleges and director of academic programs at Harvard Medical International, presented “Global Health: Progress, Priorities and Pitfalls.” Dr. Eckhert’s talk addressed changing trends in global health and its impact on U.S. academic health centers in improving health

around the world.

Dr. Eckhert is also a playwright, and on the following day, her play, *A Lady Alone, Elizabeth Blackwell: First American Woman Doctor* was performed by actress Linda Gray Kelley.



Actress Linda Gray Kelley portrays Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell in a dramatic performance that was part of the Elizabeth Blackwell Day observance.



**Medical Alumni Book Distribution.** Thanks to the generosity of our alumni, the Upstate Medical Alumni Foundation was able to provide each of our MSII students with a copy of the *First Aid for the USMLE Step 1* book this past January. Pictured from left to right are Sam Richter '12, Zac Williamson '12, Kasandra Scales '12, and Medical Alumni Foundation Executive Director Vince Kuss.

## Upstate Joins Network to Create Healthcare Reimbursement Database

Upstate Medical University is one of four New York academic institutions forming a research network to create and develop a new healthcare database for consumer reimbursement and a website for consumers to compare prices before they choose doctors.

The research network will be spearheaded by FAIR Health Inc., a new not-for-profit company headquartered at Syracuse University, and SUNY Buffalo, Cornell University, the University of Rochester and Upstate.

“FAIR Health and the research network headquartered at Syracuse University will bring much needed transparency, accountability, and fairness to a broken consumer reimbursement system we have called Code Blue,” said Attorney General



Andrew M. Cuomo. “By spending almost \$100 million in settlement proceeds from health insurers, this initiative will create new jobs and contribute to the development of the upstate economy that is vital to New York.”

“We are pleased to participate in this collaborative research project,” says Upstate Medical University President David R. Smith, MD. “The accurate processing and analysis of health claims data is extremely important within the healthcare industry.”

The creation of FAIR Health arises from a wide-ranging investigation by Cuomo’s office into how the health insurance industry reimburses consumers for out-of-network health care charges. The investigation uncovered a fraudulent and conflict of interest ridden reimbursement system affecting millions of patients and their families.

## Upstate Becomes Test Site for Lumbar Spinal Stenosis Device

Upstate Medical University researchers are participating in an FDA approved, multi-site clinical trial to test the safety and effectiveness of an implantable device to treat moderate lumbar spinal stenosis. The FDA will evaluate the data collected from this study to determine whether the device—the Superior Interspinous Spacer (ISS)—should be made commercially available in the United States.

Upstate’s study is being conducted by principal investigator Richard A. Tallarico, MD ’00, and co-investigators William F. Lavelle, MD, and Mike H. Sun, MD, of Upstate’s Department of Orthopedic Surgery.

“Superior ISS is a potential alternative to traditional spinal surgery and has been designed to relieve leg, buttock, and groin pain resulting from pressure on the spinal nerve roots that can develop from walking or standing for long periods,” says Dr. Tallarico.

The Superior ISS is limited to investigational use within the United States. It belongs to a new category of treatments designed to relieve pressure on the compressed nerve roots while preserving the patient’s anatomy and ability to maintain motion. The clinical trial will compare the effectiveness of Superior ISS to the X-STOP Interspinous Process Distraction Device, an FDA-approved interspinous spacer that is implanted in a slightly different manner. “We are investigating whether Superior ISS may offer a minimally invasive alternative to spinal decompression surgery for some patients,” says Tallarico.

## Medical Admissions Workshops Offered

The Upstate Medical University Office of Admissions will offer an interactive workshop for “friends” of Upstate, children of alumni, employees, and other supporters. The day-long workshop will be held on **Monday, May 24**, and will provide advice on topics ranging from the application, to the interview, and even what to



Richard A. Tallarico, MD ’00

wear. Participants will be able to practice mock interviews with Upstate faculty and staff.

While there is no fee for the workshop, those interested must register by May 17 by calling the admissions office at 315 464-4570, or online at [www.upstate.edu/com/admissions/friends\\_reg.php](http://www.upstate.edu/com/admissions/friends_reg.php).

Information sessions for high school students considering a career as a doctor will be held in several locations throughout Central New York in April. No registration is required.

- **April 7, 6:30 to 7:30 pm** - NOPL - North Syracuse Public Library
- **April 8, 6:30 to 7:30 pm** - OASIS at Shoppingtown Mall
- **April 13, 6:30 to 7:30 pm** - Baldwinsville Public Library
- **April 28, 6:30 to 7:30 pm** - Solvay Public Library
- **April 29, 6:30 to 7:30 pm** - SUNY Upstate Medical University, Weiskotten Hall, Medical Alumni Auditorium, 766 Irving Ave.

## Upstate Establishes Industry Relationship Policy

Upstate Medical University has adopted a new policy that establishes guidelines for university employees and students in their relationships with pharmaceutical, medical device, and biotechnology industries.

“The Policy on Relations with the Pharmaceutical, Medical Device and Biotechnology Industries” covers almost all aspects of industry relations with university personnel, from purchasing decisions and speaking engagements to continuing medical education and research sponsorship.

Under the new policy, Gregory L. Eastwood, MD, professor of bioethics and humanities, will serve as Upstate’s Conflict of Interest Officer. Eastwood said the policy builds on current laws and policies governing public employees, but provides even greater transparency in key areas of the university’s operations.

One example is the requirement that all individuals teaching at Upstate must disclose to students any relations they have with the pharmaceutical, medical device, or biotechnology industries at the beginning of a course.

The new policy also restricts Upstate employees and students from accepting “giveaways and gifts” from industry representatives, including notepads, pens, stethoscopes, textbooks, food, conference fees, or any other hospitality. The policy prohibits researchers from taking gifts from research sponsors and puts tighter controls on what industry can support at continuing education events.

The policy was developed by a group of faculty, staff, and students across Upstate Medical University under the direction of Kathy Faber-Langendoen, MD, director of Upstate’s Center for Bioethics and Humanities.



### COLLEGE OF MEDICINE PHONATHON A GREAT SUCCESS!

Thank you to all of our donors who answered their phones during our annual College of Medicine Phonathon. Upstate medical students worked diligently making calls to our alumni helping to raise funds to increase scholarship awards. As a result of those phone calls, students engaged in wonderful conversations with alumni of all ages.