

# Education

SUNY Upstate's three clinically-oriented Colleges (Medicine, Nursing and Health Professions) have each seen a more than 50% rise in applications over the past five years.

Many of our students are interested in improving access to health care and pursue their clinical experience in underserved areas.

SUNY Upstate's Rural Medical Education program (RMED) is one of the longest-established programs of its kind. For 20 years, RMED has allowed students to live and learn in small communities by working side-by-side with local, board-certified physicians.

Dr. John Wight (below), serves as a preceptor in Vernon, NY. Following residency, several former RMED students have returned to join Dr. Wight's practice.

Access to education is a measure of a community's well being. Consider the value of a university that offers affordable education to its citizens, provides its graduates with well paying careers that directly influence health, and then nurtures these professionals with continuing education and support.

As the only academic medical university for one-third of our state, SUNY Upstate does just that, and is poised to do more. We are in a unique position to offer both high quality health care *and* educational opportunities to Central New York's 1.8 million citizens—and beyond. We have real answers to the looming questions regarding doctor shortages, access to services, and drawing professionals to our region.

At SUNY Upstate, we have a vision for the growth of our educational programs — many of which are underway now. Our vision is to become the national leader in a new model of distributed medical education. The approach of “we will build it and they will come” is not relevant for our citizens who need healthcare practitioners in their own backyards, and for professionals who need their skills refreshed where they live and serve. We plan to expand our student body by 30% as well as increase the number of sites at which we offer education. Our state faces critical medical shortages at a time when young professionals are leaving the region in dramatic numbers. SUNY Upstate offers hope: we will bring more students here for education and keep them in Central and Upstate New York for rewarding health and medical careers.

We have strong pathways with colleges in New York State for students who wish to pursue education via our early assurance, 2+2, and 3+3 programs. Through our College of Graduate Studies we offer an undergraduate research experience for college juniors interested in biomedical research and a new lecture series for campuses in the Northeast. Last year, SUNY Upstate affirmed a commitment to recruit a greater percentage of its students from New York in response to health care needs of the state.



Across all four of our colleges, SUNY Upstate attracts particularly dedicated students. Attrition rates for students in our Health Professions programs are among the lowest in the state. Our PhD students enjoy greater-than-average access to principal investigators, and of our nursing master's students well over 90% stay on track for their degree, despite the fact that the vast majority work full time.

## Supplying the Health Care Work Force

Each degree program offered by SUNY Upstate's Colleges of Medicine, Nursing and Health Professions is aimed at meeting the health care needs of our region. Each student incorporates a high degree clinical experience into his or her education, and for some careers we have among the longest-established programs in the state. Innovative programs include a greater use of simulated patient experiences – including one of the newest clinical skills labs in the country. Our alumni essentially enjoy 100% employment, and, thanks to Upstate's excellent reputation among employers, most students receive several job offers before graduation. The majority of our health care graduates stay in New York state:

- College of Medicine: 2,566 graduates in NY State;
- College of Health Professions: 2,101 graduates in NY State;
- College of Nursing: 1,390 graduates in NY State.

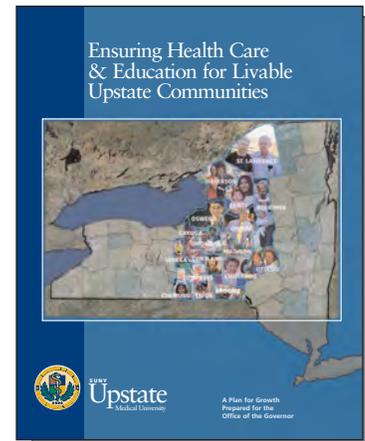
As a professional university, we know where our graduates are and who they serve. Our support for doctors, nurses and other alumni does not end at graduation. This connection is especially important in smaller communities – it protects practitioners from isolation and brings new methods, technology and ongoing access to instruction. In addition, we draw on our alumni network for our students' clinical experience. These encounters are beneficial for both students and their preceptors – and often lead to jobs for the students and professional connections for their hosts.

## Being Part of the Solution

Implementation of our strategic plan related to student growth is in two stages. The first stage focuses on critical faculty growth and on two buildings that will accommodate new students, teachers and researchers. The second phase addresses additional capital projects for our Binghamton campus, our main Health Professions and Nursing teaching sites, and to create new student housing.

We feel there is no better time to invest in this vision:

- The supply of doctors is dwindling in Upstate communities;



**“Health Care & Education For Livable Upstate Communities” reiterated SUNY Upstate’s commitment to expand its student body by 30%, and detailed the investment needed in faculty and facilities to achieve this goal. SUNY Upstate has been acknowledged to be a highly efficient educator, and while applications have been increasing dramatically, there are upper class size limits based on our current infrastructure.**



**The Branch Campus partnership plan was prepared in May 2009 in concert with the Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization, which is preparing a grant request on behalf of SUNY Upstate to explore this prospect.**

We are committed to helping every promising student achieve their greatest opportunity for success. We were the first medical school in the state to launch a C-STEP program to create mentorship in medical school for underrepresented and economically disadvantaged students.

We launched a Medical Scholars program that allows promising students from disadvantaged backgrounds to prepare for medical school through an advanced Master's degree route at the College of Health Professions. Medical Scholars credit the program's support—both in curriculum and encouragement—for their success.

We are committed to creating new pathways for students to study close to home, in hope that they will be able to begin their careers in their hometown or in underserved communities.

- There is an equally urgent need to supply nurses and other healthcare practitioners for our aging and underserved populations;
- The AAMC has issued a plea for medical schools to expand class size;
- One-third of the doctors in our state are over age 55;
- More than three-quarters of the counties in our region are designated as Health Professional Shortage areas.

SUNY Upstate have the drive, the core talent, and the inspiration to grow. We are among the 50% of medical schools who are responding to the need to prepare more doctors. We also expanded upon this charge and have developed new programs to meet critical shortages:

- Registered Nurse First Assistant program to prepare RNs to assist surgeons before, during and after surgery (2007). Nurses in this role can assist with many procedures that would otherwise require two surgeons, a boon for small community hospitals;
- Nursing master's degree in Family Psychiatric Mental Health (2008) which addresses a current provider shortage crisis;
- Physician Assistant master's degree program (2009) with an emphasis on rural and underserved populations in the Southern Tier and Northern New York;
- Central New York Master's of Public Health (2009) which is offered in partnership with our College of Medicine and Syracuse University and is designed for both clinicians and those who seek to enter the field.

From its main campus in Syracuse, SUNY Upstate is committed to its bringing its special training to communities in the North Country and Southern Tier, as we believe the best care is delivered by well-educated clinicians close to home.

To continue to meet regional needs, we will:

- Build on the success that is our Binghamton Campus. Currently 80 third- and fourth-year medical students gain clinical experience there. Part of our long-range goal is to revive the long-abandoned historical "Binghamton Castle" as a home for our teaching there.
- Develop a branch campus in the North Country to address local needs and to supplement the fine foundation laid there by the region's hospitals and Fort Drum.

