

# CMO REPORT

FROM THE DESK OF

Amy Tucker, MD, MHCM, Chief Medical Officer, Upstate University Hospital  
Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs, College of Medicine

UPSTATE  
UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

December 23, 2021

## COVID Update

| # Positive | # ICU | # Vent |
|------------|-------|--------|
| 52         | 19    | 7      |

## Holiday Message

From Amy Tucker



As 2021 draws to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to each of you for what you do every day on behalf of our patients and of Upstate. The past 2 years have been ones of unprecedented hardship in healthcare, and daily I have been humbled by the dedication and stamina I have seen from our medical staff. Here's wishing each of you a safe and joyful holiday season and a brighter 2022.

## Limitations on Elective Surgery based on Governor's Directive

The New York State Department of Health (DOH) has issued guidance in accordance with the declaration of emergency that Governor Kathy Hochul issued earlier this month (which will be reassessed on January 15). Per the DOH guidance, facilities will be required to limit non-essential elective procedures in regions DOH identifies as high-risk due to hospital capacity restraints. The regions currently identified as high-risk are the Capital Region, Central New York, Finger Lakes, Mohawk Valley, North Country, and Western New York.

A region is considered "high-risk" if:

- The overall acute care occupancy rate is 90% or higher based on the previous seven-day average *or*
- The overall acute care occupancy rate is 85% - 90% *and* the new COVID-19 hospital admission rate is greater than 4.0 per 100,000 population, both based on the average of the previous seven days

A hospital will be considered an "impacted facility" if it is located within a high-risk region and has occupancy of  $\geq 90\%$  based on the average of the previous seven days. Impacted facilities will be required to suspend all non-essential elective inpatient and outpatient procedures completed within the hospital (defined as locations with inpatient beds). Such facilities will not be required to suspend electives performed in a hospital-based ambulatory surgery center. However, any impacted hospital with  $\geq 95\%$  occupancy (versus 90%) will be required to suspend not only in-hospital electives but also elective hospital-based ambulatory surgeries. Upstate has been identified as an impacted hospital with  $\geq 95\%$  occupancy, and therefore must limit elective surgeries at both hospital and ambulatory facilities.

Surgeries excluded from restriction include:

- Cancer (including diagnostic procedure of suspected cancer)

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- Neurosurgery
- Intractable pain
- Highly symptomatic patients
- Transplants
- Trauma
- Cardiac with symptoms
- Limb threatening vascular procedures
- Dialysis vascular access
- Patients who are at a clinically high risk of harm if their procedures are not completed

Upstate will continue to perform all urgent cases and will prioritize medically necessary cases according to clinical urgency. The number of inpatient cases done will be adjusted weekly according to staff availability and bed capacity. The Surgical Services Leadership Team and the Surgical Department Chairs will continue to screen and approve cases prior to scheduling using the DOH requirements and the prioritization strategy for decision-making. **All operative cases must be approved by the Chair before they can be put on the schedule. Cases may not be scheduled as requested due to the DOH directive and staffing issues outside of the OR.** Individual physicians and their offices may be receiving phone calls regarding the appropriateness of cases as needed. We appreciate the extraordinary effort this process requires from our Surgical Chairs and the distress these circumstances place on our patients and our surgeons. We are grateful for your patience and forbearance as we work through solutions.

## Anonymous COVID Vaccine Survey – Takes Less Than 5 Minutes!

by Dr. Steven Blatt, Dr. Christopher Morley, Dr. Jana Shaw, and Dr. Telisa Stewart

The pediatric COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective. However, vaccination rates for kids under 18 remain low. A team of vaccination and public health experts at Upstate developed a brief, five-minute, survey to better understand Upstate employees preferences for vaccinating children against COVID-19. The information will help us to better understand barriers to vaccine uptake and improve access.



The survey is anonymous and can be found here: <https://redcap.upstate.edu/surveys/?s=LE3PF7A87EEL8RN3>.

The survey link is also available on PCs throughout campus as an icon called, “Children COVID Vaccines” on the desktop. Please respond by Monday, January 10<sup>th</sup>.

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## Proctoring at Upstate

by Beth Erwin

Proctoring at Upstate is getting more close scrutiny after a recent visit from DNV highlighted some issues around documentation of proctored cases. [Policy OMS P-16](#) is being updated to reflect changes to the proctoring process. Proctoring is usually required for adding new privileges, but may also be assigned by a medical staff committee such as Credentials, Clinical Quality Improvement (CQI), or the Medical Executive Committee (MEC).

For new privileges requiring proctoring, the following are required:

1. [Increase in Privilege Request](#) form and list of cases proctored (see policy [OMS P-16](#) – page 6) signed by both the proctor and proctored practitioner
2. Proctoring form signed by the proctor (see policy [OMS P-16](#) – page 5)
3. Copies of consent forms for each case, showing the proctored practitioner as the Attending physician, and the proctor as an additional physician, with their role clarified.

More information, as well as a link to the revised policy, will be sent out via Upstate email in the coming weeks.

## Verbal Orders

by Andrea Bleyle

In recent months, it has become evident that the use of verbal orders has grown exponentially. The hospital has been averaging over 15,000 verbal orders each month. On average, over 170 verbal orders are declined by the assigned provider each month. If a provider declines the order, it is difficult for HIM to determine who the order should be assigned to. In areas like Radiology or the ED, it is virtually impossible to find anyone who will take ownership. As a result, there continues to be outstanding verbal orders that remain unsigned.

According to policy [CM P-50, Credentialed Provider Orders](#), verbal orders should be used only in emergent situations. They are not to be used for communicating routine orders. The nurse, pharmacist, or respiratory therapist accepting a verbal or telephone order enters the order into Epic and reads the order back to the provider to ensure accuracy. Verbal orders must be timed, dated, and signed by the person accepting the order, and they must be countersigned by the ordering providers within 24 hours of the order being placed. If the provider declines to sign the order, they should enter a comment and indicate the correct person to sign.

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This is a significant compliance issue. DNV will be looking closely at documentation next month and having unsigned orders puts us at risk for increased findings. It is important that all providers reduce the number of verbal orders and sign verbal orders within 24 hours.

## Words of Wellness

by Dr. Leslie Kohman

“When it is dark enough, you can see stars”

## Clinical Documentation Improvement (CDI)

by Dr. Emily Albert, Dr. Brian Changlai, and Dr. Abha Harish; Co-Directors, CDI

To our Upstate Family, we are honored to work with you and appreciate you! Happy Holidays!

## Welcome New Providers!

Please join me in offering a warm welcome to our new providers:

### ANESTHESIOLOGY

Michael Loudner, CRNA  
Joseph Madelone, CRNA

### EMERGENCY MEDICINE

Spencer Heggers, MD  
Kishani Heller, MD  
Mitchell McKinnon, MD

### FAMILY MEDICINE

Karen Bertrand, MD  
Makayla Flath, NP

### GERIATRICS

Natina Reed, NP

### MEDICINE

Ganesh Aswath, MBBS  
Laura Beattie, NP  
Cassandra Bradford, NP  
McKenna Burgwin, NP

Jon Burns, PA  
Erika Delisle, PA  
Bridget Frontale, PA  
Auyon Ghosh, MD  
Kaushik Govindaraju, DO  
Ramiro Gutierrez-Martinez, MD  
Ayesha Jamil, MBBS  
Aisha Khaliq, MBBS  
Seah Lim, MD  
Sarah Lounsberry, NP  
Ahmed Mahgoub, MD  
Molly Minko, PA  
Michaela Murphy, NP  
Koh-Eun Narm, MD  
Vishwanath Pattan, MBBS  
Krithika Ramachandran, MBBS  
Kristin Ramella, NP  
Fnu Sapna, MD  
Apurva Shah, MD  
Husna Shaik, MD  
Genevieve Thomasset, PA

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Victor Tung, MD  
Nabil Zeineddine, MD

## NEUROLOGY

Meghan Claver, NP  
Kimberly Laxton, MD

## OB/GYN

Valentina Acosta-Moreno, PA  
Jodie Carncross, NP  
Merideth Geers, LM  
Erina Myagkota, NP  
Alyssa Naylor, LM  
Ashley Scofield, NP  
Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences  
Adam Miller, MD  
Matthew Weinstein, DO

## ORTHOPEDICS

Keith Sherman, DPM  
Riane Teagarden, DPM  
Zachary Telgheder, MD

## OTOLARYNGOLOGY

Mark Arnold, MD

## PEDIATRICS

Christine Aris, NP  
Rheu Cristine Candava, MD  
Shannon Colvin, NP  
Kara Donato, NP  
Sarah Harding, MBBS  
Kelly Hirsch, NP  
Lewis Kass, MD  
Corinne Leach, MD  
Allison Marakovits, PA  
Sherri McMullen, NP  
Nisha Patel, MD

## PEDIATRICS (cont.)

Uzma Rani, MBBS

## PHYSICAL MEDICINE & REHABILITATION

HeeRak Kang, MD

## PSYCHIATRY

Kirsten Cominsky, NP  
Danielle Davis, LCSW  
Nikima Glatt, NP  
Helga Herold, DO  
Rachel Kuch-Cecconi, MD  
Kenna LaPorte, PHD  
Elyssa Max, NP  
Rebecca Shields, DO  
Rebecca Waldo, NP  
Tara Wellington, NP

## RADIATION ONCOLOGY

Elise Hotaling, MD  
Dennis Kotlove, MD  
Hsin Li, MD

## RADIOLOGY

Waqas Abid, MD  
Stewart Bober, MD  
Miriam David, MD  
Cierra McNair, MD  
Jill Wruble, DO

## SURGERY

Mohamed Elfar, MD  
Samir Iskhagi, MD  
Ilyas Liventsov, NP  
Timothy Shope, MD

## UROLOGY

Seetharam Bhat Kulthe Ramesh, MBBS

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## Outstanding Physician Comments

Comments from grateful patients receiving care on the units and clinics at Upstate:



**Adult Hematology Oncology:** Dr. Emily Albert has gone above and beyond to communicate with me and with others on my care team. Dr. Alina Basnet – excellent! Dr. Stephen Graziano has always been very prompt to answer questions/concerns. Dr. Jeffrey Bogart and Dr. Stephen Graziano – great!

**Breast Care Center:** Dr. Prashant Upadhyaya is an exceptional health care provider. His knowledge and expertise are second to none. He does amazing work and his communication with patients is exceptional. I always receive a prompt response if I have a question or concern. Thank you.

**Family Medicine:** Dr. Clyde Satterly – logical and understands my lifestyle and health situation. I appreciate Dr. Rupali Singla's sensitivity. She is an excellent doctor, knowledgeable, and personable.

**Family Medicine at Community Hospital:** Dr. Igor Kraev – I brought a list of questions/concerns and he spent the time to answer all of these which took longer than a standard visit. I was impressed and thankful.

**Gamma Knife:** Dr. Grahame Gould and Dr. Hahn – they are the best and my hero's. Dr. Michael Lacombe and Dr. Walter Hall – amazing! I put my brain in their hands and they didn't falter. I am the most grateful I could ever be!

**GEM:** Dr. James Mangano was simply amazing. He listened to my concerns and treated me in a timely manner. I appreciate him VERY much!

**Heart and Vascular Center:** Dr. Debanik Chaudhuri – pleasant, caring, personable and competent. Dr. Debanik Chaudhuri – straight forward and knowledgeable. Dr. Hani Kozman – known him for 19 years. He is King Kool. My deepest thanks to Dr. Matthew O'Hern. Dr. Matthew O'Hern – terrific!

**Inclusive Health Services:** Dr. Angana Mahapatra is wonderful! She is very thorough and kind. I could not be happier with the care she has provided me since becoming my primary physician.

**Joslin Center for Diabetes:** Dr. Barbara Feuerstein is great, very concerned with patient's health. Dr. Barbara Feuerstein – knowledgeable, patient, nice. The patient is always the focus of a visit with Dr. Barbara Feuerstein. She shows utmost concern, is helpful, and reassuring. I love Dr. Barbara Feuerstein. I always feel like she remembers me and really cares about me. Dr. J Kurt Concilla always answers all my questions. Dr. Ruban Dhaliwal – concerned and looks at the big picture. Dr. Roberto Izquierdo – listened to my concerns and questions. Thank you. Dr. Roberto Izquierdo – listens and discusses options.

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**Multidisciplinary Programs Can. Ctr.:** Dr. Ruham Alshiekh Nasany was so patient, empathetic and caring during our visit and we did not feel rushed or dismissed in any way. All our questions were answered thoroughly. Dr. Jesse Ryan – calm, caring, listens, takes time with me and helps me to understand my concerns. He's just a great, well-rounded doctor and I am blessed to have him caring for me.

**Pediatrics After Hours at Community Hospital:** Dr. Marissa Smith was absolutely amazing, listened to me, understood my concerns and fears, answered all my questions, and made me feel like my daughter was her only patient that night. I left there less anxious and knowing my daughter was on the mend. I cannot thank Dr. Marissa Smith enough for her care and compassion. Dr. Marissa Smith is an outstanding care provider! She seemed genuinely concerned for not just my son's well-being but mine as well. I wish she was my son's provider so we could see her more often.

**Pediatric Multispecialty Clinic:** Dr. Christopher Fortner – efficient, responsive, knowledgeable, caring, and great. Dr. Christopher Fortner took so much time with us, made my son feel so comfortable, listened to all our concerns and gave very good advice and explanations of what he recommends and what to expect without being condescending or confusing. I feel so reassured after talking with him about how to protect my son's health during this pandemic in a way I haven't since it began. He also made plans that if we escalated treatment that takes out unnecessary steps that delay the process. I can't speak highly enough about the genuine care he provided.

**Pediatric Surgery:** We love Dr. Michaela Kollisch-Singule. She is exceptional in what she does and is so compassionate. Dr. Jennifer Stanger has been so kind and has taken her time to explain all aspects of my child's condition and treatment options to both my son and myself. She is very compassionate towards her patients and their families. I would highly recommend Dr. Jennifer Stanger to others in the future.

**Radiation Oncology:** I cannot say enough wonderful things about Dr. Anna Shapiro. She is kind and compassionate, and her empathy for patients and their well-being runs deep. I am grateful to be one of her patients.

**Rheumatology Clinic:** Dr. Hiroshi Kato is the best. The care is awesome when I see Dr. Hom Neupane. He is so sweet, professional and caring. It is great because he really takes the time to listen to me. Love this guy!! I am very pleased with the care Dr. Hom Neupane is giving.

**SUNY Upstate – Virtual:** Dr. Shahram Izadyar is always professional, thorough and kind.

**Surgery – UH:** Dr. Mark Crye explained my condition in a way that was easily understood. He answered all my questions. I was very impressed by the level of care I received. Dr. Anthony Feghali addressed all of my questions and concerns. He explained everything perfectly and gave me different options. I will definitely recommend him to friends and family. Dr. David Pinter explained very well.

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**Surgery – UH LL022:** Dr. Moustafa Hassan took his time, showed concern, explained fully, answered all questions, was professional, and made me feel comfortable.

**The Surgery Center – CG:** Dr. Timothy Damron is good at explaining things in a way that I felt reassured and calm and read. I am so glad that Dr. Mary Ellen Greco and Upstate Community Hospital were recommended by a former patient. Dr. David Halleran – very personable.

**Transplant Center:** Dr. Eman Shaban was absolutely a pleasure to talk to and very personable and knowledgeable. My wife and I were very pleased. Great!

**UHCC – Neurology:** Dr. Anuradha Duleep is a great doctor. Dr. Anuradha Duleep's knowledge and care she showed was impressive. Dr. Kimberly Laxton was very thorough. I have always had a good experience with Dr. Jenny Meyer. Dr. Jenny Meyer – attention to my problem was excellent, gives her patients appropriate time, and I never feel rushed. Dr. Jenny Meyer – her care and attention to detail, concern about my needs. Dr. Awss Zidan is amazing. He is very knowledgeable and explains things easily. Dr. Awss Zidan is excellent. Dr. Awss Zidan was amazing! Very thorough, I felt like he listened to all my concerns and had a very clear cut plan for treatment by the end of my appointment.

**University Cardiology:** Very happy with Dr. Robert Carhart's expertise and manner. Dr. Robert Carhart is so personable and easy to talk to. I couldn't be happier I was referred to him last year.

**University Center for Vision Care:** Dr. Robert Fechtner's care, concern, and expertise have been outstanding. Very grateful for everything he's done! Dr. Robert Swan is a very caring physician and I was very glad I had a referral with him. He helped me keep my visions!

**University Geriatricians:** Dr. Andrea Berg is very compassionate, understanding and knowledgeable.

**University Internists:** Dr. Vincent Frechette for his care, knowledge and compassion. Dr. Vincent Frechette – professional, knowledgeable, excellent people skills, and exhibits genuine concern. Dr. Vincent Frechette is outstanding, would recommend him without reservations. Dr. Vincent Frechette is always a pleasure to see. He's professional, current in practice, and a great practitioner. I am delighted with Dr. Kaushik Govindaraju. He is and will be fantastic.

**Upstate Pediatrics:** We love Dr. Ellen Schurman! My daughter always responds well to her!

**Vascular Surgery at Community Hospital:** Dr. Palma Shaw is a superstar. She saved my life with Jehovah's help. She was available, is an excellent diagnostician, excellent vascular interventional surgeon, and professor. I was thrilled to hear that she cares for inpatients at Upstate. She is kind, compassionate, and a true caring advocate for her patients.

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**4North at Community Hospital:** Dr. Kenneth Rhee came in several times and spoke to us.

**4West at Community Hospital:** Dr. Tanya George was wonderful, informative, patient and intuitive.

**6thFloor at Community Hospital:** Dr. Matthew Hess – excellent care, explained everything, was never in a hurry.

**05B:** Dr. Brian Gallay and Dr. Matthew Hanlon were great in my treatment.

**06B:** Dr. Harvir Singh Gambhir was on top of all my testing and kept me very well informed on all the results – the best!

**06E:** Dr. Mashaal Dhir – informative and very good.

**07A:** Dr. Mike Sun is very good! Dr. Mike Sun is the best! Dr. Mike Sun was excellent.

**08G:** Dr. G Randall Green always kept me informed, was compassionate and reassuring, and I felt completely confident of his skill and care.

**09G:** Dr. Ali Khan advocated for me. Dr. Carlos Muniz – impressed me and gave me answers.

**10H:** Dr. Rahul Seth was the greatest.

**11E:** Dr. Michaela Kollisch-Singule and Dr. Jennifer Stanger were very professional and did an excellent job explaining information in detail to us, in a very understandable way. They answered all of our questions and took the time to listen to us. Remarkable and caring physicians.

**12E:** Dr. Kerry Biggs was wonderful during discharge transition.

Thank you for all that you do!

~ Amy



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