

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

April 2, 2024

Happy Belated Doctors' Day!



On behalf of University Hospital Administration, I would like to wish each of our physicians a belated Happy National Doctors' Day! Every day you go the extra mile to provide outstanding care and compassion to our patients, to create an amazing learning environment for our trainees, and to advance the frontiers of medical science. We appreciate and celebrate you! ~Amy

2024 Medical Executive Committee Leadership Series

By Dr. Stephen Thomas



The SUNY Upstate Medical Executive Committee and the Office of Continuing Medical Education will host a leadership lecture on April 11, 2024, from 12 pm – 1 pm in the Syracuse University National Veterans Resource Center. Jon Frankel will present "Making Connections in Media and Medicine."

Jon Frankel is a three-time Emmy-award winning correspondent as a member of HBO's Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel. His career spans more than 30 years including local sports journalism and network news with NBC's Today Show, ABC's Good Morning America, World News and Nightline and CBS' Early show. Many of Mr. Frankel's stories intersect sports and public health such as his reporting on the gun industry, CTE and traumatic brain injuries in football, and the trials of skiing the World Cup's daunting Hahnenkamm course. Jon was a correspondent on the acclaimed 2016 Report Sports expose on the International Olympic Committee that captured a duPont-Columbia University broadcast journalism award and the Sports Emmy for Outstanding Sports Journalism.

Jon Frankel is a graduate of the Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse and holds a Bachelor of Arts (B.A) in Broadcast Journalism and Political Science.

Admission is free. CME credits are available. Please register at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LV8F2G7>

Doctors Across New York Physicians (DANY) Loan Repayment Program

By Cynthia Jaconski

- The application period for Cycle X of the NYSDOH DANY Physician Loan Repayment program is now open.
- Qualified physicians can apply for \$40,000 per year for three years (\$120,000 in total funding) of loan repayment who agree to work in an underserved area during the three-year period.
- NYSDOH will fund approximately 132 three-year awards on a first come first serve basis. Applications are due by May 2, 2024.
- Eligibility requirements, how to apply, and more information can be found at: https://www.health.ny.gov/professionals/doctors/graduate_medical_education/doctors_across_ny/

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Emergency Alert Codes Change

By Christopher Dunham



Upstate's Emergency Management Committee has made updates to several emergency codes, as plain language terminology is more effective when communicating an emergency and the instructions that follow. There will be no changes to how Upstate responds to the events, simply changes in terminology.

New alert cards for Upstate ID holders will be available with code updates in the next few weeks. Training programs are also being updated to reflect these changes that went into effect April 1. The changes are as follows:

- **Missing Child** will now be overhead paged as "Staff alert: Missing pediatric patient, with location and description." Was formerly Code Amber. ([Policy M-03](#))
- **Missing Adult** high risk only will now be overhead paged as "Staff alert: Missing high risk adult patient, with location and description." Was formerly Code Grey. ([Policy M-03](#))
- **Severe Weather** will now be overhead paged as "Weather alert, plus location if needed, description, and instructions." Was formerly Code Black. ([Policy S-04](#))
- **Hazmat/Decontamination** will now be sent via VOCERA directly to all RN managers on duty and then overhead paged as "Facility alert: Decontamination event, plus details, and all HCTS report to room 1320." Was formerly Code Orange. ([Policy DIS M-30](#))
- **Active Shooter** will now be overhead paged as "Security alert plus location, description, action items, shelter in place." This event will also include an ALERTUS notification to all Upstate computer screens. Was formerly Code Silver. ([Policy H-11](#))
- **Bomb Threat** overhead paging process will be retired. University Police will communicate with impacted personnel, depending on the situation, to avoid unnecessary panic. Was formerly Code Yellow. ([Policy DIS M-15](#))

Codes remaining the same:

- Code Red for fire ([Policy F-01](#))
- Code Blue for adult medical emergency ([Policy CM E-15](#))
- Code White for pediatric medical emergency ([Policy CM P-77](#))
- Code Pink for newborn medical emergency
- Code C for pregnant mother medical emergency
- Code BERT for pediatric behavioral escalation team ([Policy PED B-05](#))

Questions about these changes or codes? Email Emergency Management Director Christopher Dunham, MBA, at Dunhamch@upstate.edu.

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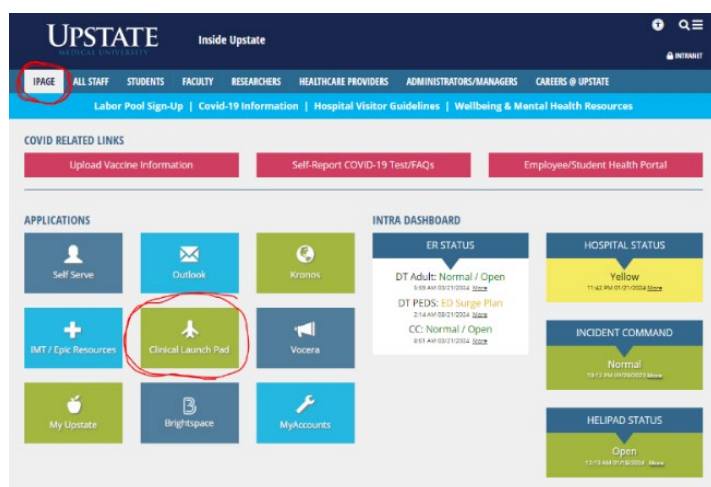
Notice of Change to Upstate Applications on Computers

By IMT Customer Support Services



On Monday, April 1, 2024, the commonly used desktop icon called Upstate Applications on Upstate computers (desktops and laptops) was removed. This change does not affect the MAK Carts (thin clients).

The systems you are accustomed to accessing from this window are accessible from the iPage, and/or from the Clinical Launch Pad which you can access from the iPage.



Please start using these new methods for accessing the systems you use and report any challenges you may have to the IMT Help Desk 4-4115.

Annual Health Assessments

By Dr. Jarrod Bagatell

All SUNY upstate Medical University staff, students, volunteers, and contract employees are required to complete an annual health assessment (AHA) for review by Employee/Student Health in accordance with NYS Health Code 405.3, as outlined in [policy A-20](#).

Completing the AHA questionnaire takes only a few minutes, [scheduling an appointment](#) for an AHA and mask fit test is easy and convenient at both hospital campuses and you can expect that our team of caring professionals will respectfully optimize your time through our office so you can get back to performing the important work that you do at Upstate.

So, don't delay! If it's been at least 12 months since your last AHA then you are overdue and out of compliance with health code. If you are approaching the month that you will be due to complete your AHA, please plan accordingly.

Your attention to this important matter is appreciated.

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Wellness Update

By Dr. Leslie Kohman

I am excited to announce that Upstate has partnered with the American Medical Association (AMA) to support us with improving practitioner well-being. The AMA is a key leader in this work and offers expertise and insights from a national perspective so that we can best identify levers for change.

With the guidance of the AMA, we have developed an assessment to measure burnout in our physicians and Advanced Practice Practitioners (APPs) and to identify system drivers of burnout within our organization. We will share the data with you and use it, with your input, to implement solutions.

This survey will be launched in the first week of April. Please be on the lookout for additional communications and instructions for completion. Please share this information with your department members. The ANONYMOUS responses will be analyzed and shared in the aggregate with all departments and organizational leadership.

We greatly appreciate your participation in this initiative and look forward to the exciting next steps ahead to increase the Joy quotient in practicing at Upstate.

After analysis, AMA will provide key performance index analysis and recommendations for policy and program enhancements in preparation for our 2025 application for Joy in Medicine GOLD.

Thank you for your support of this initiative. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Leslie Kohman at KohmanL@upstate.edu.

Primary Care Education Session

By Darcy DiBiase

The next Primary Care Task Force Session will be held on Wednesday, April 10, from 12:15 pm – 1:00 pm. Dr. Birendra Sah will present “Understanding and Treating Pulmonary Sarcoidosis. To access this presentation, please visit:

<https://upstate.webex.com/upstate/j.php?MTID=mdb125c3eb2fb13784f6e9281e2a345a9>

The Primary Care Task Force Education sessions are held virtually on the second Wednesday, of the month, from 12:15 pm – 1 pm. Future presentations (each with a unique link) include:

- May 8: Palliative Care Integration in Primary Care-- Part One
<https://upstate.webex.com/upstate/j.php?MTID=macee908142c11929e8dba5cad239b2f2>
- June 12: Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences in Adult Primary Care
<https://upstate.webex.com/upstate/j.php?MTID=m08a87ec84fcf87955558596bc44b55eb>
- July 10: Interstitial Lung Diseases/Pulmonary Fibrosis for the Primary Care Physician.
<https://upstate.webex.com/upstate/j.php?MTID=ma0967e09591342b6d2c3504567c3f72f>

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- August 14: Palliative Care Integration in Primary Care-- Part Two
<https://upstate.webex.com/upstate/j.php?MTID=m71fec80bfd682cc0843b2cc3bd8491d4>
- September 11: Update from Joslin for PCP's
<https://upstate.webex.com/upstate/j.php?MTID=m1f394b6bab009f12b0243ff8cab8831f>
- December 11: Wound Care in the Primary Care Setting
<https://upstate.webex.com/upstate/j.php?MTID=m1f79668c4d8801f17901ca66037c12a5>

All past presentations can be found online [here](#).

Please reach out to Darcy DiBiase at DibiaseD@upstate.edu if you have any questions or suggestions for future engagement opportunities.

Clinical Documentation Improvement (CDI) Tip for March & April 2024

By the CDI Physician Advisory Group



Skin Series Part II: Representation of skin injuries is based on provider documentation of all known or presumed etiologies. When skin injuries are multifactorial, relating the injury to components of pressure and skin failure, moisture, or shearing ensure accurate representation of the patient and condition present.

Skin Series Finale: When skin ulcerations are present, unrelated to skin failure or pressure, documentation of ulceration depth is crucial to represent the condition's severity.

Please see attached tip sheets for more information (also available on the [CDI website](#)!) and contact with the CDI Team at CDI@upstate.edu with questions.

Exceptional Teacher Recipient for March 2024

By Dr. Lawrence Chin



Amy Brown, MD, MSc, MSCS, is the March 2024 recipient of the Exceptional Moments in Teaching recognition.

The Norton College of Medicine recognizes exceptional teachers with the monthly "Exceptional Moments in Teaching" program. Honorees are selected via student assessments from courses and clerkships. Recognized teachers – including medical faculty, residents, nurses and other educators – are those who challenge students and provide an exceptional learning experience.

Comments from Dr. Brown's students:

I had many moments where I felt conflicted during a case. For example, when my culture values clashed with some things that my peers or most of Western medical culture would

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consider ethical or moral. I liked that the professor did not try to establish a right or wrong in our discussion but instead just created space for everyone to share their opinions, which highlighted the complexity of these ethical cases and for me personally, highlighted the importance of self-reflection (especially coming from another culture) and the importance of cultural competency.

Dr. Brown is fantastic, truly a pleasure to have her as a P2P facilitator. I have learned a lot through our various sessions and the classes consistently help bring awareness of issues I may not have thought about in depth. I think that Dr. Caruso-Brown asks great open-ended questions and gives us time to think about and work through these complex cases. I think she creates a low-stress environment conducive to discourse, which is what I enjoy most. I genuinely look forward to this class.

Dr. Amy Caruso-Brown was a fantastic facilitator; she was kind, highly skilled at navigating complex ethical situations, and fostered a low-stress learning environment. I learned a great deal about ethical situations and their implications.

Welcome New Clinicians!

Please join me in offering a warm welcome to the following new clinicians at Upstate Medical University:



ANESTHESIOLOGY

Shanavia Barr, CRNA
Elizabeth Walker, CRNA
Timothy Walker, CRNA

FAMILY MEDICINE

James Edinger, MD

MEDICINE

Malek El Muayed, MD
Al-Aman Shaukat, MD

NEUROSURGERY

Greta Jasinski, PA

OB/GYN

Magdalene O'Boyle, LM

PEDIATRICS

Courtney Mauzy, PhD
Amy Mrowka, NP
Bianca Perez, PA

RADIOLOGY

Kenneth Richardson, MD

Outstanding Physician Comments

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



Adult Hematology Oncology: Dr. Alexander Banashkevich is beyond the most caring and concerned doctor I have ever had! Dr. Sam Benjamin – the best! Dr. Merima Ramovic-Zobic is excellent. Really cares about her patients. Explains everything that is going on with me. Doesn't rush my visit. She's the best!

Breast Care Center: Dr. Mashaal Dhir is the best. He explained everything in detail and was very compassionate. I would recommend him to anyone.

Breast Care at CC POB: I am so grateful for Dr. Jayne Charlamb.

ED at Community Hospital: Dr. Derek Cooney is the best!!! Dr. Derek Cooney - caring, accommodating, and knew exactly what to do. I was beyond impressed. Dr. Jordan Holliday was great! Dr. Rose Solomon was very nice and

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thorough. **Dr. Thomas Weidman** was the absolute best. He demonstrated the characteristics of customer service excellent: people, process and paperwork in order. First, he took the time to ask me about me and my numerous trips to the emergency room. Secondly, he explained that he was able to do the procedure in the emergency room, which meant I wouldn't be getting admitted and would be going home that night. Last, but not least, he explained why he was not giving me antibiotics like the last two times. Paperwork was done in a timely manner. He exceeded my expectations and I will be looking for him if I ever have to go to the emergency room again.

Family Medicine: **Dr. Rahila Iftikhar** is very thorough and caring. She goes the extra mile to make sure all my concerns are addressed and taken care of.

Family Medicine at Community: **Dr. Bushra Atta ur Rehman** was very pleasant, easy going to talk with, and deal with!

Gamma Knife: **Dr. Michael Mix** – very concerned and informative. Thank you!

GYNONCMI: **Dr. W Douglas Bunn** was very understanding and explained everything. I just love **Dr. W Douglas Bunn**. **Dr. Mary Cunningham** has always been excellent. I feel very fortunate to have had her managing my care. **Dr. Mary Cunningham** – professional, caring, an excellent listener. I always feel that I get a thorough exam at each visit and trust her completely. **Dr. Mary Cunningham** – kind, caring, and understanding.

Heart and Vascular Center: **Dr. Jamal Ahmed** made my experience in the unit much easier. **Dr. Debanik Chaudhuri** is very down to earth, pleasant, skilled, and a true asset to Upstate! **Dr. Michael Fischi** was nice and explained my procedure clearly. **Dr. Michael Fischi** reflected my need for humor, was so professional and eased my anxiety, funny, calming, and answered my myriad of questions throughout the procedure. Please thank **Dr. Michael Fischi** for not damaging my \$600 glasses. He talked to me the whole time, told me what he was seeing, and why he was doing what he was doing. **Dr. Timothy Ford** – wonderful! Thank you, **Dr. Palma Shaw** for caring. **Dr. Scott Surowiec** has come to my rescue over and above what is expected. He is a treasure to this facility. I would especially like to thank **Dr. Srikanth Yandrapalli** who made this experience wonderful.

Inclusive Health Services: My number one doctor there is **Dr. Elizabeth Asiago-Reddy** who is the most wonderful human being god has put on this world. Thank you to her. **Dr. Angana Mahapatra** is awesome and down to earth. Second to none.

Joslin Center for Diabetes: **Dr. Barbara Feuerstein** – willing to help. **Dr. Rachel Hopkins** has always been a great communicator. I always feel well-informed and well-cared for after a visit with her. **Dr. Roberto Izquierdo** – knowledgeable, thorough, understanding, sympathetic, and very professional. I trust **Dr. Roberto Izquierdo's** decision making and that he will include me in those decisions. I am so glad **Dr. Roberto Izquierdo** is my doctor!! **Dr. Roberto Izquierdo** has always been a caring and compassionate physician! **Dr. Roberto Izquierdo** is simply the best. He spends time, listens, and gives honest feedback when asked a question. He answers portal questions within hours, most times. I am SO fortunate to have him as my doctor. **Dr. Ruth Weinstock** is extraordinary.

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Multidisciplinary Programs Cancer Center: Dr. Joseph Valentino explains everything very well, shows concern, and answers questions that can be understood. Dr. Joseph Valentino – visits are always informative, he shows concern, and takes the time to answer questions.

Rheumatology Clinic: Dr. Jihad BenGabr was very nice and I feel confident in her expertise. I would highly recommend her to others. Dr. Hom Neupane is always willing to listen and explains everything I ask or need to know. Dr. Hom Neupane has my trust that he has my best interests in mind. Dr. Jianghong Yu – very friendly, understood my condition.

Pediatrics After Hours at Community: Dr. Moshe Roberts was awesome - listened to her answers, discussing, and letting us know what was wrong.

Stress/Echo – UH: Dr. Traian Anghel – exceptional!

SUNY Upstate – Virtual: Dr. Joseph Valentino and his staff have been looking after me from day one. I could not ask for any better. Dr. Joseph Valentino and his team are the BEST!!

Surgical Subspecialties at CC: Dr. Jeffrey Albright – very pleasant and explained everything well.

UHCC – Neurology: Dr. Deborah Bradshaw is stellar! So smart and compassionate! Dr. Antonio Culebras knows his stuff. Dr. Kimberly Laxton was terrific. Dr. Corey McGraw – informative and compassionate, listened to my concerns, and gave input. Dr. Katherine Wojcicki is exceptional. She really made me feel listened to as a mom.

University Center for Vision Care: Dr. Robert Fechtner is a first-rate physician. He explains the results of the different eye exams clearly. Dr. Katharine Liegel was excellent with our son. Dr. Katharine Liegel is thorough and brilliant at what she does. Truly amazing! Dr. Katharine Liegel has been with our son since he was in the NICU and now is four. We wouldn't have chosen anyone else! Dr. Stephen Merriam is very compassionate and cares to explain exactly what he is doing. He gives very realistic expectations. Dr. Robert Swan is exceptional!

University Geriatricians: Dr. Andrea Berg was very thorough asking questions and explaining what she was doing and following through to correct medical concerns. Dr. Sharon Brangman is the best!

University Internists: Dr. Vincent Frechette - magnificent. Dr. Vincent Frechette was patient with my lengthy list of concerns and took time to review it with me. Dr. Vincent Frechette is kind, caring, and easy to talk to. Dr. Vincent Frechette is a genius. There is nothing he does not know. I feel so good about myself when I leave his office. He never rushes me and listens so intently. He is a wonderful doctor. Dr. Vincent Frechette is a very good doctor and I highly recommend him to all my friends and colleagues! Dr. Vincent Frechette is very knowledgeable and nice. He has been my primary physician since 2008 or so and he is the best. Dr. George Gluz does an outstanding job focusing on his patient. He provides detailed information and answers all questions thoroughly. Dr. George Gluz goes out of his way to keep the patient at ease and relaxed for what can be an anxiety causing situation. Dr. Danielle Kochen is attentive and treats me as a whole person, celebrating things that we are working on and helping me to problem solve what is not working. Dr. Sarah Lappin always impresses me. I love University Internists and Dr. Sarah Lappin! Dr. Sarah Lappin has been a godsend for me. I am truly blessed to have her as my PCP. Dr. Sarah Lappin is always so pleasant and easy to talk to. Dr.

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Sarah Lappin was so approachable and took the time to listen to all my history since it was my first visit. **Dr. Sarah Lappin** is the best!

Upstate Brain & Spine Center: **Dr. Grahame Gould** was articulate, very kind, very thoughtful, and very intelligent which helped me feel I was with the very best doctor to see. **Dr. Ali Hazama** answered all our questions, explained to us all about what the surgery would do for his back and explained what he would be doing to ease our minds. Very professional. Very pleased with him. Would highly recommend him to others.

Upstate Pediatrics: We love **Dr. Ellen Schurman**!

Vascular Surgery at Community: **Dr. Scott Surowiec** is an exceptional doctor. I really appreciate the concern he shows.

4North at Community: **Dr. Sanobar Jamali** was very helpful, courteous, and thorough.

05B: **Dr. Bader Madoukh** was amazing. **Dr. Joseph Valentino** is one of the best doctors I have ever come across.

10E: **Dr. Komal Akhtar** and **Dr. Stephen Graziano** took a personalized approach and cared for me with patience and respect.



Amy

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CDI Tip of the Month
Skin Series Part II: Hospital Acquired Skin Injuries

Part I of the Skin Series discusses recognition of Skin Failure as an unavoidable physiologic component of skin breakdown.

Part II of the Skin Series is addressing hospital acquired skin injury etiology.

Several contributing factors may be present when patients develop skin injuries. It is important to both recognize and document all known or suspected etiologies and contributing factors of skin breakdown.

Pressure Related	Over bony prominence due to failure to adhere to conventional means of prevention with no other contributing factors
Skin Failure Related or Component	Physiologic process of skin breakdown in critical/acute disease process, or end stage process, with injury developing despite conventional means of prevention. This can be sole etiology or contributing factor to skin injury.
Moisture Related or Component	High moisture as sole etiology, or contributing factor, to skin injury. Etiology examples: diaphoresis, incontinence
Shearing Related or Component	Shearing and/or friction as sole etiology, or contributing factor, to skin injury. Etiology examples: thrashing, sliding
Device Related	Usually related to a pressure source, however can also be complicated by a moisture component. Examples: ear related to oxygen tubing, bridge of nose related to BiPap mask

Injuries that are multifactorial in etiology are not represented as pressure related injuries. Etiology is dependent on professional medical judgement and knowledge of the patient and their clinical status.

Examples

Wound Care NP is a consulting service and sees patient sedated. There may not be knowledge the patient was previously combative and thrashing, now being evaluated due to a new skin injury.

On assessment skin is warm and dry, there may not be a knowledge the patient was previously diaphoretic due to critical illness or experienced incontinence that possibly contributed to skin damage.

Collaboration in establishing etiology is imperative and requires input from Nursing, Wound Care, and Physician staff that promotes exercising professional medical judgement to appropriately represent the patient's condition.

CDI Tip of the Month
Skin Series Part III: Vascular or Diabetic Related Skin Ulcers

Part I of the Skin Series discusses recognition of Skin Failure as an unavoidable physiologic component of skin breakdown.

Part II of the Skin Series addresses hospital acquired skin injury etiology.

Part III of the Skin Series is addressing other skin ulcerations related to disease process.

Key Points

Diabetic and Vascular ulcers are common in hospitalized patients. They may be new, chronic, worsening or improving. Healed ulcers are not coded, however healing ulcers are.

It is important for clinicians to specify depth of ulcerations related to diabetes or vascular disease by tissue involved rather than units of measure.

This is the same for debridement procedures performed – debridement must be specified as Excisional or Non-Excisional and include greatest depth of tissue removed by tissue layer, not units of measure.

Tissue Depths for Ulcer Specificity

Skin breakdown only

Fat layer exposed or subcutaneous tissue breakdown

Muscle involvement **with** or **without** muscle necrosis

Bone involved **with** or **without** bone necrosis

CDI Tip of the Month – Debridement Specificity

Terms such as “sharp debridement” or statement outlining use of scalpel alone are not considered sufficient for code assignment of excisional debridement.

There is no synonymous term for “excisional”.

Both CDI Specialists and Inpatient Coders may not assume that any debridement performed is excisional, nor may they assume that “sharp debridement” is excisional.

For clarity, the term “**excisional**”, “**excised**”, or “**excision**” should be with the supporting documentation as mentioned below must be present.

The following information must also be documented by the proceduralist:

- ✓ Description of the area debrided
- ✓ Instruments used (scalpel, scissors, forceps, etc.)
- ✓ The greatest depth of tissue removed, stated in terms such as skin, fascia, muscle, tendon, or bone. *Units of measurement, such as centimeters or inches representing depth, are not sufficient for coding purposes.*
- ✓ Documentation of removal or cutting away of devitalized tissue, necrosis or slough

Ineffective or incomplete documentation will result in query to clarify the procedure performed.

Failure to clarify may result in inappropriate code assignment and subsequent reimbursement for services rendered.

FACULTY EXCEPTIONAL MOMENTS IN TEACHING



Amy Brown, MD, MSc, MSCS, an associate professor of Bioethics and Humanities and Pediatrics at Upstate Medical University, is the **March 2024** recipient of the **Exceptional Moments in Teaching recognition**.

COMMENTS FROM DR. BROWN'S STUDENTS:

I had many moments where I felt conflicted during a case. For example, when my culture values clashed with some things that my peers or most of Western medical culture would consider ethical or moral. I liked that the professor did not try to establish a right or wrong in our discussion but instead just created space for everyone to share their opinions, which highlighted the complexity of these ethical cases and for me personally, highlighted the importance of self-reflection (especially coming from another culture) and the importance of cultural competency.

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