Albany Med Health System | 2023 Annual Report





#### A Message from the CEO and Board Chair





#### Dear Friends,

For the Albany Med Health System, 2023 provided opportunities time and again to see our mission in action—improving health through the highest standards of quality in care, education, and research.

As the region's largest and only locally governed health system, we provide the most advanced specialty care to the people of our 25-county area.

From a new Level 1 Pediatric Trauma Center designation at Albany Medical Center to Saratoga Hospital's clinic for backstretch workers at the racetrack, the System continues to serve our communities with the very best in compassionate health care.

Merging our cardiac teams at Albany Medical Center and Columbia Memorial Health provides patients in Columbia and Greene counties local access to the most advanced and comprehensive heart care services. Our Centers of Excellence for Alzheimer's Disease at Albany Medical Center and Glens Falls Hospital offer not only an interdisciplinary approach to diagnosing and managing the disease, they also serve as a resource for other health care organizations.

Now, we are upon a major milestone that will further tie our campuses together: The go-live of our unified electronic medical record, Epic. Epic launched at Albany Medical Center in March 2024 and will expand to Columbia Memorial Health, Glens Falls Hospital, and Saratoga Hospital in the fall. Shared platforms streamline information, improve accessibility, and advance the care only we can provide in this region.

A strong, committed workforce is central to our System's success. As such, we remained focused on recruitment and retention. In 2023, a new hiring referral program led to hundreds of additional applications and bolstered our nursing staff, while partnerships with local colleges ensure a stream of new, dedicated, talented staff are trained and ready to join our team. We also enhanced compensation for two-thirds of our workforce and strengthened employee benefits. We know our team's drive to change and save lives is what enables the System to thrive.

As an academic medical health system, we continue our role in educating the next generation of health care professionals in varied settings. This includes physicians, scientists, physician assistants, bioethicists, nurse anesthesiologists, and clinical investigators.

Our scientists and researchers at Albany Medical College are investigating diseases and treatments to transform patient care—from heart disease to cancer to infectious diseases. In 2023, this included multimillion dollar National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants for the study of tuberculosis, breast cancer, heart failure, bone marrow failure, and long Covid.

Looking ahead, we will continue our work guided by our mission, vision, and values, expanding our footprint in health care delivery, research, and medical education throughout the region. People turn to us in their greatest moments of need. It's a privilege to be able to serve the public in such a meaningful way, and we continually seek new ways to best meet the health care demands of tomorrow.

Dennis P. McKenna, MD '92

Sleveni P. McKenne.

President and CEO, Albany Med Health System **Robert T. Cushing** 

Chair, Albany Med Health System Board of Directors



After a multi-year effort, Albany Medical Center successfully launched a new electronic medical record (EMR) on Saturday, March 2, 2024. Columbia Memorial Health, Glens Falls Hospital, and Saratoga Hospital will go live with the Epic EMR platform in the fall of 2024, further unifying the Albany Med Health System and better aligning services and care throughout the communities we serve.

In 2023, the Epic implementation team finalized the build and configuration in a process that involved not only our partners from Epic, but more than 1,000 members of the workforce across the System. At the base of our EMR is Epic's foundation system, which contains the best practices from each organization that Epic has worked with over the years. To support the build, employees from each campus also provided critical input and made key decisions to ensure that the platform would meet the unique needs of the System.

The second half of 2023 focused on System and user readiness with multiple efforts to extensively test our design of Epic. The project team recruited hundreds of super users from throughout the System who would go on to help support their colleagues in the weeks surrounding the go-live periods. Super users received early and specialized training to be able to answer questions about workflows, policies, and more. Albany Medical Center employees also readied for Epic training that would kick off in January 2024.

#### IN THE FIRST MONTH:

30,000 appointments scheduled

daily chats with providers

At 6 weeks out,

48,000 signups for MyChart accounts

250 85
staffed the command super

10,000

users

Albany Medical Center employees trained on Epic

**Epic** Super User

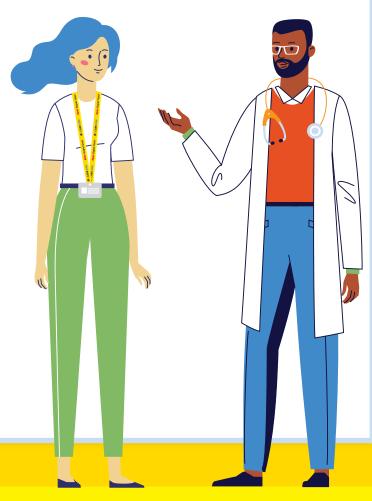
center



## Workday Connects Supply Chain, Financial Reporting Across System

In July 2023, the Albany Med Health System launched a unified enterprise resource planning process (ERP) through Workday, bringing together processes that had been spread across four separate ERP systems. Now, as the source of truth for supply chain and financial reporting, Workday is the single platform for employees to order supplies, submit reimbursements, and access financial reports.

Workday brings with it more transparency, greater efficiency, and better tracking and reporting capabilities. The ERP platform will help System staff ensure that supplies can flow seamlessly across campuses and that resources are directed to where they're needed most. Alongside the Workday launch also came efforts to centralize procurement and accounts payable departments.



# Recruitment and Retention

#### **ALBANY MEDICAL CENTER**

Our workforce is a foundational, priority focus critical to the success of the Albany Med Health System. To meet our workforce goals, we continue to focus on recruitment and retention, professional development, succession planning, advancement opportunities, and pipeline strategies through partnerships with local colleges and high schools.

Between January and December of 2023, Albany Medical Center hired 2,278 employees across the campus. We also attended or hosted a total of 74 recruitment events in 2023, including more than 20 career fairs for nursing.

We also launched an employee referral program. Albany Medical Center employees who successfully refer a new hire can receive up to \$2,000 cash. We received nearly 200 referrals since the program launched in the fall of 2023.



Nurse manager Shannon Kelly speaks to students from Albany Leadership Charter School who toured Albany Medical Center.

Glens Falls Hospital also worked with pharmacy leadership to expand hours to Saturdays to provide more flexible access for staff.

#### **SARATOGA HOSPITAL**

Saratoga Hospital focused on increasing both onsite and community career events and initiatives, as well as an enhanced collaboration with Indeed and streamlining the application process for candidates. As a result, applications increased by 115 percent, and overall new hires grew by 5 percent.

Retention and recognition also remained key areas of focus. A biannual retreat for hospital leaders was established to enhance professional development opportunities, and recognition programs were assessed and positioned for growth for the upcoming year. Programs centered around employee wellness also continue to grow through expansion of the wellness committee and holding events such as the Farmer's Market, Vinyasa Yoga, and the Harvest Market & Wellness Fair.

#### **GLENS FALLS HOSPITAL**

In 2023, Glens Falls Hospital hired a Director of Talent Acquisition and Retention to lead recruitment—resulting in 450 more unique external applicants than in 2022. Glens Falls Hospital expanded outreach at college campuses and job fairs, and improved the onboarding process to empower candidates as they begin their new roles.

With a focus on retention and recognition, Glens Falls Hospital implemented several initiatives, including: sending a personal greeting card from the CEO to each new hire before they start employment; reinvigorating the Hospital's recognition program, ensuring long tenured employees were honored at service milestones; bringing emotional support dogs into the hospital for the benefit of both patients and staff; and opening a new food service option for staff.

Glens Falls Hospital also worked with pharmacy leadership to expand hours to Saturdays to provide more flexible access for staff.

#### **COLUMBIA MEMORIAL HEALTH**

Recruitment and retention remained one of Columbia Memorial Health's top strategic priorities in 2023. The hospital streamlined the onboarding process to allow candidates to move through it more efficiently, and restructured new hire orientation to integrate company culture, including a welcome message from the CEO.

Columbia Memorial Health continued to partner with local high schools and colleges and introduced two new scholarship programs in 2023: first year nursing students at Columbia Greene Community College; and second year students enrolled at Hudson Valley Community College in the Radiology Technology program.

Employee engagement, wellness, and professional development also remained key areas of focus in 2023. The hospital developed career ladders, education and skill training, and other opportunities for professional development, and enhanced wellness initiatives to support employees both in and outside of the workplace.

# Investing in Our Workforce

The Albany Med Health System relies on our strong, dedicated workforce. To ensure we continue to recruit and retain the best possible team, each campus tailors a workforce strategy appropriate for their goals. For example, at Albany Medical Center:

2024 Annualized Expense for Salaries and Benefits

#### \$1.1 Billion | 55 Percent of Total Expense

2023 Budget: Additional Investment in Salaries and Benefits

#### \$38.3 Million

#### Compensation

- Increase in base hourly wages from \$15 to \$18: 20 percent
- Adjustments at several additional job levels based on years of service
- Benefitted more than 6,000 employess
- Increase to on-call rate
- Merit increase will continue

#### **Medical Plan**

- New: Employee + spouse and employee + child(ren)
- New prescription drug carrier: Express Scripts
- Advanced intertility services

More than \$650,000 in tuition reimbursement

**74 Recruitment Events** 

#### **Why it Matters**

Reinvestment. Sustainability. Mission. Growth. Community.





# YEAR IN REVIEW

#### Albany Medical College Leads Region in NIH Funding

At the beginning of 2023 it was announced that Albany Medical College led the Capital Region in funding from the National Institutes of Health, with 35 grants totaling \$11.5 million, according to an analysis by the Center for Economic Growth.

"Biomedical research is integral to our mission as an academic medical health system," said Alan S. Boulos, MD '94, The Lynne and Mark D. Groban, MD '67 Distinguished Dean of Albany Medical College.

#### Oley Foundation Marks 40 Years of Education and Advocacy

The Oley Foundation, a nonprofit based at Albany Medical Center that supports and advocates for people who use home intravenous nutrition or tube feeding, celebrated its 40th anniversary on Feb. 2. People with severe digestive conditions, such as the inability to swallow, a motility disorder, or a shortened intestine, cannot

eat normally. Instead, they rely on long-term home IV nutrition or tube feeding to survive.

"You can't control intestinal failure," said one patient. "But you can control how to live."

#### Study Published on Opioids and Surgery

A study by Albany Medical Center urologists, published in *JAMA Surgery*, concluded that patients who had major abdominal surgery rarely needed prescription opioid medications to control their pain after hospital discharge. Further, no adverse effects were seen regarding complications or recovery in patients who did not take opioid pain medications after surgery.

"These results are exciting as they indicate we can essentially eliminate opioid prescriptions after urologic cancer surgery, which is important not only for an individual patient's recovery, but also for reducing excessive opioids and potential misuse in the community," said Badar M. Mian, MD, professor in the Department of Urology at Albany Medical College and lead author of the study.

#### Glens Falls Hospital Opens Onsite Pharmacies

Glens Falls Hospital opened Specialty and Community Pharmacies. These two pharmacies work together to provide services far beyond the scope of a typical pharmacy. Through the Community Pharmacy, patients, employees, and the local community can access over-the-counter and commonly prescribed medications. The Specialty Pharmacy provides additional support for those requiring specialty medications and education around their associated treatment plans.

#### A Model for System Collaboration

Providing the highest level of patient care is at the center of the Albany Med Health System's mission. The establishment of the System's Access Center aims to meet that mission.

"All the hospitals within the Albany Med Health System get multiple calls every day from across the region," said Diane Gaylord, RN, director of access capacity and demand

**FIVE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS SERVE PATIENTS ACROSS THE REGION THROUGH THE ALBANY MED HEALTH** SYSTEM. THEY ARE **LOCATED AT COLUMBIA MEMORIAL HEALTH, GLENS FALLS HOSPITAL, SARATOGA HOSPITAL** (THE ALFRED Z. **SOLOMON EMERGENCY CENTER IS PICTURED). AND AT ALBANY MEDICAL CENTER, WHICH HOUSES THE MASSRY FAMILY CHILDREN'S EMERGENCY CENTER AND THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT AND LEVEL** 1 TRAUMA CENTER.



Top: Glens Falls Hospital was recognized for their wound healing program. Bottom: The Saratoga Backstretch Clinic provides health care to members of the horse racing community.

management at Saratoga Hospital. "Previously, there was no way to organize those calls on a System-wide basis and prioritize by patient condition and need."

#### **Glens Falls Wound Healing Center** Recognized

Glens Falls Hospital's Wound Healing Center was recognized as a Center of Distinction by Healogics, the country's leader in Wound Care and Hyperbaric Medicine. To be considered for this prestigious recognition the Wound Healing Center had to surpass performance metric goals that included a Heal Rate higher than 92 percent, a Patient Satisfaction score higher than 92 percent, and a Median Days to Heal of less than 28 days.

"The Wound Center is equipped with advanced technology including hyperbaric oxygen chambers, bio-engineered skin substitutes, and advanced specialty wound care dressing," said Joe Kiefl, Wound Healing Center director.

#### Saratoga Backstretch **Clinic Dedicated**

In July, representatives from Saratoga Hospital, the Backstretch Employee Service Team, and NYRA, as well as Assemblywoman Carrie Woerner, philanthropist John Hendrickson, and members of the community gathered near Gate 16 at

the Saratoga Race Course to celebrate the opening of the Saratoga Backstretch Clinic.

Jill J. VanKuren, president and CEO of Saratoga Hospital, said, "This clinic is a place of refuge for the people that give their lives to take care of us, our horses, our livelihood. This community is truly a family, and there is nothing we cannot do together."

At the clinic, Saratoga Hospital clinicians provide primary care and behavioral health services, along with specialty services in dermatology and endocrinology.

"The health care clinic will be an indispensable resource to the people who form the backbone of the sport in New York: the backstretch community," said David O'Rourke, NYRA president and CEO.

#### **New Therapy for Brain Tumors**

The Albany Med Health System was the first in the region to offer GammaTile Therapy, a novel approach to treating brain tumors. GammaTile Therapy is an FDA-cleared, surgically targeted radiation therapy that is designed to delay tumor regrowth for patients with brain tumors while protecting healthy brain tissue.

"With GammaTile, patients begin receiving radiation immediately following placement and continue to receive treatment as they go about their daily lives, thereby decreasing the burdens of repeated appointments

and improving the quality of both the patient's and the caregiver's lives," said Edward Farhangi, MD, chair of the Department of Radiation Oncology.

#### **Pediatric Cystic Fibrosis Center Recognized**

The Pediatric Cystic Fibrosis Program at the Bernard & Millie Duker Children's Hospital was awarded a Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Quality Care Award. The award recognized the team for quality improvement projects over the course of 2021-2022. The Quality Care Awards recognize Foundationaccredited care centers that demonstrate a commitment to improving the quality of care they provide to people with cystic fibrosis. Only nine programs were awarded, out of more than 130 care centers across the country.

#### **Columbia Memorial Health Unveils New Center for Breast Health**

Columbia Memorial Health (CMH) opened the Center for Breast Health at the Hudson campus, adopting a leading national model of comprehensive and integrated breast care that improves both quality of care and patient outcomes.

"This Center stands as an example of how a community can work together to meaningfully improve health care services," said Dorothy M. Urschel, DNP,







CMH president and chief executive officer. "It blends the experience and expertise of our providers with advanced diagnostic technology, in a soothing and comfortable environment. It's a significant step in our continuous efforts to provide the best care possible for our community."

The Center provides screening and diagnostic 3D mammography, diagnostic ultrasound, ultrasound guided biopsy, and stereotactic breast biopsy, as well as education on breast health, consultation on treatment decisions, and support groups for patients and families.

#### **White Coat Ceremony Welcomes New Med Students**

The 145 medical students entering Albany Medical College donned their white coats for the first time on Aug. 4 during the College's White Coat Ceremony, held at the Kitty Carlisle Hart Theatre in The Egg at the Empire State Plaza. The students also recited the Declaration of Geneva, a modern-day physicians' oath.

Selected from more than 13,000 applicants, the Class of 2027 came from 24 states, including 45 students from New York.

Forty of the new students graduated from one of Albany Medical College's joint degree programs at Siena College, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and Union College.



#### RPI and Albany Medical College Awarded \$3.3 Million To Improve Breast Cancer Treatment Using AI

Researchers from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Albany Medical College were awarded a \$3.3 million grant over five years by the National Cancer Institute to use artificial intelligence to improve targeted drug therapy in HER2-positive breast cancer treatment.

"For more than a decade, NCI has been recognizing the importance of this crossinstitutional collaboration and the unique skills and expertise each researcher brings to the collaboration," said Alan S. Boulos, MD '94, The Lynne and Mark D. Groban, MD '67 Dean of Albany Medical College. "The studies supported by this new grant will have a significant impact on the future of cancer diagnostics and therapy."

#### Saratoga Hospital Marks 100 Years of Maternity Services

On Dec. 17, 2023, Saratoga Hospital celebrated a milestone, marking a century of nurturing lives and fostering beginnings with the 100th anniversary of the Saratoga Hospital Maternity Unit. Since its establishment on Dec. 17, 1923, the unit has welcomed more than 60,000 babies to the Saratoga community.

Saratoga Hospital President and CEO Jill J. VanKuren, said, "As we commemorate a century of excellence in maternity services, our hospital remains steadfast in its commitment to providing exceptional care and embracing innovation. Here's to a century of milestones, and to the countless stories of new beginnings written within our walls and beyond them in our community."

#### NIH Awards Albany Medical College \$1.2M to Study Heart Failure

Scientists at Albany Medical College received a \$1.2 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to study heart failure, as part of a joint award with Thomas Jefferson University totaling more than \$2.3 million over four years. The research teams will focus on how the protein ryanodine receptor type 1 (RyR1) regulates cardiac function.

"We'll examine a potentially innovative therapeutic strategy that targets RyR1," said Yun-Min Zheng, MD, associate professor in the Department of Molecular and Cellular Physiology.





#### **MS Program in Human Anatomy Aims to Address Shortage**

Albany Medical College began offering a Master of Science in Human Anatomy (MSHA) in September to address a nationwide shortage of anatomical science educators. The MSHA is a two-year standalone program designed to provide graduate level training and teaching experience in the anatomical sciences.

"While there will be a strong focus on human cadaver dissection instruction and techniques, our students also will be trained in histology, embryology, neuroanatomy, and topics in research, and they'll have opportunities to perform teaching apprenticeships, making them much more marketable," said program director Michael Smith, PhD.

#### \$2.1M NIH Grant **Awarded for Study of TB**

Albany Medical College scientists were awarded a four-year, \$2.1 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to study the role of lung epithelial cells—the cells that form a mucosal barrier in the lungs—in protecting against tuberculosis.

"Most people can control the lung-damaging inflammation caused by TB," said Bibhuti Mishra, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Immunology and Microbial Disease and study leader. "But for others, post-TB lung damage persists even after successful antibiotic treatment, permanently impairing respiratory functions and leading to significant morbidity."

Top: Albany Medical College's 185th commencement was held in May at SPAC. Bottom: The annual Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research was awarded to three esteemed scientists for breakthroughs in understanding microbiomes.

#### 2023 Albany **Prize Awarded**

The 2023 Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research was awarded to three scientists whose research advanced the study and understanding of the microbiome, bacteria, and how they communicate in the body and their role in disease and health. The trio accepted the award at a special ceremony in Albany in October.

#### **College Commencement**

Albany Medical College awarded 224 degrees on May 5 during the 185th Commencement ceremonies at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center. Speakers included Alan S. Boulos, MD '94, The Lynne and Mark D. Groban, MD '67 Distinguished Dean of Albany Medical College; Maggie Gillis, vice chair of the Albany Med Health System Board of Directors; and student representatives of the Class of 2023. Vaccine specialist Barney S. Graham, MD, PhD, a 2021 recipient of the Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research, delivered the keynote address.

Medical degrees (MD) were awarded to 130 students. In addition, 41 received MS degrees in Physician Assistant Studies, 16 received either MS or doctoral degrees in clinical investigations and the biomedical sciences, 10 received master's degrees from the Alden March Bioethics Institute, while two received doctoral degrees from the bioethics program. Twenty-five students received MS degrees in Nurse Anesthesiology.

#### NIH Awards \$2M for Bone Marrow **Failure Study**

Scientists at Albany Medical College were awarded a fouryear, \$2 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to study severe aplastic anemia, a type of bone marrow failure.

"Immunosuppressive therapies, bone marrow transplantation, and other current treatments aim to suppress inflammation, which is known to be associated with bone marrow failure." explained Kate MacNamara. PhD, professor in the Department of Immunology and Microbial Disease. "These treatments can help young patients but aren't as effective for elderly patients and can lead to increased susceptibility to infection."

#### Dr. Shahbazov **Named Head of Transplant Surgery**

Rauf Shahbazov, MD, PhD, was named the inaugural chief of the Division of Transplant Surgery and the **Neil Lempert Endowed Chair** in the Department of Surgery.

"Albany Medical Center's transplant program has successfully served patients for several decades with excellent outcomes. I look forward to leading the team in its continued work toward long, healthy, and productive lives for people with end stage organ failure through access to safe and high-quality transplantation and continued care," Dr. Shahbazov said.



"Our connections through the Albany Med Health System have allowed us to strengthen our commitment to serve patients, care providers, and employees in all our communities with the highest level of safety and quality."

**-Kristopher Kusche,** chief information officer, Albany Med Health System.

#### Three Health System Hospitals Named Among Nation's Most Wired

Albany Medical Center, Glens Falls Hospital, and Saratoga Hospital were recognized among the Most Wired hospitals in the nation by the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME). The CHIME Digital Health Most Wired program assesses how effectively health care organizations apply core and advanced technologies to their clinical and business programs to improve health and care in their communities.

"Our connections through the Albany Med Health System have allowed us to strengthen our commitment to serve patients, care providers, and employees in all our communities with the highest level of safety and quality," said Kristopher Kusche, chief information officer of the Albany Med Health System.

#### Recreation of Classic Pink Floyd Track Provides Deeper Understanding of Brain Activity

Researchers made a breakthrough to assist those living with neurological disorders and diseases, all through a better understanding of how the brain works while listening to a classic rock song.

A study conducted by researchers from multiple institutions used data from 29 Albany Medical Center patients, each diagnosed with epilepsy. The patients passively listened to "Another Brick In The Wall, Part 1," a 1979 track by Pink Floyd. Recordings of each patient's brain activity allowed researchers to recreate the song using the patient's neural activity, with the goal of gaining a better understanding of how the brain takes in and then reconstructs information such as music.

#### New Alzheimer's Center Director

Maria Kataki, MD, PhD, was appointed director of The Alzheimer's Center at Albany Medical Center. A board-certified neurologist, Dr. Kataki specializes in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

Both Albany Medical Center and Glens Falls Hospital are designated as Centers of Excellence for Alzheimer's Disease (CEAD) by the New York State Department of Health.

# Community Service

Albany Med Health System is dedicated to the communities we serve and continually seeks ways to connect with our neighbors. In 2023, this included (clockwise from top): speaking out about driving under the influence or while distracted; participating in the American Cancer Society Making Strides Against Breast Cancer annual walk; joining the Hudson City School District Meet the Teacher Community Night; marching in the Capital PRIDE Parade; providing health care services to un- and under-insured members of the creative community at a free pop-up clinic at Caffè Lena; and working with teachers in Warren and Washington Counties to build a jump rope program.









# More Man Patients





#### **KYLE STICKLES**

### Teenage Sarcoma Survivor Spreads Hope at 5K

Capital Region community members walked and ran to raise awareness of sarcoma—a rare form of cancer that affects bones and soft tissue—at the 10th annual Sarcoma Strong 5K in Saratoga Springs. Founded by Albany Medical Center's Director of Orthopedic Oncology, Matthew DiCaprio, MD, the Sarcoma Strong organization raises funding to support sarcoma research.

# "We believe Kyle's story is giving others hope."

-Jamie Stickles

The event's Honoree of the Year was osteosarcoma survivor Kyle Stickles, 14, of Ghent. From October 2020 through

June 2021, Stickles underwent surgery and multiple rounds of chemotherapy at the Melodies Center for Childhood Cancer and Blood Disorders, at the Bernard & Millie Duker Children's Hospital, where he spent 97 days.

Stickles worked with Make-A-Wish of Northeastern New York to visit the Jets headquarters and play catch with Jets wide receiver Garrett Wilson. He and his family were then invited to attend the 2023 NFL Draft.

Welcomed onto the stage by NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, Stickles' enthusiastic announcement of the draft pick went viral—getting the attention of other famous football players. Patrick Mahomes of the Kansas City Chiefs tweeted, "Shoutout to Kyle Stickles for bringing the energy!!!!"

"People are recognizing Kyle and the inspiration that he is," said Jamie Stickles, his mother. "We believe Kyle's story is giving others hope."

The family has since connected with other sarcoma patients and families to offer guidance and comfort.27

"For anyone going through something like cancer, or going through a difficult time, I hope they see that there's a light at the end of the tunnel. They can get through this challenge in their life," said Kyle Stickles.

#### The Right Place, Just in Time

Dianne Shugrue retired in 2021 after eight years as president and CEO of Glens Falls Hospital. It was during her tenure that the hospital became part of the Albany Med Health System, a move she knew would greatly benefit the hospital and its surrounding communities. But little did she know the profound impact the System would have on her own future health.

She had just returned from spending time with a friend when she began experiencing dizziness and nausea. A registered nurse by trade, she thought she might be coming down with a virus. But when her symptoms worsened, her husband Larry Kelly, also a retired hospital CEO, called 911.

Her condition required that she be taken to the nearest community hospital, but because her symptoms were not the typical stroke-like symptoms, imaging tests showed she needed advanced care at Albany Medical Center—the region's only Comprehensive Stroke Center.

As Shugrue was being transported, the Logistics Capacity Command Center was hard at work assembling a team to prepare for her arrival. Modeled after similar centers in hospitals around the nation, the Logistics Center is open around the clock to coordinate patient flow and resources not only at Albany Medical Center, but across the entire System as needed.

Led by Ashley Telisky, DO, chief logistics officer, and Patty Meo, RN, director, the Logistics Center works closely across service lines and disciplines with the goals of improving patient flow and patient safety, enhancing the quality of care, and creating capacity.

"We've been able to centralize many of our daily efforts that align with our System mission and values regarding patient care," said Dr. Telisky.

"We can provide air traffic control of sorts across the System," Meo said. "Behind the scenes, we are connecting, collaborating, and coordinating to have a positive impact on patient outcomes."

When Shugrue arrived at Albany Medical Center, endovascular neurosurgeon Alexandra Paul, MD, was already waiting.

Based on her initial CT scans, Dr. Paul knew Shugrue was experiencing a rare basilar stroke.

"Dianne had a clot in the basilar artery, which is the main blood supply to the brainstem and controls the patient's ability to breathe on their own, to be awake, and to control their eye movement. It's an essential part of the brain and a stroke in this area can be devastating," said Dr. Paul.

Dr. Paul determined that Shugrue was a candidate for a procedure to remove the clot in her brain. The Sofia catheter from Microvention allowed Dr. Paul to access the clot minimally invasively.



"This community is so lucky that this technology is available, and that we have the skilled neurosurgeons available to perform these procedures."

-Dianne Shugrue

"Because the Sofia catheter is so reliable, we got to the clot easily and were able to successfully remove it. The time between her arrival and the clot being completely removed was under one hour," Dr. Paul said.

Other than feeling tired for the first few weeks, Shugrue fully recovered and is grateful for the advanced care she received.

"I think about the commitment of the Albany Med Health System to invest in the technology and to recruit and retain world-class neurosurgeons and other specialists," she said. "This community is so lucky that this technology is available, and that we have the skilled neurosurgeons available to perform these procedures."



"It was always Kevin first.
They took their time with him and made him feel comfortable as a patient."

-Melissa Heddy



#### Care Across Specialties

Melissa Heddy would do anything to keep her children from feeling pain. When her son Kevin McGuire, 5, had an accident on his three-wheeler riding toy, she felt helpless.

"It broke my heart," Heddy said.

McGuire was at his aunt's house in Mayfield when the accident happened. Heddy, who was at work at the time, received a call from McGuire's dad and met them at their local hospital.

The initial thought—that McGuire broke his arm and nothing more—soon turned into a more complex medical issue. McGuire was diagnosed with a supracondylar fracture, and there were

The initial thought that McGuire broke his arm and nothing more soon turned into a more complex medical issue.

concerns about the location of the break and the potential impact to Kevin's brachial artery, the main artery in the arm.

McGuire was airlifted to Albany Medical Center. Two hours later, McGuire was ready for surgery, which was performed by Abigail Mantica, MD, the only fellowshiptrained pediatric orthopedic surgeon in the Capital Region. "We were able to set the bone in the proper position, place pins to keep the bone in the right place and provide the proper observation post-surgery to make sure he was comfortable when he left the hospital the next day," she said.

Heddy described Dr. Mantica as "absolutely wonderful." She praised the nurses at the Bernard & Millie Duker Children's Hospital who provided care following surgery.

"It was always Kevin first," Heddy said.
"They took their time with him and made him feel comfortable as a patient."

#### MARK FABER

#### Unique Procedure Helps Patient Breathe Easier

Mark Faber spent more than ten years on oxygen as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) blocked airflow to his lungs, making him constantly feel like he was either drowning or suffocating.

He couldn't walk upright or take deep breaths. He let his driver's license expire and stopped riding his motorcycle. Leaving home meant his wife would have to load his oxygen tanks and wheelchair into the car.

Yet seeing the 63-year-old Faber today, it's difficult to imagine how hard daily activities had been for him. He bursts with pride as he talks about how he brushed snow off the car, brought four bags of groceries inside, and cooked a meal—all of which would have been unheard of just a few months prior to his procedure.

"I'm almost to the point where I was before being on oxygen," he said.

In August 2023, Faber's pulmonologist referred him to Nagendra Madisi, MD, an interventional pulmonologist. That October, Dr. Madisi used a bronchoscope—a thin tube inserted into the lungs via the nose or mouth—to place three endobronchial valves in Faber's left lung. Four additional valves were placed in his right lung in November, resulting in dramatic improvements to his breathing and overall quality of life.

Endobronchial valve placement by bronchoscopy is a minimally invasive, nonsurgical treatment for patients with severe COPD, including advanced emphysema. Patients at Albany Medical Center receive either Zephyr valves or Spiration valves, both of which are FDA-approved.

"These one-way valves help air come out of the diseased, overinflated part of the lung," explained Dr. Madisi, who has performed more than 50 endobronchial valve placement procedures at Albany Medical Center. "The diseased part slowly deflates, which helps relieve pressure on the diaphragm and allows people to take deep breaths again."

Faber says he feels like a new person. He even plans to renew his driver's license and get back on his motorcycle.

"There are really no words to describe it," he said. "It's like getting your life back."

"There are really no words to describe it. It's like getting your life back."

-Mark Faber

# A System By and For Our Community



**Increased Cross-campus Departmental Cooperation** 

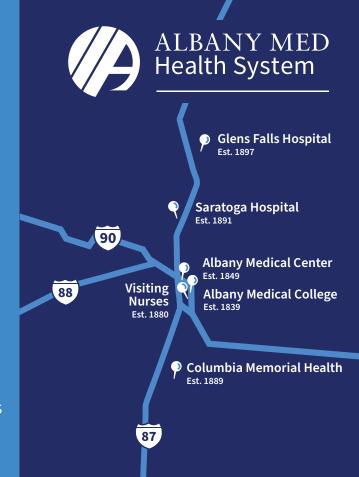
**System-level Planning** 

**System-wide Financial Mitigation Strategies** 

- Behavioral Health
- Cardiovascular Care
- Staffing Alliance
- Transportation
- Urgent Care

#### **Interhospital Relationships**

- Anesthesia, Emergency
- Coordination of patient transfers
- Oncology: Saratoga, Glens Falls







"What we've had to do is respond to a demand for psychiatric and mental health services in recent years that could never have been anticipated."

 -Jeffrey Winseman, MD, chair of the Albany
 Medical Center
 Department of Psychiatry

#### Meeting Our Region's Mental Health Needs

With more awareness than ever surrounding the importance of mental health, the demand for accessible psychiatric services has never been greater in the United States.

In hospitals across the Albany Med Health System, the need for those services reflects national trends.

"What we've had to do is respond to a demand for psychiatric and mental health services in recent years that could never have been anticipated," said Jeffrey Winseman, MD, chair of the Albany Medical Center Department of Psychiatry.

Each System hospital provides a broad spectrum of psychiatric services. At Albany Medical Center, approximately 6,400 psychiatric consultations were conducted for patients throughout the hospital in 2022.

At Glens Falls Hospital, investments are being made to improve the level of psychiatric care. With the support of donations and federal funding through the American Rescue Plan Act, the hospital began expansion of its crisis stabilization unit from seven to 13 beds to better support both adult and pediatric patients.

"Dramatic increases in demand for mental health services have led us to rethink how we help patients of all ages," said Mary Shannon, vice president of clinical services at Glens Falls Hospital. "Our focus is on meeting that demand, whether patients come to us with a mental health emergency, are in need of support that results in a hospital stay, or would be helped through some connection to another community resource."

The establishment of the Albany Med Health System Transfer Center has improved how patients are connected to the care they need. Through the Transfer Center, each hospital communicates real-time information on bed capacity and the needs of patients.

System leaders discussed how the early successes of the Transfer Center can strengthen the level of psychiatric care.

"One challenge we have is the detailed and sensitive referral process associated with mental health cases," said Lin Murray, manager of the System Transfer Center. "We're working closely with our behavioral health team systemwide to develop processes that address this concern and which will ultimately connect patients to the care they need in a more efficient way."

A unique asset of the System is that each of its four hospitals has inpatient psychiatric beds available. By attaining the highest standard of quality in care at each hospital, patients and their families know they are receiving compassionate and collaborative evaluation, assessment, and treatment no matter where they may access care across the System.

Behavioral health services at Saratoga Hospital range from comprehensive psych evaluations in the hospital to individual and group therapy in an office setting. The hospital runs an Addiction Medicine Program at Saratoga Community Health Center that offers patients comprehensive and personalized treatment, including behavioral health counseling.

Along with Saratoga Hospital, Columbia Memorial Health provides mental health support in its primary care offices. Behavioral specialists are available to meet with patients who visit primary care offices in Columbia and Greene counties with the goal of proactively providing support before an untreated condition leads to an emergency.

Each hospital assesses the ever-changing landscape and mental health needs of patients. Albany Medical Center's Department of Psychiatry introduced Parent/Child Interaction Therapy, a therapy that allows parents to hear recommendations of a clinician in real time as they work with children diagnosed with complex issues.

It's one of many examples of how a locally governed System makes decisions that enhance the level of care provided across the region.

"Each hospital is able to provide the services most in demand and identify new ways of working on problems that can benefit patients of all ages," Dr. Winseman said.

#### Regional Medical Partnership

A new partnership between Albany Medical College and several regional health organizations provides a unique opportunity for medical students to gain early clinical exposure.

The Introductory Longitudinal Clerkship (ILC), part of the Medical College's major curriculum modification, places first year medical students with primary care physicians throughout the community. Since January, 145 medical students have attended regular half-day sessions with primary care physicians from Community Care Physicians, St. Peter's Health Partners (SPHP), the Stratton VA Medical Center, Albany Med Health System members Columbia Memorial Health and Saratoga Hospital, as well as several private practices.

The ILC gives students the opportunity to work with the same physician preceptors as they provide care to their patients over time. Traditionally, medical students would not start clinical patient care training until the third year of medical school.

"Such early longitudinal clinical experiences with positive physician role models have been shown to help students develop foundational clinical skills, self-confidence, empathy toward patients, and a sense of professional identity," said Alan S. Boulos, MD '94, The Lynne and Mark D. Groban, MD '67 Distinguished Dean of Albany Medical College. "We're grateful to our community partners who have so generously volunteered their time to help us educate the next generation of physicians."

## Prestigious Level 1 Pediatric Trauma Verification

The American College of Surgeons verified Albany Medical Center as a Level 1 Pediatric Trauma Center. The Level 1 verification is the highest a hospital can attain and comes after a rigorous review by the ACS Committee on Trauma to ensure the hospital is meeting all aspects of trauma care, prevention, rehabilitation, and more.

The Massry Family Children's Emergency Center, which opened in 2018 as the region's only designated pediatric emergency department, is the referral center for all seriously ill and injured children in a 25-county area of northeastern New York and western New England. Physicians are fellowship-trained and board-certified in pediatric emergency medicine. Patients seen in the emergency department have easy access to the Bernard & Millie Duker Children's Hospital.

"Our trauma services provide a safety net for patients who sustain serious and life-threatening injuries," said Mary Edwards, MD, division chief of Pediatric Surgery and medical director of the Pediatric Trauma Program. "In the pediatric emergency center, parents, caregivers, and families place their trust in us. Our physicians, nurses, and staff strive every day to continue to earn that trust when these serious injuries occur."

Factors that qualify a hospital for a Level 1 verification include 24-hour availability of care from surgeons, prevention

and public education efforts in surrounding communities, continuing education of trauma program members, and the establishment of a comprehensive quality assessment program.

Albany Medical Center's adult emergency department is also a verified Level 1 Trauma Center by the ACS and is the busiest in New York State.



#### A Decade of Care at Malta Med

In 2013, Albany Medical Center and Saratoga Hospital entered a partnership to bring leading-edge health care closer to the homes of Capital Region residents. The vision was to provide surgical, urgent, and specialty care outside the hospital. Today, Malta Med Emergent Care is a pivotal point of access to the broad scope of services throughout the Albany Med Health System.

"In its first year, Malta Med Emergent Care saw more than 28,000 visits, underscoring its role in the community," said medical director Joanne McDonough, MD. "Today, we are providing care for more than 45,000 visits annually, offering a reliable alternative to the emergency department for all but the most critical conditions."

The success of Malta Med fueled expansion. The complex now includes facilities for same-day orthopedic surgery in collaboration with the Bone & Joint Center through the Center for Advanced Ambulatory Surgery, which opened in 2021. Care and treatment for oncology, physical therapy, and other services are also performed at Malta Med.

"We are committed to meeting the diverse health care needs of our community," Dr. McDonough said.

Advanced technologies at Malta Med allow physicians to make accurate diagnoses and initiate timely treatment.

"Our access to technologies such as CT, ultrasound, X-ray, as well as an on-site pharmacy and lab is unlike any ambulatory facility in the region, enabling our physicians to deliver prompt care," McDonough explained. "Should our patients require a higher level of specialized treatment, we can seamlessly transport them to one of our Albany Med Health System hospitals."

"To become a successful vascular program, comprehensive infrastructure needs to be in place to care for these incredibly complex patients."

-**R. Clement Darling III, MD,** chief of vascular surgery



#### Partnering to Treat Rosecea of the Eyes

More than 14 million people in the U.S. are living with rosacea, a chronic inflammation that causes a red, swollen rash, usually on the face. Approximately half of them also experience a form that affects their eyes, known as ocular rosacea.

"This can result in drying of the surface of the eye, putting patients at risk of pain, irritation, cosmetic deformity, and even vision loss," explained ophthalmologist Edward Wladis, MD, professor and chair of the Lions Eye Institute, Department of Ophthalmology at Albany Medical Center.

"There is currently no cure or truly effective therapy," he added.

But Dr. Wladis and scientist Alejandro Adam, PhD, associate professor in the Department of Molecular and Cellular Physiology at Albany Medical College, have been working to change that.

For more than a decade, they've been collaborating to develop an effective treatment for ocular rosacea, with exciting results so far.

They joined forces with Jacqueline Busingye, MD, chief of ophthalmology at Albany Stratton VA Medical Center, the principal investigator on a Phase I clinical trial for a topical cream based on their research. Sponsored by the VA hospital, the study was recently completed in a small group of VA patients and showed no adverse effects.

"We identified a vexing clinical problem, figured out how to understand it in greater detail, and worked together toward our goal of developing a new therapy," said Dr. Wladis.

The studies developed through this collaboration demonstrated that two distinct proteins are activated at very high levels in the skin of rosacea patients. Drawing on those results, Drs. Wladis and Adam developed and patented the cream, which is applied to the cheeks and nose.

#### System Benefits from Elite Vascular Care

Albany Medical Center was among the first four hospitals in the United States to be verified as part of the Vascular Verification Program (Vascular-VP), a quality program launched by the American College of Surgeons (ACS) with the Society for Vascular Surgery (SVS).

To receive verification, Albany Medical Center has shown a commitment to improving outcomes and care for patients receiving vascular surgical and interventional treatment in an outpatient setting.

Albany Medical Center served as one of eight pilot programs to assist in the development of the verification standards. To become verified, the hospital had to meet elements of vascular surgical care and quality across nine domains, including institutional commitment; program scope and governance; resources for facilities, personnel, and services; clinical care; data abstraction and analysis; quality improvement; and education and research.

"To become a successful vascular program, comprehensive infrastructure needs to be in place to care for these incredibly complex patients," said R. Clement Darling III, MD, chief of vascular surgery.

The Albany Med Health System is the major referral center and the largest provider of vascular surgery in northeastern New York and western New England. The program has a long history of excellence. The team is visited regularly by colleagues worldwide and has pioneered numerous procedures that are now standard in the field, including procedures to repair aneurysms and peripheral artery disease.

# Awards and Honors

The American College of Surgeons verified Albany Medical Center as a **Level 1 Pediatric Trauma Center,** the highest a hospital can attain.

Albany Medical Center was among the **first four hospitals in the United States** to be verified as part of the **Vascular Verification Program,** a quality program launched by the American
College of Surgeons with the Society for Vascular Surgery.

Ninety Albany Med Health System physicians affiliated with Albany Medical Center, Columbia Memorial Health, and Saratoga Hospital were named as "Top Doctors" in Hudson Valley magazine.

Albany Medical Center, Glens Falls Hospital, and Saratoga Hospital were named among the **Most Wired** hospitals in the nation by the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives.

practices as part of its annual list of the most trusted and top-performing care providers in the region.
Four practices from Columbia Memorial Health and Saratoga Hospital medical groups were honored in the categories of Family Practices and Top Performers in Quality of Care.

CDPHP named several System

Three longtime leaders and cornerstones of the Albany Med Health System's foundation were presented with the System's highest honor—the **Pillars Award.** Steven Frisch, MD, Ferdinand Venditti, MD, and Vincent Verdile, MD, were credited for their leadership and vision.

Six Albany Medical Center nurses were recognized for excellence in patient care and leadership with the **Pillars of Nursing Excellence Award:** 

**Andrea Bousbouras, RN,** Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders

Kaylin Dawson MS, BSN, RN, SANE A/P, NYSAFE,

Forensic Medicine Division/ Sane Program for Emergency and Trauma Services

Robin Dugan, MS, RNC-NIC, Pediatrics

**Katie Nagy, MS, RN, ACNS-BC,** Renal Pulmonary
General Medicine Unit

**Erin O'Keefe, RN,** Apheresis **Ginny Pfeil, MSN, NNP-BC,** Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

Barbara Ostrov, MD, chief of service of the Bernard & Millie Duker Children's Hospital and the vice dean of Clinical Affairs at Albany Medical College, received the James T. Cassidy Award in Rheumatology from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The Pediatric Cystic Fibrosis Program at the Bernard & Millie Duker Children's Hospital was awarded a Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Quality Care Award. Saratoga Hospital was named one of "The World's Best Hospitals" by Newsweek for the third year in a row. With 171 beds, the hospital is the smallest New York State facility to earn the designation.

EmUrgentCare in Colonie was voted "Best Urgent Care" in the *Times Union*'s annual Best of the Capital Region Survey.

The Albany Med Health System was recognized with the **Live Fierce Award** by the American Heart Association - New
York State for its multi-year
"Live Fierce" collaboration.
Pediatric cardiology nurse
Kimberley Branigan, RN, NP,
was named **Leader of Impact.** 

Damian Shin, PhD, and Eric Molho, MD, were presented with an Albany County Legislature proclamation recognizing April 2023 as Parkinson's Awareness Month in Albany County.

The System Communications and Marketing Department was honored by the American Marketing Association and Public Relations Society of America Capital Region chapters with MARCOM awards for the brand launch and image campaign (With You for Everything) and for the new Albany Med Health System website.





Above: Attendees celebrate Glens Falls Hospital at Savor at the Inn at Erlowest; Right: Aloha 5K participants dress for the occasion.



#### The VNA Foundation

The Visiting Nurses Foundation aids and assists the work of the Visiting Nurses Association by helping patients who often have no other resources. Throughout 2023, the Foundation continued to assist with bed lifts, grab bars, wheelchair ramps, and other forms of assistance that improved the safety and independence of many of the more than 3,000 patients served by the organization. 🗷



# FOUNDATIONS

#### Saratoga Hospital Foundation

With the unwavering support of the community, the Saratoga Hospital Foundation remains dedicated to ensuring that health care excellence is accessible to all.

In 2023, John Hendrickson's \$1.2 million donation led to the establishment of the backstretch clinic, where Saratoga Hospital can provide comprehensive health care services to seasonal workers at the Saratoga Racetrack. The clinic serves all backstretch workers for the six month season, with an average of around 800 patient visits per year.

The emergency department's new CT scanner was made possible by Foundation donations from The Volunteer Guild, the Robert and Lisa Moser Family Foundation, The Dake Family/Stewart's Shops, and Mike and Linda Toohey.

The 15th Annual Cantina Kids Fun Run supporting Saratoga Hospital drew more than 1,000 participants and raised money to support children's health care (shown below left). At the 41st Annual Saratoga Hospital Luau Gala held in August, more than 1,000 attendees supported the Saratoga Hospital Community Health Center, which provides primary care, dental, behavioral health, and addiction medicine services to community members, regardless of their finances or insurance coverage.

Below top: 204 golfers from across the region participated in the Saratoga Hospital Golf Invitational at Saratoga National Golf Club in September to raise funds for nursing education and professional development.







Staff members of the Albany Medical Center Department of Emergency Medicine enjoy an evening at Light up the Night.

#### Columbia Memorial Health Foundation

Columbia Memorial Health Foundation has the generous support of donors that provide us with the resources to buy innovative technology, expand and renovate facilities, provide direct patient care items, and support our health care team. In 2023, the Foundation:

- Supported the future Women's Health Center scheduled to open in July of 2024. The newly designed center will combine gynecology and urogynecology services, offering women compassionate care in one location.
- Celebrated the grand opening of the new Center for Breast Health in October. The Center adopts a leading national model of comprehensive and integrated breast care that improves both quality of care and patient outcomes. Services available at the center include screening and diagnostic 3D mammography, diagnostic ultrasound, ultrasound guided biopsy, and stereotactic breast biopsy. The Center's expert medical decisions, and support groups for patients and their families.
- Provided the hospital with new technology including bone densitometry, ultrasonography, X-Ray, echocardiogram, and anesthesia units that can provide the most accurate, state of the art diagnosis and treatment.

The CMH Foundation Nursing Scholarship Fund was established in partnership with Columbia-Greene Community College, providing ten students with full tuition if they join the hospital's health care team for a minimum of two years upon graduation. 🗷





former Columbia Memorial Health president and chief executive event raised \$615,000 to support the Women's Health Center.

#### Albany Medical Center Foundation

The Albany Medical Center Foundation exceeded fundraising goals in 2023, thanks to donations of all sizes from generous donors comprised of grateful patients, dedicated staff, board members, community leaders, and local and national corporations and foundations. These donors make an indelible impact on our Hospital and College, and we are thankful for their support that helps us remain at the leading edge of health care, medical education, and biomedical research.

In its 40th year, Dancing in the Woods raised nearly \$550,000 for the Melodies Center for Childhood Cancer and Blood Disorders. The event celebrates the patients and their families and the highly skilled team who cares for them. CDPHP was the title sponsor of the event for the 23rd year.

The 25th annual News Radio 810 & 103.1 WGY and 99.5 The River Cares for Kids Radiothon, sponsored by Star Roofing and Price Chopper/Market 32, raised more than \$330,000 for the Bernard & Millie Duker Children's Hospital, our local Children's Miracle Network Hospital. And the Annual Golf Tournament, sponsored by BBL Construction Services, LLC and Columbia Development Companies, raised more than \$200,000 for the Bernard & Millie Duker Children's Hospital.

Light up the Night, Albany Medical Center's annual summer fundraising gala, raised nearly \$300,000 for the Department of Emergency Medicine. The event was sponsored by Anthem Blue Cross. 03

> Emma, 6, Melodies Center patient and our 2023 Miracle Child Champion for Children's Miracle Network.







#### Albany Med Health System | 2023

#### **Hospital & Patient Care**

Licensed beds	1,520
Patient admissions	62,580
Patient days	372,940
Observation cases	10,695
Observation days	15,804
Outpatient visits	2,692,496
Average length of stay (days)	5.96
Average daily census	1,021.8
Surgical cases	54,198
Emergency department visits	181,023
Visiting Nurses Visits	43,078
Licensed Home Care Hours	439,972

#### **Faculty**

**Employees** 

Full-time physicians	889
Residents	509
Basic science faculty:	110
Full-time	71
Part-time	1
Volunteer	23
Emeritus	15

16,906

#### **Graduate Studies**

Graduate students (total enrollment)	267
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#### **Medical College**

Medical students (total enrollment)	567
Freshmen	146
Average GPA (of incoming freshmen)	3.7
Medical school applications	12,973

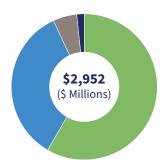
#### Research Funding (\$ millions)

Total sponsored research	\$19.2
Basic science	\$15.6
Clinical science	\$3.6
Active awards	408
Peer reviewed publications	676



#### **Unrestricted Revenues** (\$ millions)

Total revenue*	\$2,875	100%
Other revenue	\$293	10.19%
Tuition and fees	\$42	1.46%
Gifts and grants	\$33	1.15%
Patient and service	\$2,507	87.20%



#### **Unrestricted Expenses** (\$ millions)

Total expenses	\$2,952	100%
Other expenses	\$49	1.66%
■ Depreciation and Interest	\$148	5.01%
Supplies and purchased services	\$1,029	34.86%
Salaries and benefits	\$1,726	58.47%

<sup>\*</sup>Total revenue does not include CARES or DSRIP funding.



