



Stay Healthy

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YOUR RESOURCE
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
AND WELLNESS



+ UHS nurse Crystal Lewis (right) took quick action to save Alex Aubel's (left) life.

Rapid Response Saves Lives

UHS nurse Crystal Lewis performs lifesaving CPR on her daughter's best friend

TIME TO CATCH UP
Why it's important to get your kids up-to-date on their shots

ON THE PULSE
The latest tech innovations at UHS

Looking forward to a bright future

At UHS, we are embracing the return to a more familiar rhythm of daily life, even though the “new normal” may not look exactly like the world did before COVID-19 hit.



We are especially encouraged that more and more people are once again seeking medical care when they need it. Scheduling your annual checkup or a recommended procedure can help you avoid more

serious medical issues down the road. One significant example is ensuring that your children have the immunizations they need before they go back to school in the fall.

Likewise, we at UHS are moving forward with a number of organizational plans and advances that are too important to neglect or delay.

We are proceeding with the Wilson Project in Johnson City and the Chenango Medical Neighborhood in Norwich, with the ultimate goal of enhancing the patient experience today and for years to come. We are expanding Hospital Care at Home and adding advances in cardiovascular care at the UHS Heart & Vascular Institute and UHS Delaware Valley Hospital.

We have long been committed to donating automated external defibrillators to key locations around our community, coupling that endeavor with CPR training. In this issue of *Stay Healthy*, you will learn how a UHS-donated AED, plus quick thinking and calm action on the part of a UHS employee, came together to save the life of a young girl.

So now, more than a year after the pandemic became a reality, we are all picking up the pieces and reflecting on the lessons learned. We are grateful for the remarkable examples of people coming together to support others with compassion and resilience. And we are committed to finding ways to make a positive difference in the lives of many.

John M. Carrigg
PRESIDENT & CEO OF UHS



Happier at Home

UHS Hospital Care at Home makes recovery easier

In December 2020, UHS launched the UHS Hospital Care at Home Program, with the goal of giving COVID-19 patients a more comfortable recovery. Instead of being admitted to the hospital, where they’re usually confined to a bed or chair in their assigned room, patients can receive care from the comfort of their own home.

Kim Brady, system director of Care Management, notes how many of the patients who have participated in the program have needed some sort of physical rehabilitation, and being at home provides them with more mobility in a familiar environment. It also means fewer patients are placed in nursing home facilities.

Patients have also been able to learn more about and become more involved with their healthcare. “Being with their caregiver, which is typically a family member, they learn together how to treat the illness,” says Ms. Brady. “And I think it’s helped with ongoing education, so they understand their health better.”

After its launch, the program has also expanded beyond just COVID-19 cases. The UHS Hospital Care at Home Program is currently treating patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cellulitis, pneumonia and congestive heart failure, as well.

The program has been a success thus far, and 181 patients have participated. “I think patients are just happier at home,” says Ms. Brady. “We’ve gotten a lot of great feedback.”



SIGN UP TODAY

Check out stayhealthyuhs.org to sign up for our e-newsletter and get the latest updates from UHS Stay Healthy direct to your inbox. You’ll also find web exclusive and extended articles, as well as the full archives of *UHS Stay Healthy Magazine*.



On the Pulse

New technology innovations at UHS improve patient services



NEW LVAD CLINIC

The UHS Heart & Vascular Institute has opened a new outpatient clinic focused on treating advanced heart failure through the use of a mechanical implant. The LVAD Clinic at the institute specializes

in caring for patients who have a special mechanical device that helps the heart pump blood.

Until now, most qualifying heart failure patients in Greater Binghamton had to travel to other cities

for checkups and maintenance after the device is implanted. Now, evaluations and routine visits can be conducted at UHS Wilson Medical Center.

“There are a lot of advanced heart failure patients in this community that this will help,” says Rasha Aurshiyah, MD, cardiologist and heart failure specialist at UHS.

NUCLEAR CARDIOLOGY

“Nuclear cardiology is functional, molecular imaging that shows

us the function of the organ systems in the body, instead of just the structures in the body,” says James Avery, imaging technician at UHS.

Bringing this technology to UHS Delaware Valley Hospital means that patients with coronary artery disease will now receive its benefits, which include quicker, better diagnoses and therefore better, more targeted treatment plans. According to Keyoor Patel, DO, cardiologist at Delaware Valley Hospital, the biggest advantage to

patients is improving access to this better care.

“This imaging technology is available in other places. However, we have a lot of patients who are unable to travel far distances—whether because of issues of comfort, weather or other reasons,” says Dr. Patel. “Having nuclear cardiology present at UHS Delaware Valley, a rural hospital, enables us to provide the care of a bigger hospital in this rural setting. It is a huge advantage for our population here and in the surrounding areas.”

IMPROVING OUR CAMPUSES

UHS is always working on making improvements and enhancements to our facilities. Right now, two exciting projects—the Chenango Medical Neighborhood Plan and the Wilson Project—are in the works, with plans to bring more access and better services to people in our service area.

THE CHENANGO MEDICAL NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

UHS Chenango Memorial Hospital has created the Chenango Medical Neighborhood Plan, a project that is integral to our vision for meeting Chenango County’s healthcare needs, today and in the future. With input from the community, the project is designed to reconfigure and redeploy hospital resources to ensure

continued access to essential services, expand specialty care, improve health outcomes and keep the hospital viable for years to come. A new Emergency Department and Walk-In Center are nearing completion, with high-profile billboards around the area informing the public of the arrival of the new services on a modernized, welcoming campus.

THE WILSON PROJECT

This major construction project will develop a new six-story, state-of-the-art clinical tower on the campus of UHS Wilson Medical Center in Johnson City. The tower will be the “front door” to UHS’ services, featuring a new trauma center and emergency



department, MRI suite, surgical support area and roof-top helipad. It will include four inpatient medical/surgical units with 30 private rooms each (for a total of 120 private rooms). The goal of the project is to create an exceptional experience for all patients who come to the UHS Wilson campus.



For the latest updates on these projects and more, visit nyuhs.org.

✦ The Lewis and Aubel families enjoy time together after their harrowing experience this March. Pictured (clockwise from top left): Crystal Lewis, Melissa Aubel, Alex Aubel, Autumn Lewis and Jillian Lewis.



✦ Access to an automated external defibrillator (AED) and the rapid response from UHS nurse Crystal Lewis, RN, to an emergency saved Alex Aubel's life.

rapid response

istock.com: pislitar

You never know when you will be exactly the right person in the right place at the right time. UHS Gastroenterology Lab nurse Crystal Lewis, RN, recently was all three.

On March 13, Crystal and her husband Keith were on their way to drop off their 14-year-old daughter, Jillian, at soccer practice at the 434 Sportsplex in Vestal. Jillian's best friend, Alex Aubel, 14, was also headed there with her mother, Melissa. The girls, both ninth graders at Owego Free Academy, were texting each other en route, planning to meet in the parking lot and walk inside together.

"I let Jillian out, and as I was parking, I heard yelling," says Crystal. "I figured one of the kids had tripped in the parking lot and hit her head, so I got out of the car and went to help." The situation she discovered was the last thing she would have imagined: "There was Alex, face-down on the ground, her backpack still on. She wasn't breathing and was already grayish, and I could tell this was bad. I went into nurse mode, and just started going through all the steps in my head."

While the team's coach dialed 911 and other parents shepherded the rest of the team indoors, Crystal began CPR compressions and sent someone to get the building's automated external defibrillator (AED). "It's so strange—just a few weeks before, I had been talking with another mom and was wondering if the facility had an AED. She went and asked, so we knew it was there, and that the staff kept it maintained and ready for use," says Crystal. When the AED was brought out, Crystal applied the patches and followed the machine's instructions. "I'm trained to do this, but it was such a surreal situation—a 14-year-old I know well having an unexpected cardiac event—so the step-by-step the machine provided was a godsend."

After applying one shock, Crystal continued compressions, and when the EMTs arrived less than five minutes after the coach's 911 call, they checked

Alex's condition and found a pulse. "The best words I've ever heard in my entire life were, 'We have a pulse,'" says Crystal. "The EMTs had to tell me more than once that I could stop so they could prepare Alex for transport."

TAKING QUICK ACTION

After Alex was placed in the ambulance, she was taken to UHS Wilson Medical Center, and after just 10 minutes in the Emergency Department she was airlifted to Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital in Syracuse, where she could be evaluated and treated by pediatric cardiology specialists. Her mom, Melissa, was by Alex's side throughout the seemingly endless five minutes that elapsed before Alex's heart began beating again; Melissa and her husband, Mike, drove to Syracuse to reunite with Alex at Golisano.

In Syracuse, Alex was diagnosed with long QT syndrome, a congenital condition that can cause fast, irregular heartbeats. Unless discovered incidentally on an EKG ordered for some other reason, the condition is a silent one until an arrhythmia strikes, usually when the individual is a young teen. Because CPR began literally moments after her collapse, Alex is alive with no cardiac or brain damage. The outcome for most patients is not typically such a happy one: Unless cardiac intervention begins immediately, as it did for Alex, most children in the same situation are not so lucky.

As part of her treatment, Alex will have an implantable cardioverter defibrillator, or ICD, for the rest of her life. The device acts as an internal AED. She now also takes a beta blocker to lower her blood pressure and reduce stress on her heart. Alex's doctors are hopeful she will be able to resume her normal activities—including soccer—without limitations. Her cardiologist took the



+ Like all members of the UHS nursing team, Crystal Lewis, RN, received training in CPR and the use of AEDs. This training and her quick action saved Alex Aubel's life.



For more information about CPR training at UHS, visit nyuhs.org.

UHS nurse Crystal Lewis performs lifesaving CPR on her daughter's best friend

SAVES LIVES

time to call Crystal: “He asked if I’d ever done CPR before, and I told him that other than training, I never had. He said what a good job I did and how well Alex was doing because of it.”

PREPARED FOR SUCCESS

Crystal’s takeaway from her stressful but miraculous experience is the importance of learning CPR and AED skills, and being willing to apply them when necessary. “In the time since Alex’s collapse, I’ve said more than once that I will never complain about the recertification training we do,” she says. “It’s fantastic that UHS provides us with pediatric advanced life support, advanced life support and CPR training, and education in AED use. I feel like that knowledge gave me the calmness and courage to proceed and not second-guess myself. I’ve been with UHS for 15 years, and as I worked on Alex, I kept replaying my training in my head.”

While fortunately these types of events are rare, Alex’s situation is the exact type of emergency that UHS nurses are prepared for due to their CPR and AED training. “Being the cardiac care center for our community, it’s very important that our nurses are always prepared to provide the best and most comprehensive care,” says Kali Gehring, nurse and CPR program coordinator at UHS. “Our nurses are very involved in the community, whether it’s through sports, the schools or other organizations, and that helps provide another level of support for the community, knowing our staff are well-trained to help in an emergency.”

Ms. Gehring points out that, according to the American Heart Association, every minute that a person is in cardiac arrest and not receiving care reduces their likelihood of survival by 10 percent. “With Crystal being trained and able to jump in and provide care immediately, that made a big difference in what saved Alex’s life,” she explains.

When it comes to quick action, another factor is the availability of AED devices. “The No. 1 goal is to close the emergency situation within a three-minute timeframe,” says Jay Hubbard, Sports Medicine field manager and lead athletic trainer at UHS Sports Medicine. UHS has placed AEDs at important sites throughout the community, including the AED used to save Alex’s life at the 434 Sportsplex. Learn more about UHS’ promotion of safety in “Community Connection” (at right).

A TRAGEDY AVOIDED

Long-time friends Melissa and Crystal are even closer thanks to this shared experience. “I’ve told Crystal I’m at her beck and call, forever,” Melissa laughed. Both women pointed to the sheer number of stars that aligned to make Alex’s deficit-free recovery possible: Jillian waited for Alex in the parking lot, so Crystal was still there and able to start CPR immediately. The coach called 911 right away. The facility had a charged AED on site. The other adults on hand did whatever was needed: Getting the AED, opening the case and activating the unit. “That girl has angels watching out for her—it was the best worst-case scenario you could have,” says Crystal.

National CPR and AED Awareness Week is observed every summer, so now’s the time to refresh existing skills or take your first-ever class. “CPR is something everyone should learn,” says Crystal. “You don’t have to be perfect at it, but being able to do something, anything, could mean the difference between life and death someday. Be prepared.” 🦋



✦ Jillian Lewis and Alex Aubel, best friends and ninth-graders at Owego Free Academy, enjoy the sunshine after Alex’s medical emergency this past March.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Sports and recreation are important to everyday life in the Southern Tier and help bring people together. Keeping our athletes healthy means creating a safe environment for them to learn and compete. Jay Hubbard, Sports Medicine field manager and lead athletic trainer at UHS Sports Medicine, explains why this is a priority:

“We strive to be the leaders in sports medicine services throughout this community,” he says. “As we have become more involved, the most important thing we bring to events is our first-aid kit and automated external defibrillator [AED]. To be able to offer that to the athlete population within the community is huge.”

Nowhere was this clearer than at the 434 Sportsplex in March, when UHS nurse Crystal Lewis, RN, saved a young woman’s life by performing CPR and using an AED (see main story to learn more). Mr. Hubbard and his team work with local schools and athletic departments throughout the region to ensure they have the resources needed to make sports safe. UHS’ portable AEDs also provide an important advantage: Because they are brought to the sidelines by a UHS team member, they are quickly accessible, compared to AEDs placed in buildings that may not be as easily accessible from the field.

For athletes and parents enjoying sports this fall, Mr. Hubbard encourages taking action if someone is in distress. “I always encourage people to act,” he says. “If you are certified in CPR, and someone is losing consciousness or not responsive, it is better to be safe and take action than be sorry.”

TIME *to catch up*

Learn why it's important to get your kids up-to-date on their shots

Last year, as parents tried their best to avoid doctor's offices and hospitals during the pandemic, many children missed appointments for their vaccines and annual checkups, according to recently released data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Mary DeGuardi, MD, pediatrician at UHS, stressed the importance of vaccination for children and adolescents in the UHS community, especially for COVID-19. "Vaccination is the only way that we can get ourselves out of this pandemic," she explains.

If your child is planning to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, and they are due for other vaccines, such as the human papillomavirus or meningitis vaccine, there is no need to wait between those vaccinations. Just be sure that wherever you choose to schedule your child's COVID-19 vaccine, the Pfizer series of shots is offered. The Pfizer vaccine is the only one currently approved by the CDC for children age 12 and up.

"As we open up and kids go back to school, go to summer camp and socialize more with their friends, if children are not adequately vaccinated, we risk the outbreak of vaccine-preventable diseases," says Dr. DeGuardi. "We have to remember it's not just about the individual who's getting the vaccine against COVID-19, it's about their friends, family and people they may be in contact with."

Dr. DeGuardi and the pediatric team at UHS also encourage parents to schedule their children's influenza vaccine as fall approaches, in preparation for what could be a particularly bad flu season.

"We didn't see much flu this past year, or other infectious diseases, because of the mask wearing and social distancing," says Dr. DeGuardi. "Once those barriers are taken down, we can anticipate that people are going to start to get sick. We're actually very concerned about having a highly active flu season."

She adds that after having minimal exposure to the flu in the last year, children are more vulnerable to more serious infection. 🦠

JOINING THE TEAM

To help meet the needs of the pediatric community at UHS, two new pediatric providers have been added to the team: Sreya Singh, MD, and Victoria R. Nakimbugwe, MD. Mary DeGuardi, MD, pediatrician at UHS, explains that not only do these new doctors come to the UHS Pediatrics team with a strong background in pediatric medicine, but their addition also improves the access to pediatric care for the UHS community.

"We want to make sure our patients who are due for vaccines and due for annual physical exams are able to do it in a timely manner without having to wait too long," says Dr. DeGuardi. "Also, for new babies that are born into our communities, they have the ability to establish relationships with a new provider that can hopefully follow them from infancy into their young-adult lives."



WELCOME NEW PATIENTS

UHS pediatricians are currently welcoming new patients. To find a pediatrician near you, visit nyuhs.org.




community care virtually

Virtual Walk-In gives you access to UHS doctors from home

Receiving walk-in care has never been easier at UHS. Not only can patients head to one of UHS' three in-person walk-in locations, but that same care is also available virtually at nyuhs.zipnosis.com.

"If you have a smartphone, tablet or computer, you can get care for many walk-in conditions wherever you're located in the Southern Tier," says Sean Britton, system program manager, Virtual Health and Digital Transformation at UHS. "One way our Virtual Walk-In is unique is you will see the same providers you see in UHS walk-in locations, under the clinical leadership of a UHS physician."

That UHS physician is Anthony Consolazio, MD, who oversees the UHS Virtual Walk-In. "The key difference in our service is that you're seeing our own providers locally. A lot of other health systems use a national service," says Dr. Consolazio. Not only does this mean you're getting care from a qualified UHS provider, but it also means if you do have to go into a location for follow-up care, you'll be meeting with the same team that assisted you virtually.

Consider the UHS Virtual Walk-In the next time you have a medical need. Refer to the chart below for conditions or issues that we can help you with through a virtual visit. 



KNOW WHERE TO GO



VIRTUAL WALK-IN VISITS

- Animal or insect bites
- Coughs
- Cuts
- Diarrhea
- Dizziness
- Eye injuries
- Fever
- Headache
- Nausea or upset stomach
- Rashes
- Sinus pain
- Sore throat
- Urinary tract/bladder infections
- Vomiting



PRIMARY CARE OR WALK-IN

- Animal or insect bites
- Broken bone
- Burns
- Concussion
- Coughs
- Cuts
- Diarrhea
- Dizziness
- Eye injuries
- Fever
- Headache
- Nausea or upset stomach
- Rashes
- Sinus pain
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Urinary tract/bladder infections
- Vomiting



EMERGENCY ROOM

- Asthma attack
- Broken bone (if skin is punctured)
- Burns (if severe)
- Concussion (if loss of consciousness)
- Cuts (if uncontrolled bleeding)
- Fever (for patients under 3 months old or with fever over 105°F)
- Headache (if severe)
- Seizure
- Shortness of breath (if severe)
- Vomiting blood



CONVENIENT CARE

Visit nyuhs.zipnosis.com to start a virtual visit. This chart is intended for use as a quick reference guide that may help you decide where to go for care. If you are uncertain of where to go, please contact your provider.