



ISSUE 1 / 2023

Stay Healthy

YOUR RESOURCE
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
AND WELLNESS

One Day at a Time

How persistence paid off during Emma Mucilli's journey of treating chronic pain with physical therapy

SLEEP IS GOOD MEDICINE

Sleep studies are helping patients take control of their overall health

KNOW WHERE TO GO

A reference guide to help you get the best care

✦ Emma Mucilli is back to hiking and other activities after a spinal injury



For a top-notch care experience



Recently several of us at UHS had the opportunity to witness a milestone moment—placing the final beam atop the steel structure of the new Wilson Main Tower of UHS Wilson Medical Center. This “topping out” ceremony commemorated

finishing the major steel structure phase of the tower. For several days prior, the white-painted top beam was held at ground level so Team UHS members could stop by, sign their names and express sentiments in writing.

The topping out marked our incredible progress with the Wilson Project and showed our commitment to keeping patients at the center of everything we do. When completed, the six-story, 183,375-square-foot Wilson Main Tower will include 120 private patient rooms in a beautiful building full of natural light.

We celebrated by joining our design and construction team partners, Chianis + Anderson Architects and LeChase Construction. Using the gigantic 340-foot-tall crane on site, the final steel beam was installed more than 100 feet above ground level. It’s part of almost 2,000 tons of steel used throughout the tower.

Topping-out ceremonies are a tradition in the construction field, signaling a milestone in work. Everyone takes a moment to celebrate the progress made and thank all involved.

We look forward to opening day in mid-2024. The goal is to create an exceptional patient experience and provide our medical and surgical patients with a world-class facility. The modernization of the UHS Wilson campus will benefit future generations across the Southern Tier region, supporting the quality of care we provide and expanding UHS’ ability to recruit and retain outstanding healthcare providers. That’s why we’re excited to open the doors and begin caring for people in this amazing new space.

John M. Carrig
PRESIDENT & CEO OF UHS



Wilson Place Pharmacy Open 24-7

OUR WILSON PLACE PHARMACY IS LOCATED AT 52 HARRISON STREET IN JOHNSON CITY, ACROSS FROM UHS WILSON MEDICAL CENTER.

UHS Pharmacy Wilson Place is open around-the-clock to serve all your medication needs.

We’re one of the few major retail outpatient pharmacies in Greater Binghamton to offer services 24 hours a day and are the closest to UHS’ hospitals. The expanded hours are designed to make life easier for you when you need to fill a prescription at any hour of the day or night and even on weekends. They’re especially convenient if you’re being discharged from the hospital and would like to get a prescription on your way home. Our pharmacies are staffed by friendly, knowledgeable professionals who are here to make your experience as a patient both safe and restorative.



Wilson Project Construction Update

The new Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) recently opened at UHS Wilson Medical Center. Its relocation is the first major unit completion of the Wilson Project. The space within UHS Wilson previously occupied by the PACU will become the new corridor linking the existing hospital with the Wilson Main Tower. Completion of the tower is scheduled for spring 2024. Be part of this journey by donating to the UHS Journey Campaign Fund. Visit nyuhs.org/give-back to learn more.

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UHS earns national “Senior-Friendly” designation

At UHS, we understand that hospital care can be a source of stress for many older patients and their families. Older adult patients have unique health needs that require special care. That’s why we participate in the Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders (NICHE) program.

As a result, UHS has earned 2023 “Senior-Friendly” recognition from NICHE. The designation shows success in implementing high-quality, system-wide initiatives that demonstrate a commitment to the care of older adults.



LEARN MORE

For more information about NICHE, visit nicheprogram.org.

These include:

- Launch of an ambulation aide position for the safe mobilization of elderly patients
- Partnership with UHS Trauma Services to set protocols for injured older adults
- Partnering with the planning team on the Wilson Project to ensure that the new Wilson Main Tower at UHS Wilson Medical Center will reflect aging-sensitive principles to ensure safety and comfort for older patients

“We are proud to be recognized as ‘Senior-Friendly’ by the NICHE program,” said Peggy Thomas, MSN, RN, CENP, vice president for nursing and chief nursing officer of UHS Hospitals. “This recognition reflects UHS’ commitment and dedication to providing care and improving healthcare for older adults and all patients.”

NICHE is a national nurse-driven program that validates a hospital’s commitment to excellence in caring for patients aged 65 or older. As part of our partnership with NICHE, UHS nurses have access to special training in the care of geriatric patients.



LUCINDA RIDER NAMED AMONG TOP 10 RURAL HOSPITAL CFOS

LuCinda Rider, CHFP, chief financial officer at UHS Delaware Valley Hospital in Walton, New York, has been named one of “10 Rural Hospital CFOs to Know/2023” by *Becker’s Hospital Review*.

“Rider is responsible for financial operations at UHS Delaware Valley, a progressive critical access hospital in upstate New York,” *Becker’s* stated. “For 10 consecutive years, she has led the

hospital to a positive bottom line.”

Outside of her role as CFO, Rider acts as the UHS Delaware Valley compliance officer and as board chair of the UHS Employees Federal Credit Union. Prior to becoming CFO, she was controller at the hospital in Walton.

“Rural hospitals provide access to health services for communities that may otherwise face barriers to quality care,” *Becker’s* stated. “CFOs of rural hospitals play a key

role in ensuring that hospital operations run smoothly.”

In 2021, *Becker’s* also recognized Ms. Rider nationally as “one of more than 50 women responsible for their hospital’s or health system’s financial operations as CFO.” That year, the proportion of women in CFO positions at major corporations was at an all-time high, according to *Fortune* magazine.

Rider’s strategic investment and cost containment plan helped earn her the national accolade.

How UHS patient Emma Mucilli learned to manage her chronic pain through physical therapy

one day at a TIME



✦ After physical therapy treatment at UHS, Emma Mucilli is happy to return to some of her favorite pastimes, such as running, hiking and skiing—activities she previously was unable to do because of her spinal injury.

Emma Mucilli hurt her back when she was 19. In her job for a clothing retailer, she suffered a herniated disc while moving merchandise in the stockroom.

The injury should have been a bump in the road.

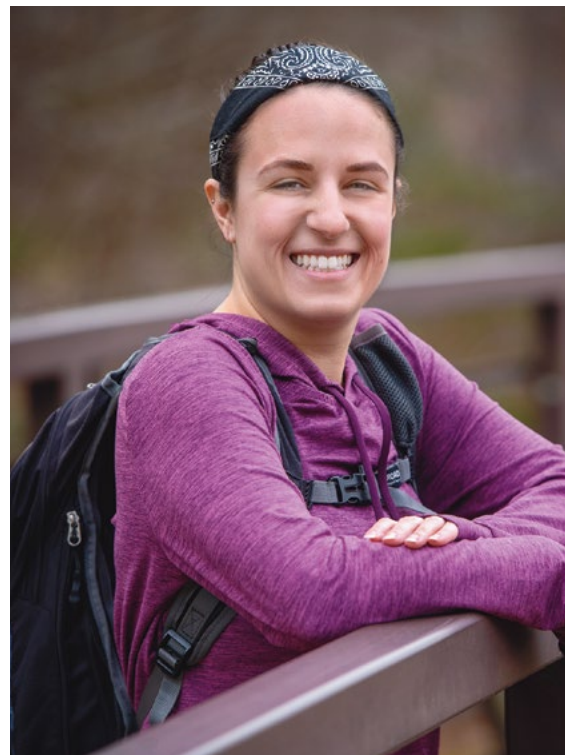
Instead, it set off an eight-year spiral of chronic pain that physically derailed Mucilli and changed how she approached life.

“I branded myself an injured person,” Mucilli says. “I woke up every morning, and the first thought was, ‘How much pain am I in today?’ I used that pain gauge to dictate everything I did for eight-and-a-half years.”

She saw lots of doctors. She tried physical therapy several times with only fleeting success, falling back into pain and frustration. One day in early 2022, while meeting with UHS pain-management specialist and orthopedic spine surgeon, Matthew Bennet, MD, she broke down crying.

“I hit my breaking point,” Mucilli says.

There are two ways to respond to a breaking point. One is to break—to give up. The other is to change course, and that’s what Mucilli did, deciding to



“*With chronic pain patients, that doesn’t always mean getting rid of all of their pain. But it can mean getting their life back.*”

—KELLY BUCHSBAUM, PT, MSPT



pursue her healing with a singular dedication.

Bennet recommended giving physical therapy one more try, this time with a therapist who specialized in spinal injury. So Mucilli drove from her home in Binghamton to a UHS clinic in Owego, hoping for a different result after years of constant pain.

REFRAMING THE MINDSET

When the new therapist, Kelly Buchsbaum, a physical therapist specializing in spine care and sports medicine, met Mucilli, “You could see that she had this amazing spirit and passion, but that her spirit was dampened by her pain and the fact that she couldn’t get better,” Buchsbaum says.

What followed was a mix of traditional physical therapy, such as correcting Mucilli’s gait and strengthening underused muscle groups such as her glutes and abs, along with treating the psychological aspects of chronic pain.

“A lot of times chronic pain almost incapacitates people because they become very fearful of movement,” says Buchsbaum. “They’re trying to protect themselves and have stopped doing what they like to do because they think it’s what’s causing their pain. But movement—proper movement patterns—is what we have to get them back to doing.”

Mucilli was stuck in a cycle. On days when she felt good, she would cram in runs, ski trips and 12-mile hikes with her dad. Then her pain would flare up in response, and she wouldn’t move for a week.

To truly recover, Mucilli had to learn to take it slow on the good days. She also had to learn how to process the twinges of pain she would feel during her recovery. Meaning, not every sting or ache meant she was reinjured and needed to rest. Sometimes, those sensations are part of the recovery journey.

“Now, if my back does twinge, I think to myself, ‘Hey, I’m not injured. This isn’t harmful, so let’s keep going on with the day,’” Mucilli says. “When I do, the twinge goes away.”

Buchsbaum also introduced Mucilli to other partner clinicians, where Mucilli was examined simultaneously by Buchsbaum, Bennet and UHS Chiropractor Douglas Taber, DC. One breakthrough came when Buchsbaum referred Mucilli to a

running-shoe store, and she was fitted with shoes that improved her gait by correcting her tendency to pronate or place most of her weight on the inside edge of the feet.

“A really good pair of sneakers made a huge difference for her,” says Buchsbaum.

Mucilli could sense that she was making real progress, and her excitement grew. That’s when Buchsbaum had to put on the brakes, encouraging Mucilli to literally apply the adage “Walk before you run.”

Mucilli loves to run and was itching to hit the pavement during the summer of 2022. But Buchsbaum encouraged her to stick to a walking program instead, to avoid setbacks associated with doing too much too soon.

“It’s definitely a mind game, especially when you’re trying to get back to something really important to you, and that’s a higher-level activity like running,” Buchsbaum said.

WHERE THE LONG ROAD PAYS OFF

Eventually, Mucilli got her therapist’s blessing to begin running again about five months after starting therapy and has continued progressing. On a sunny day in early February, she ran three miles and then spent the rest of the day taking a mental inventory of her body to see if there was residual pain.

There was none.

That was a landmark moment for Mucilli, though not her favorite part of recovering from chronic pain.

“I feel like my relationships with other people are just flat-out better,” Mucilli says. “I’m able to have more patience, compassion and empathy.”

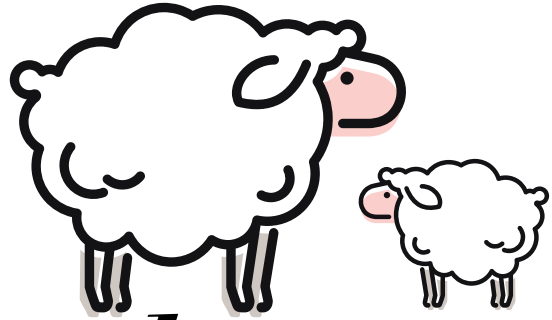
It’s a triumphant season for Mucilli. For Buchsbaum, watching Mucilli’s progress has been both thrilling and validating in terms of the impact that therapy can have.

“It will never stop being amazing when you’re able to really get through to a patient that they can reach whatever their goals are,” Buchsbaum says. “With chronic pain patients, that doesn’t always mean getting rid of all of their pain. But it can mean getting their life back.”

TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR PAIN

For more information about physical therapy at UHS, visit nyuhs.org.

SLEEP



is good medicine

Sleep studies are helping patients at UHS improve their overall health

More than one-third of adults are not getting enough sleep, according to The National Sleep Foundation. Those adults don't just feel tired during the day, but their daily mood, mental sharpness and productivity also are negatively impacted.

A consistent lack of sleep quality is more than simply feeling tired. This can often lead to negative outcomes, such as poor work performance, inability to exercise and an increased risk of heart failure, high blood pressure, stroke and more.

If this sounds familiar, a sleep study or sleep apnea-specific screening could be vital for discovering why you aren't getting enough quality sleep. Poor sleep often results from medical problems, environmental factors, mental health conditions or a sleep disorder, such as sleep apnea. Sleep studies can be conducted in a sleep center or with new technology, at home.

Maciej Nowakowski, MD, who specializes in sleep disorders, explains the benefits of a sleep study.

"The importance of quality of sleep is still underestimated. We spend about eight hours a day—one-third—of our lives sleeping, and it's still an exotic territory. Patients feel tired because they don't sleep well. But for some patients, sleep apnea is extremely severe," he says. "So basically, it's a question of the quality of life. General health is hugely impacted because of sleep apnea."

WHO SHOULD GET A SLEEP STUDY?

Dr. Nowakowski says a sleep study can benefit many patients, but those who can benefit particularly are people who:

- Are overweight
- Are chronically ill
- Have other serious health issues
- Snore

"For people who snore, there's a significant relationship between sleep apnea and other illnesses like hypertension, atrial fibrillation and coronary artery disease," Dr. Nowakowski explains. "So patients who have cardiac or respiratory problems, diabetes, patients who are overweight—they should be screened for sleep apnea."

ADVANTAGES OF AN AT-HOME STUDY

Getting a sleep apnea screening used to be somewhat daunting, but thanks to new technology, many patients can now do them in the comfort of their homes. So instead of needing to stay the night at a sleep center and have sensors placed throughout your body, you can simply wear one removable device.

"It's much easier to do the test at home than to come and stay overnight. It's very simple. Patients just come here to pick up the device. They don't have to bring it back, which is a big advantage for patients who live far away," Dr. Nowakowski says.

Patients should check their health insurance to see if an at-home study is covered. Studies can also be conducted at the the UHS Sleep Center in Binghamton.

SMALL CHANGES WITH BIG IMPACT

After a sleep study or at-home screening, the next steps are straightforward. Patients will schedule a follow-up appointment to go over the results and discuss any diagnoses, treatments and other suggestions that can help the patient improve their sleep patterns. Most sleep disorders can be successfully treated once they're diagnosed.

"A lot of our patients end up sleeping with the continuous positive airway pressure machine (CPAP), and the sleep and life quality are much better," Dr. Nowakowski says. "Generally, it's a good thing. I tell patients it's a significant improvement in life quality and general health. And with a CPAP, it's not surgery or medication. It's just a physical device." 🌿



GET SCREENED

See if a sleep study is right for you by contacting your UHS health provider or visiting nyuhs.org.

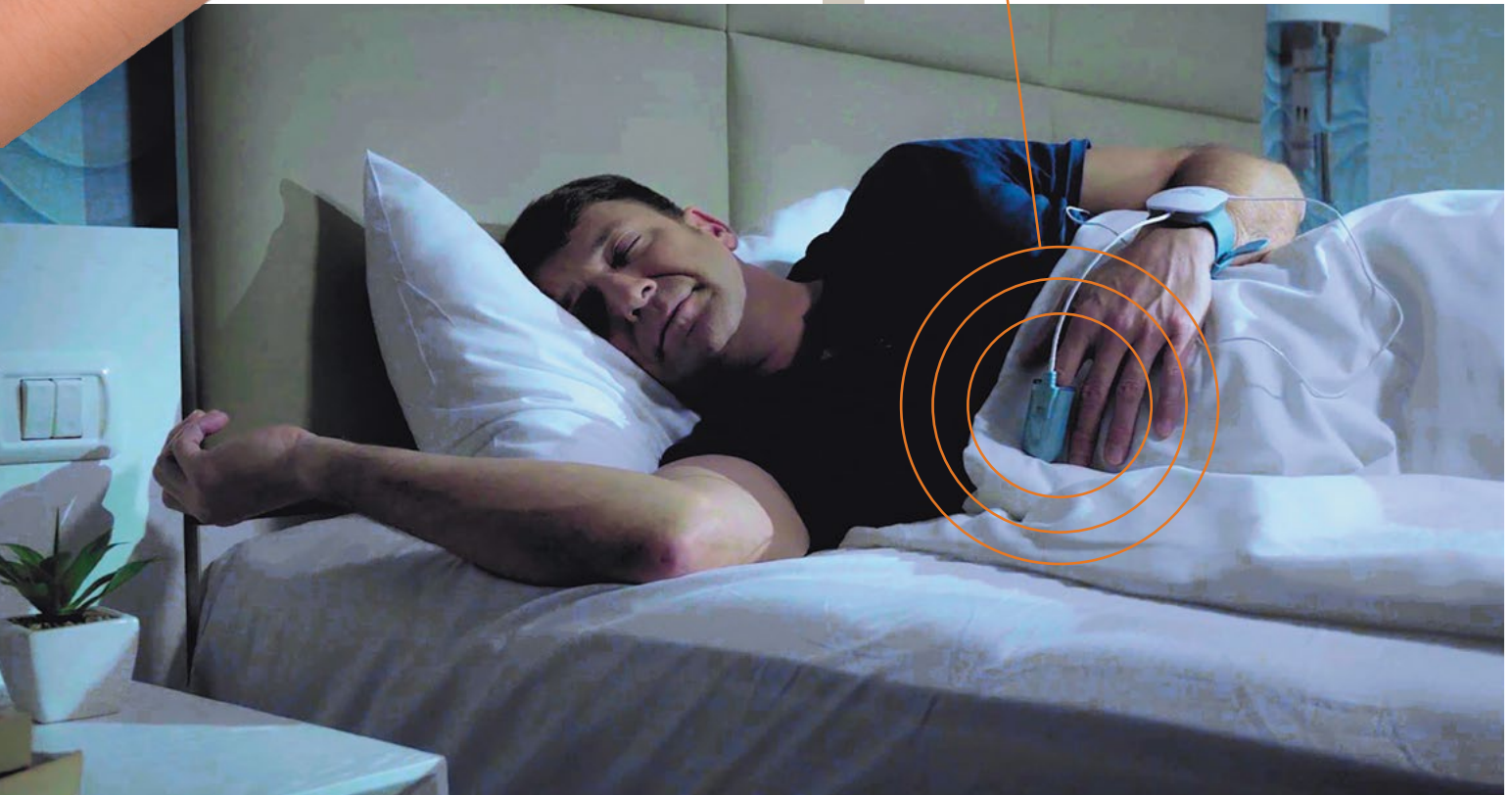


HOW HOME SLEEP TEST DEVICES WORK

At UHS, patients undergoing at-home sleep apnea screening can finish their test in a few simple steps:

1. Pick up the device they need to wear at their doctor's office or sleep clinic.
2. Wear the minimally invasive device while sleeping for at least one night.
3. Sleep as usual.
4. Discard the device.
5. Schedule a follow-up appointment to discuss the results with a doctor.

For more information on sleep studies and sleep apnea screenings, visit nyuhs.org/care-treatment/sleep-neurodiagnostic.



Know where to go

A reference guide on where to go for care

As we know all too well, life happens. Sometimes our bodies feel great, and an injury or illness can appear out of nowhere. Your child falls and sprains an ankle while playing at the park. You catch a bug, and now you're running a high fever, coughing and more. It can be tough to distinguish where to go for medical care when your symptoms feel unbearable, and your primary care provider is unavailable. Here are some key differences to help you decide.



STAY PREPARED

Learn more on how to prepare for your emergency room or walk-in visit at nyuhs.org.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

Emergency Departments are designed to assist patients experiencing life-threatening medical situations. When you come to the Emergency Department at any UHS hospital, a triage nurse will assess your condition. Although they are open 24-7, wait times vary because healthcare staff need to treat the most seriously ill and injured patients first.



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

WHAT TO EXPECT AT A WALK-IN CENTER

UHS Walk-In Centers are created to provide patients with immediate care for situations that cannot wait for a scheduled doctor's appointment. This typically includes many medical problems, such as coughs, fevers, flu or ear infections.



UHS PERSONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE SYSTEM (PERS)

HELP WITH THE PUSH OF A BUTTON

For those living independently, such as an older adult, a single parent with a young child or anyone who wants extra security in case of an emergency, consider installing an at-home emergency alarm response system. UHS has three equipment options to choose from, along with trained emergency operators, giving subscribers and their family members the peace of mind knowing immediate help is available in case of emergencies. Learn about your different options at nyuhs.org.

