



Stay Healthy

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YOUR RESOURCE
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
AND WELLNESS

UHS ACHIEVES HIGH-LEVEL CERTIFICATIONS

The Joint Commission awards UHS Gold Seals for Stroke & Spine Surgery

THE 1,000TH TAVR PROCEDURE

UHS celebrates a milestone of expertise and trust

SKIP THE WAITING ROOM

UHS Virtual Walk-In provides fast daytime care

Regain Control

Focused Ultrasound for a Tremor-Free Tomorrow



A commitment to innovation, compassion and care

Each day, our colleagues at UHS are working to advance medical care by bringing innovative treatments and advanced certifications to our community. I am proud to share two significant milestones that reflect our unwavering commitment to excellence in patient care.



UHS is proud to lead the way in advanced neurological care as the first healthcare system in Upstate New York to offer Focused Ultrasound for essential tremor. This groundbreaking, incisionless procedure has been life-changing for patients like Richard Kircher, restoring independence and confidence with minimal recovery time—ensuring more patients can access transformative care close to home.

Additionally, we are honored to have earned the prestigious designation as an Advanced Comprehensive Stroke Center. This certification reflects our team's dedication to providing the highest level of stroke care—from rapid diagnosis and intervention to rehabilitation and recovery support. With this achievement, we stand ready to deliver lifesaving care to patients facing even the most complex stroke emergencies.

Both milestones demonstrate our commitment to advancing care, improving outcomes and ensuring our patients receive the best possible treatment close to home. I am incredibly proud of our teams for their hard work and dedication in making these advancements a reality.

Together, we are shaping the future of healthcare—delivering innovation, excellence and hope to those we serve.

John M. Carrigg
PRESIDENT AND CEO OF UHS

UHS ACHIEVES *high-level certifications*



The Joint Commission awards UHS Gold Seals for stroke & spine surgery

The new year is already proving to be a golden year for UHS and our team of dedicated professionals. The Joint Commission, an independent, non-profit organization that accredits and certifies healthcare organizations and programs in the United States, announced that UHS earned two core certifications in Stroke Care and Spine Surgery.

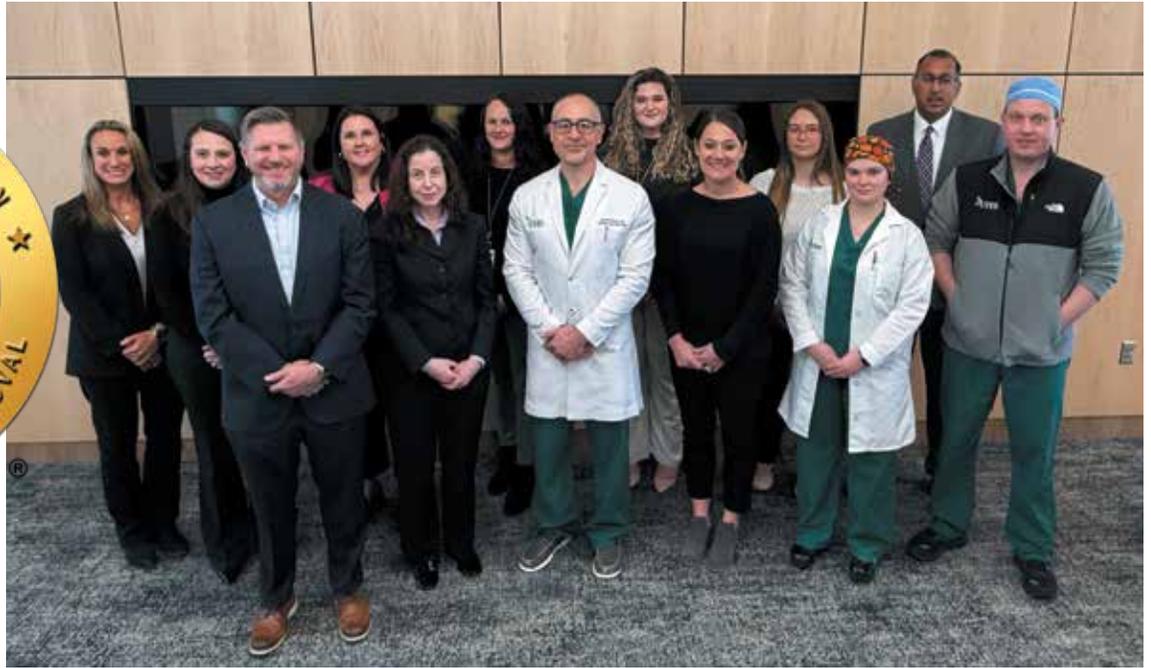
The Gold Seal is a symbol of quality that reflects a healthcare organization's commitment to providing safe, quality patient care and recognizes UHS' consistent communication and collaboration among all providers throughout the patient care process.

EMPOWERING THE COMMUNITY WITH ADVANCED STROKE CARE

UHS is the first program in the Greater Binghamton and northern Pennsylvania region to earn The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval® for Comprehensive Stroke Center Certification, the most advanced stroke certification offered by The Joint Commission.

✦ The UHS Stroke Team, whose dedication and expertise have earned UHS the region's first Joint Commission Gold Seal of Approval® for Comprehensive Stroke Center Certification.





✦ The UHS Spine Team is the first in the region to earn the Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval® for Core Certification in Spine Surgery.

“We are confident our community and the entire region will greatly benefit from the resources and expertise of our Comprehensive Stroke Center.”

JOHN M. CARRIGG

across disciplines, the unparalleled commitment to quality of the entire institution and the consistently high-quality care provided to stroke patients at UHS. We are confident our community and the entire region will greatly benefit from the resources and expertise of our Comprehensive Stroke Center, the only location in the region offering the most advanced treatments for stroke care.”

COMMITTED TO COMPASSIONATE, TAILORED SPINE CARE

UHS is the first program in the region to earn The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval® for Core Certification in Spine Surgery. Our team's achievement of this recognition demonstrates

UHS underwent a rigorous assessment. During this time, a team of Joint Commission reviewers was on site and evaluated compliance with certification standards, which are developed in consultation with healthcare experts and providers, measurement experts and patients.

“We have a team prepared to treat the most complex stroke conditions and capable of delivering exceptional outcomes...at any time of the day or night,” said John M. Carrigg, president and chief executive officer, UHS. “The surveyors were highly impressed by the universal dedication of staff

“We offer comprehensive operative and nonoperative spine care that is evidence-based and tailored to each patient's needs.”

SIMONE BETCHEN, MD, MBA

continuous compliance with Joint Commission performance standards, placing UHS among a select group of hospitals nationwide that achieve excellence in spine care.

“Earning The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval for Core Certification in Spine Surgery underscores the commitment of the UHS Spine Surgery Program to deliver high-quality, compassionate care to our community,” according to Simone Betchen, MD, MBA, Chief of Neurosciences, UHS Neurosurgery. “At UHS, we offer comprehensive operative and nonoperative spine care that is evidence-based and tailored to each patient's needs. We pursued this certification to externally validate the quality of our care and enhance our ability to provide the level of care our community deserves.”

The UHS Spine Surgery program is part of the Neurosciences service line and features the UHS Neurosurgery team, advanced practice providers, therapists and nurses. This program assists patients in identifying the most suitable treatment options, including nonoperative spine care and pain management, physical medicine, rehabilitation and surgical care. Patients also benefit from access to cutting-edge surgical technologies and imaging equipment at UHS. 🌱

REGAIN *control*

UHS is the first and only healthcare system in Upstate New York to offer Focused Ultrasound treatment for essential tremor

For thousands of individuals living with essential tremor, everyday tasks such as holding a cup of coffee, writing a signature, or even shaking someone's hand can become a source of frustration and embarrassment. The condition, which causes involuntary shaking that worsens with time and movement, often goes undiagnosed or untreated until it severely impacts quality of life. Now, UHS is changing the treatment landscape, becoming Upstate New York's first and only healthcare system

to offer incisionless Focused Ultrasound technology for essential tremor patients.

A REVOLUTIONARY ADVANCEMENT IN TREATMENT

Essential tremor is estimated to be 20 times more common than Parkinson's disease, affecting approximately 2% of the population. While some individuals respond to medications, many find that the effectiveness of treatment diminishes over time or that side effects become intolerable. Until recently, invasive surgical procedures

like Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) were among the only viable options. However, DBS requires the surgical implantation of a device in the brain, often with anesthesia, which some individuals find too daunting.

UHS patient Richard Kircher experienced debilitating tremors that impacted his ability to complete everyday tasks, requiring him to rely on the assistance of his family members. Feeling a loss of independence, Mr. Kircher could not find an effective, long-lasting treatment option for his tremors. That was until he learned about the Focused Ultrasound treatment. And it was closer to home than he realized.

"I started looking into Focused Ultrasound, and UHS was the only place in Upstate New York that does it," Mr. Kircher explained. "My other options were to go to Cleveland, Boston or New York City, which I wasn't too thrilled about."

With Focused Ultrasound, patients like Mr. Kircher can receive life-changing treatment without incisions, anesthesia, a hospital stay or permanent implants. The procedure uses MRI-guided sound waves to target and treat the source of the tremor in



✦ UHS leads the region with cutting-edge Focused Ultrasound technology, which is revolutionizing essential tremor care.

the brain, providing almost immediate relief. Unlike traditional surgical interventions, Focused Ultrasound allows patients to return home the same day with little to no recovery time.

UNPARALLELED PRECISION, FASTER TREATMENT

UHS is not only pioneering Focused Ultrasound in the region but is also offering the most advanced version of the technology available. According to Simone Betchen, MD, MBA, chief of Neurosciences, UHS Neurosurgery, the system provides “higher image quality, more precise targeting and potentially reduced procedure time.” This ensures a safer, more efficient and more comfortable experience for patients.

“UHS has the privilege of being the first and only facility that has this technology in Upstate New York,” Dr. Betchen shared. “We’re also the only facility in the state to have the newest, most updated version of the equipment. It is more precise and allows for easier use, which makes the patient’s experience better.”

TRANSFORMING LIVES, ONE TREATMENT AT A TIME

For Mr. Kircher, the decision to undergo Focused Ultrasound at UHS has been life changing.

“It’s really great being able to do the simple things, like shaving. I used to have to shave with two hands to try to steady it enough. I cut myself constantly,” he said. “It’s been a big difference. It’s been great, and I didn’t expect it to be this immediate.”

Dr. Betchen has witnessed firsthand the profound emotional impact of this procedure on patients and their families. “It can be emotional. We take the frame off and bring their loved ones back, and there are often tears of joy. Families have also been living with this. Someone who’s been a caregiver for years had to help someone eat and

drink and clean what’s spilled off the floors. You’ve changed their lives.”

One particularly moving moment for Dr. Betchen was with a patient who had struggled to sign his name for over ten years. After the procedure, he kept signing his name over and over again. When she asked him why, he said, “I haven’t seen my signature in over a decade.”

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO TREATMENT

One of the most important aspects of Focused Ultrasound is that it’s accessible to a wide range of patients. There is no upper age limit for treatment, making it available for older adults who may not be eligible for more invasive procedures. Additionally, the procedure is covered by Medicare, New York State Medicaid and most private insurers, reducing financial barriers for those seeking relief.

Despite these advantages, and the fact that over 20,000 Focused Ultrasound procedures have been performed worldwide, many people remain unaware that Focused Ultrasound is an option. “The shame is that most people don’t know about it,” Mr. Kircher noted. “I have a hand that’s steadier than it’s ever been...and



✚ Dr. Simone Betchen (left) with Richard Kircher and his wife after his Focused Ultrasound procedure.

with very little side effects. I mean, that’s unbelievable.”

A FUTURE WITHOUT TREMORS

UHS is working to ensure that more people learn about this life-changing treatment. Essential tremor is largely underdiagnosed, and many people may not know they have it, Dr. Betchen emphasized. “It is socially isolating, and many people can no longer do their jobs or hobbies because of the tremor,” she added. However, with this technology, that may not have to be the case anymore. 📺

DISCOVER THE FULL STORY

Watch Richard’s exclusive video to gain deeper insights into his inspiring journey and the support that made it possible.



IS FOCUSED ULTRASOUND AN OPTION FOR ME?

Are you or a loved one struggling with symptoms of essential tremor that are affecting your daily life? If medications aren’t helping, don’t hesitate to contact UHS for advice on screening and treatment possibilities. Your well-being is important to us, and we’re here to help you find the best solutions.

While you must be at least 22 years old to receive treatment, there is no upper age limit. If you meet the eligibility requirements, can fit into an MRI scanner and have essential tremor or tremor-dominant Parkinson’s disease, you are eligible for this life-changing procedure.

Benefits of Focused Ultrasound include:

- Tremor improvement
- Incisionless procedure
- Can treat tremors in both hands
- Quick recovery, with patients returning home the same day
- One treatment session (for each side of the body)
- Outpatient procedure
- No anesthesia or radiation

CONTACT UHS Neurosurgery at 607-763-5404 or TremorTreatment@nyuhs.org to learn more.

THE 1,000th TAVR PROCEDURE

UHS celebrates a milestone of expertise and trust

The UHS Heart & Vascular Institute recently reached a significant milestone—completing its 1,000th TAVR (Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement) procedure. More than just a number, this achievement represents improved lives for patients with aortic valve stenosis. For Barbara McDevitt, the 1,000th TAVR patient, it meant continuing her active, healthy lifestyle.

Ms. McDevitt received annual echocardiograms to monitor her heart. In June 2024, results showed severe aortic valve stenosis, a condition that restricts blood flow from the heart to the body. Because she had never experienced any symptoms, she was shocked. Symptoms can include chest pain, breathlessness and fatigue, particularly with activity.

“I had been in the moderate stage for years, so hearing it was now severe was scary,” Ms. McDevitt said.

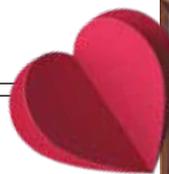
A MINIMALLY INVASIVE OPTION

Ms. McDevitt’s provider referred her to Alon Yarkoni, MD, FACC, director of the Structural Heart Program, UHS Heart and Vascular Institute. Unlike open-heart surgery, TAVR replaces the diseased valve using a catheter inserted through a small incision in the groin, making it a less invasive alternative.

The procedure is a team effort, involving cardiologists, heart surgeons, nurses, radiology technicians and anesthesiologists. From pre-op to discharge, dedicated staff ensure smooth recovery.

Despite initial hesitation, Ms. McDevitt discussed her concerns with UHS Clinic Coordinator Nicole Schneider, RN. Ms. Schneider thoroughly explained the process, easing Ms. McDevitt’s fears and helping her decide to proceed.

“I didn’t feel sick, so it was difficult to decide. But after learning more, I realized it was best to do it now rather than wait for an emergency,” Ms. McDevitt said.



✦ Barbara McDevitt, the 1,000th TAVR patient at UHS, can now continue her active, healthy lifestyle.



Westend61/Westend61 via Getty Images

REASSURANCE AND RECOVERY

The morning of the procedure, Ms. Schneider stopped by to reassure Ms.

McDevitt. “I was nervous, but her kindness and understanding made a difference,” she said. The 45-minute surgery went smoothly, and she was discharged the next afternoon.

Post-procedure, UHS Cardiology Nurse Practitioner Kristen Lewis, FNP, managed Ms. McDevitt’s recovery, prescribing a three-month course of Plavix and daily low-dose aspirin to prevent blood clots. Most TAVR patients continue aspirin long-term to reduce heart attack and stroke risks.

THRIVING AFTER TAVR

A follow-up echocardiogram confirmed her new valve was working well. “Kristen was always informative, reassuring and took the time to answer all my questions,” Ms. McDevitt said.

She remains active, enjoying family time, cooking and walking. “I never stopped doing what I loved, but now I plan to be even more diligent about staying active.”

Ms. McDevitt was grateful to be part of this milestone. “Knowing Dr. Yarkoni had done so many procedures gave me confidence. This milestone reflects the trust patients have in his expertise.”

1,000 PROCEDURES STRONG

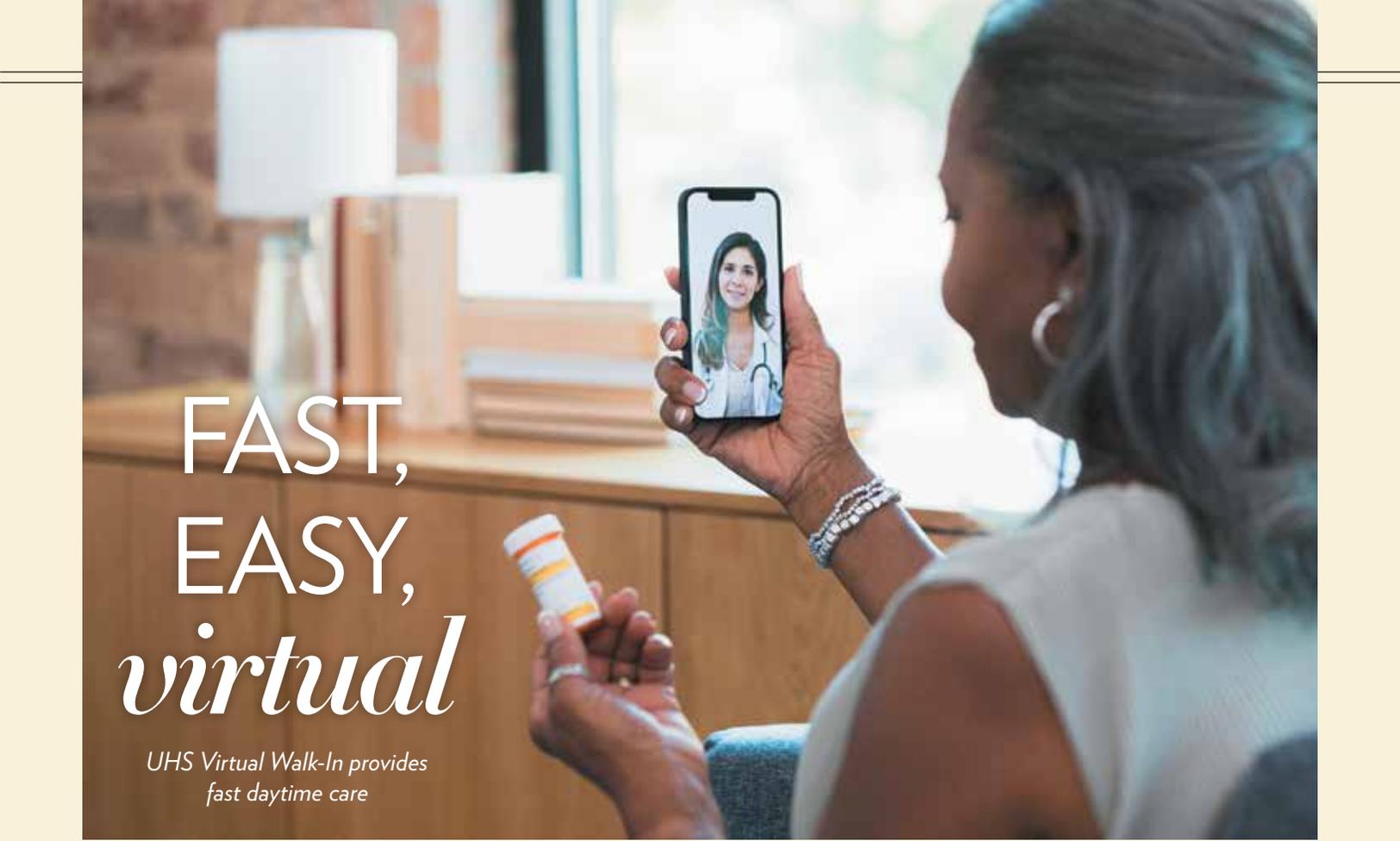
UHS performed the Greater Binghamton region’s first TAVR in 2014 at Wilson Medical Center. Now at 1,000 procedures, the program is a testament to expert care in the Greater Binghamton area.

“TAVR has transformed lives in our community. I’m proud of our team for making this a successful program,” said Dr. Yarkoni. 🎉

✦ Since performing the first TAVR in 2014, UHS continues to lead the way in expert, life-changing heart care for the Greater Binghamton region.



LEARN MORE about the TAVR procedure and the UHS Heart and Vascular Institute at nyuhs.org.



FAST, EASY, *virtual*

*UHS Virtual Walk-In provides
fast daytime care*

Avoid the waiting room and get care from home with UHS Virtual Walk-In. This service connects you with UHS physicians and advanced practice providers via phone, tablet or computer to treat common ailments like headaches, minor muscle strains, lingering coughs or fevers. Providers can guide home care and send prescriptions to your pharmacy if needed.

Visiting the UHS Virtual Walk-In is simple. Providers are available seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Providers assess symptoms, offer treatment advice and, if necessary, refer patients for in-person care with a primary care provider, specialist or the emergency department.

“It’s a full medical visit,” said Sean Dolan, system program manager for Virtual Healthcare and Digital Transformation, UHS. “If a higher level of care is needed, such as imaging or lab work, the provider makes the referral.”

CONVENIENT AND TIME-SAVING

“One great feature is the estimated wait time displayed when you log in,”

Mr. Dolan said. “Often, it’s under 8–10 minutes. Patients can also compare this to wait times at in-person clinics.”

Beyond convenience, patient feedback highlights satisfaction. In a recent survey, all respondents who rated their experience gave the virtual service an 8, 9, or 10 out of 10. Patients praised:

- Comfort from home
- Quick provider response
- Attentive and thorough providers
- Easy scheduling with minimal wait time
- Compassionate care

ADDING VIRTUAL HEALTHCARE TO THE SCHOOL DAY

No parent wants a call saying their child is at the school nurse’s office. But now, thanks to the UHS Virtual Walk-In, that call is a little easier for families at local schools. Parents of students at Binghamton City School District, Hancock Central School District, Harpursville Central School District and Susquehanna Valley Central School District can now stay informed and

involved with their child’s care with little disruption to their day.

“If a school nurse believes a student could benefit from a virtual visit, they can connect with a UHS provider,” Mr. Dolan explained. “We can loop in the parent or guardian on a three-way video call.”

For nonemergency cases, this keeps kids in school while ensuring they receive care. If medication is needed, UHS providers can prescribe it to be administered by the school nurse with parental consent.

“Parents prioritize their child’s health,” Mr. Dolan said. “If they can jump on a five-minute video call, they do. If they need to wait until lunch, we schedule the visit for when they’re available. Providers can guide self-care and send prescriptions to your pharmacy if needed.”

LEARN MORE Start your virtual walk-in appointment today. After scanning the QR code, patients can select “Start Your Visit Now” on the webpage—to begin a virtual appointment.



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.



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

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.



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

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. 🏥



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

STAY PREPARED

Learn more about which option might be right for you at nyuhs.org.