

04-26 Policy Matters

Subject: Celebrating Nurses and Recognizing Black Maternal Health Week and Donate Life Month

Preheader: Here, Policy Matters. Learn the latest from UPMC's Government Affairs team.



Nurses are at the heart of UPMC, bringing skill, empathy, and dedication to every patient interaction.

Through their commitment to compassionate care, professional excellence, and lifelong learning, nurses strengthen UPMC's workforce and play a vital role in improving health outcomes for individuals, families, and communities across the Pittsburgh region and beyond.

In this issue of *Policy Matters*, we spotlight nursing excellence and highlight the innovation and advocacy that support a strong and responsive health care system.

From recognizing the National Nurses Week and advances in nursing education, to regional economic development, expanded clinical services, and reflections during Black Maternal Health Week and Donate Life Month, this edition captures how collaboration across disciplines and communities drives both progress and purpose in health care.

## **Highlighting UPMC's Nursing Excellence During National Nurses Week (May 6 to 12)**

At UPMC, our more than 21,000 nurses and nursing support staff devote their lives to the health and well-being of our patients every day. As healers, advocates, teachers, and innovators, our nurses play a vital role in delivering exceptional care across our system.

With 50 specialty nursing roles spanning nearly 20 clinical specialties, UPMC offers endless opportunities for professional growth and lifelong career development. In recognition of the Nurses Appreciation Week (May 6 to 12), we proudly celebrate the compassion, expertise, and dedication of our nurses who make a difference in the lives of so many.



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## How UPMC's Community-Focused Nursing Education Shapes the Future of Health Care

Maribeth McLaughlin, UPMC's chief nurse executive, recently highlighted how UPMC Schools of Nursing's community-centered programs are strengthening both the workforce and local health systems.

McLaughlin highlighted UPMC's eight hospital-based nursing programs across Pennsylvania, including the forthcoming Mercy School of Nursing at Altoona. UPMC Schools of Nursing had over 600 graduates in 2025.

UPMC Nursing also follows a "grow our own" approach, where students are immersed in UPMC's care standards and culture from day one. Approximately 80% of graduates choose to stay with UPMC, often transitioning from roles like patient care technicians or interns.

McLaughlin also detailed the flexible and affordable pathways, with programs offered full-time, part-time, and in accelerated formats that also support diverse demographics, including working parents and career changers. She noted that UPMC offers competitive tuition, loan forgiveness, reimbursement, and opportunities for BSN/MSN advancement through key partnerships.

Lastly, McLaughlin highlighted how campus offerings reflect regional health care demands. Campuses are strategically placed in nursing shortage areas such as Altoona and Harrisburg, strengthening community care across UPMC hospitals.

[Learn more](#)

## **UPMC Magee-Womens Contract Negotiations Update**

Contract negotiations are underway between UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital, University of Pittsburgh Physicians, and SEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania on behalf of registered nurses and advanced practice providers. Talks began in January and reflect the complexity of the first contract process.

UPMC is committed to reaching fair agreements that support nurses while ensuring the high-quality patient care Magee-Womens is known for. Ongoing updates are available at the link below.

**Find out more**

**Explore further reading:**

**[UPMC Magee-Womens' Rich Beigi reaches out to union nurses](#)**



**Recent Nursing Education Highlights**



[INSIDE.UPMC.COM](https://www.inside.upmc.com)

## **From Classroom to Care: UPMC Schools of Nursing Graduation 2025**

In December, UPMC Schools of Nursing celebrated over 380 graduates across its seven campuses. With nearly 300 graduates already accepting positions at UPMC, this reflects UPMC's dedication to building a robust pipeline of future health care professionals.

[Learn more](#)

[INSIDE.UPMC.COM](https://www.inside.upmc.com)

## **UPMC's Nurse Residency Program: Setting Nurses Up for Success**

UPMC is advancing nursing excellence through its innovative Nurse Residency Program. The program is an evidence-based, systemwide onboarding model designed to support new nurses during their critical first year by fostering engagement, well-being, and professional confidence. This approach is validated by recently published research and strong early feedback from program participants.

[Learn more](#)



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## Nursing Workforce and Economic Development Initiatives

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### **UPMC Invests \$23 Million in Wage Increases for Nonunion Nurses**

Announced in December 2025, UPMC is investing \$23 million in wage increases for thousands of nonunion nurses. This investment expands on earlier efforts to raise entry-level pay and strengthen recruitment and retention through a competitive, market-driven compensation strategy.

[Learn more](#)

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### **UPMC Hamot Announces Launch of Community Nurse Liaison Program**

The Community Nurse Liaison Program model consists of embedding VA registered nurses into UPMC Hamot and seven other UPMC hospitals. This helps streamline the care of veterans from admission to discharge.

[Learn more](#)



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## Personal Nursing Reflections from our UPMC Community



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## **Journeying with Patients Through Life: Part One**

Explore the work of nurses in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital. Senior professional staff nurses Chavonne Peluso and Emma Verdecchia share how NICU nurses care for both patients and their families during their hospital stays.

**Learn more**



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## **Nurse by Day, Animal Advocate by Night**

Andrea is a senior professional staff nurse in the Emergency Department (ED) at UPMC Chautauqua. She devotes her additional energy to fostering, rescuing, and caring for animals in need with the help of Empire Animal Rescue Society, based in Salamanca, N.Y.

This compassion mirrors Andrea's work in the busy UPMC Chautauqua ED. She's held her position since completing the LPN to RN bridge program at UPMC Jameson School of Nursing at UPMC Hamot.

[Learn more](#)



**Advocating for our Communities**

## **A Look Back on Black Maternal Health Week (April 11 to 17)**

UPMC Magee-Womens recognized Black Maternal Health Week through coordinated awareness and community-focused events that underscored its commitment to addressing disparities in maternal care, lowering maternal mortality, and supporting families throughout the birthing journey in a safe, respectful, and welcoming environment.

### **Engaging Fathers: Fortifying Fathers and Families Through the Birthing Journey and Beyond (April 11)**

This event convened community members, health care professionals, and advocates, including Blayre Davis, second lady of Pennsylvania, for discussions and interactive sessions focused on the barriers Black fathers face during the birthing process and ways to foster more culturally inclusive care for families of color.

### **Rooted in Hope: Strengthening Mothers, Families, and Futures (April 17)**

UPMC Magee-Womens hosted a baby expo that connected mothers with education and resources on topics such as labor pain management, pregnancy wellness, and infant CPR, along with health screenings, demonstrations, and community support opportunities.



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## **Lieutenant Governor Austin Davis Highlights UPMC Magee-Womens for Black Maternal Health Care**

Austin Davis, Pennsylvania's 35th lieutenant governor, recently commended UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital for its leadership in improving Black maternal health outcomes in Pittsburgh and across the region.

Davis highlighted the hospital's national excellence and commitment to supporting Black women through personalized prenatal care, postpartum support, and education. He also shared his personal experience with his wife, Blayre Davis, during the pregnancy and birth of their daughter at UPMC Magee-Womens.

[Watch the full video](#)



**Expanding Access**

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## **Dave Patton, President of UPMC Horizon and UPMC Jameson, Participates in Penn-Northwest Economic Summit**

The Penn-Northwest Development Corporation recently held its annual economic summit at Grove City College. Dave Patton, president of UPMC Horizon and UPMC Jameson, contributed to a panel discussion.

Patton highlighted how telehealth is helping patients receive high quality care close to home. He also addressed workforce challenges in rural Pennsylvania. He noted that while many nurses left the profession during the COVID-19 pandemic, about 30% have since returned.

To address ongoing staffing needs, Patton said UPMC is partnering with local colleges such as Westminster and pursuing rural health funding with Thiel College to train new nurses and encourage them to remain in the local community.

**[Learn more](#)**



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## **UPMC and OIP Open New Orthopaedic Clinic in York County**

In response to York County's growing population and the fact that 50% of Americans will need care for an orthopaedic condition in their lifetime, UPMC and Orthopedic Institute of Pennsylvania (OIP) have opened a new clinic in York to meet community needs.

Earlier this year, UPMC and OIP partnered to deliver comprehensive musculoskeletal services together, ensuring patients across central Pennsylvania are receiving world-class care when and where they need it most.

"By bringing together the strengths of OIP and UPMC, we're able to provide patients with the care they need to thrive after debilitating orthopaedic injuries," UPMC Memorial President Karen Wastler says. "Our hospital provides OIP surgeons and patients with access to the latest surgical technology, dedicated surgical services and support staff, and spacious, modern facilities for recovery."

**Learn more**



## Reflecting on Donate Life Month (April 2026)

UPMC, alongside Donate Life America, proudly recognized organ donors who made a life-changing impact in 2025 across the UPMC health system. Living donor celebrations across the region honored these selfless individuals, while hospitals also held flag raisings, celebrations, and educational events to raise awareness and celebrate the power of donation.

Further reading about Donate Life Month activities:

- [Ceremony at UPMC Altoona Spotlights Annual Need for Organ Donation.](#)
- [UPMC Northwest Observes National Donate Life Month.](#)
- [UPMC Physician Highlights Importance of Organ Donation During Donate Life Month.](#)
- [One Decision, Four Transplants: How a Pittsburgh Donor Sparked a Lifesaving Chain.](#)
- [Midstate Couple Shares Donation Story During Donate Life Month.](#)
- [UPMC Expert: Why Organ Donation Matters.](#)

## Stay Informed

UPMC's Government Affairs Team is committed to delivering relevant and timely news on the latest health care trends, medical research, and clinical developments as they relate to public health issues.

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