

07-25 Policy Matters

Subject: Supporting the Health and Education of Children

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



UPMC | POLICY MATTERS

At UPMC, our commitment to Life Changing Medicine begins with our youngest patients. In this issue of *Policy Matters*, we are proud to share the educational initiatives and programs we support to ensure that all children and adolescents can live full, healthy, and supported lives.

Through a variety of hands-on services like the Children's Health and Nutrition Goals and Education (CHANGE) Program, *Raise Your Hand for Health*, Youth Wellness and Community Education in central Pennsylvania, Student Government days held across Pennsylvania, and more, UPMC continues to invest time, talent, and resources in educating and supporting our youth.

We also join the Arthritis Foundation this July in recognizing Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month to educate others on the children living with this condition and the challenges they face. More than 300,000 children in the U.S. live with the joint pain, swelling, and stiffness. At UPMC Children's, our experts provide exceptional care to help them manage and thrive.



Educational Opportunities, Available Programs, and Services

UPMC Government Relations Participates in Student Government Events Across Pennsylvania

Michele Reyes, senior director of Government Affairs, and Bill Ries, vice president of Government Affairs and Public Relations, recently participated in several Student Government events across Pennsylvania, engaging with high school students to discuss UPMC's role in the community and its collaboration with government leaders. Events included those hosted by Senate Majority Leader Joe Pittman in Indiana, Pa., Sen. Scott Hutchinson in Butler, Pa., and Sen. Gene Yaw in Williamsport, Pa. UPMC is proud to participate in these events that allow for students to obtain a better understanding of the legislative process and develop professional relationships that can open the door for future internships and job opportunities.



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UPMC's Surgery Live! Program Inspires Students to Become Surgeons

UPMC is investing early in aspiring health care professionals through the *Surgery Live!* program in central Pennsylvania. This new program encourages middle and high school students to pursue health care careers by connecting them to UPMC surgeons and operating rooms through interactive high-definition video conferencing technology. The program was created in partnership through the Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts, UPMC, and the UPMC Pinnacle Foundation.

[Learn more](#)



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Junior Achievement BizTown®

To support the success of future generations, UPMC is a proud partner and sponsor of Junior Achievement BizTown®. JA BizTown is a simulated town run by students. It helps them connect the dots between what they learn in the classroom and how those lessons apply in the real world. Children can choose from many jobs and roles in the town — including at UPMC storefronts, where students interested in health care can work.

[Learn more](#)

Mental Health Experts Working to Connect Injured Student-Athletes with Support System

At a recent event presented by the UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation, UPMC mental health experts joined school leaders to highlight the importance of supporting injured student-athletes. James Tew, MD, vice president, Medical Affairs, UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital, emphasized that injuries can take a serious emotional toll and that early mental health support is key to preventing anxiety and depression. The event underscored UPMC's commitment to partnering with schools and other community officials to build stronger support systems for young athletes during recovery.

[Learn more](#)

Raise Your Hand for Health

Raise Your Hand for Health is a health and wellness resource guide available to schools in Allegheny County. The guide was developed by Let's Move Pittsburgh — a program of Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens — and UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. It includes a comprehensive list of health and wellness programs and services available to Allegheny County schools.

[Learn more](#)

Children's Health and Nutrition Goals and Education Program

The Children's Health and Nutrition Goals and Education (CHANGE) Program is a community outreach program. The [UPMC Heart and Vascular Institute \(HVI\)](#) offers the program in collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI).

The program seeks to develop, enhance, and educate the community of Pittsburgh and surrounding regions on healthier living, nutrition, and overall wellness. The mission of CHANGE focuses on the proactive prevention of childhood and adult obesity through supportive services and education.

[Learn more](#)

Youth Wellness and Community Education | UPMC in Central Pa.

UPMC in Central Pa. hosts programs aimed at teaching individuals how to manage their diet, activity level, and mental health.

The program provides a variety of educational opportunities to the Dauphin County, Lancaster-Lititz, Lebanon, Cumberland-Perry, and York-Hanover areas. Youth and school programs include "Eat Smart, Play Smart," a Children's Health Fair, Youth Wellness Health Coaching, and more.

[Learn more](#)



Juvenile Arthritis Resources

Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis

At UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and across our regional locations, our physicians diagnose juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA) based on the child's symptoms and a physical examination. JIA is an autoimmune condition, so it can be treated using medications that affect the immune system, as well as anti-inflammatory medication or steroid medication injected into the joint.

Once treated, most patients can lead normal, active lives.

[Learn more](#)

Juvenile Arthritis Patient Story

Diagnosed with juvenile idiopathic arthritis at age 8, Macy found expert care and support at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. Today, she's active, confident, and living life on her terms.

[Read her story](#)



UPMC Health Plan Information

PQA Presents Quality Awards to Eight Medicare Plan Contracts for High Achievement in Medication Quality Measures

Dr. Vanessa Campbell, director, Clinical Pharmacy, UPMC Health Plan, accepted the 2025 PQA (Pharmacy Quality Alliance) Laura Cranston Excellence in Quality Award for Prescription Drug Plans (PDPs) on behalf of UPMC Health Plan. This award goes to PDPs with at least a 4.5-star Part D summary rating and a 4-star rating on all five PQA medication measures used within the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Star Ratings Program.

[Learn more](#)

UPMC Health Plan's Pathways to Work Program – New Graduates

The UPMC Pathways to Work program celebrated a significant milestone in June with a graduation ceremony honoring Freedom House participants. Twelve Pittsburgh residents were recognized for successfully completing a six-week paid workforce training program. Their achievements mark a meaningful step forward as they transition into new career opportunities.

This event also highlighted a broader accomplishment. The program has now graduated more than 200 individuals across Allegheny, Dauphin, and Erie counties, underscoring its growing impact on workforce development in Pennsylvania. Media coverage included WTAE TV-4, KDKA Radio, and the *New Pittsburgh Courier*.

[Learn More About Pathways to Work](#)

Stay Informed

UPMC's Government Relations 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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UPMC, [200 Lothrop Street](#)
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

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