

03-26 Policy Matters

Subject Line: Healthy Policy in Focus: Congressional Air Medical Caucus, Rural Health, and more

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



March brought significant momentum across UPMC as our teams continue advancing innovative care models, strengthening community partnerships, and shaping key policy conversations at the local, state, and federal levels.

This month's edition of *Policy Matters* highlights:

- Active engagements with leading policymakers.
- Initiatives that expand access to care across our regions.
- Meaningful collaborations that support the patients and communities we serve.

From rural health innovation and air medical advocacy to educational partnerships, workforce development, and community well-being efforts, these stories showcase how UPMC's mission is brought to life every day through leadership, teamwork, and a shared commitment to improving health for all.



Health Policy in Focus



ZINKE.HOUSE.GOV

UPMC Supports Launch of the Congressional Air Medical Caucus

Access to timely air medical transport is often the determining factor between life and death for patients experiencing:

- Cardiac emergencies.
- Severe trauma.
- Stroke.
- Other critical conditions.

In many rural and hard-to-reach communities, air medical programs such as UPMC's STAT MedEvac are the only rapid link to advanced, lifesaving care. As demand grows and operational challenges intensify nationwide, strong federal awareness and support have become increasingly essential to sustaining these services.

To help address these needs, U.S. Reps. Ryan Zinke and Jill Tokuda formally launched the bipartisan Congressional Air Medical Caucus during an official kick-off event at the Cannon House Office Building.

The event convened members of Congress, industry leaders, and medical professionals — including UPMC leaders, pilots, nurses, and paramedics — to highlight the critical role air medical services play in the nation's emergency care infrastructure.

UPMC has been a leading voice in advocating for the establishment of this caucus and elevating the unique needs of air medical providers.

"Air ambulance specialized treatment and transport directly impact survival," says Jim Houser, president and CEO, UPMC Center for Emergency Medicine of Western Pennsylvania Inc "Programs like STAT MedEvac serve as vital

of Western Pennsylvania, Inc. Programs like STAT MedEvac serve as vital extensions of the health care system, ensuring that patients — especially those in rural communities — are connected swiftly to life-changing medicine.

"We appreciate Representatives Tokuda and Zinke's leadership in launching the Congressional Air Medical Caucus and look forward to working with members to help ensure these services remain available to the patients and communities who depend on them."

[Learn more](#)



PA.GOV

Rural Health: UPMC Leaders Attend Southern Allegheny Regional Rural Health Summit

UPMC representatives participated in the Southern Allegheny Regional Rural Health Summit at Juniata College on Feb. 19. They contributed to discussions that will guide ongoing efforts to address rural health challenges and solutions in central Pennsylvania.

Dana Kirschner, DO, program director, UPMC Williamsport Family Medicine Residency, and Rebecca Diehl and Lynn Watt, supervisors of the Nurse-Family Partnership, engaged in the Women's Health & Maternity Care Work Group to help shape future approaches to supporting rural populations.

[Learn more](#)



News Across UPMC



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UPMC Marks Expansion of Expedition Trail Outpatient Center in Gettysburg with Local and Federal Officials

The UPMC Expedition Trail Outpatient Center has expanded its services to increase access to specialty and primary care in the Gettysburg area. Patients can access advanced specialty and primary care close to home, including:

- Ear, nose, and throat.
- Heart and vascular.
- On-site lab services.
- Weight management.
- Women's health.

UPMC leaders joined the Chamber of Gettysburg & Adams County, community partners, Pennsylvania Sen. Doug Mastriano, and U.S. Sen. Dave McCormick's staff for a ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house at the new facility.

Watch a video about the expansion



MSN.COM

UPMC Somerset Enhances Patient Care with Renovated 4A Medical-Surgical Unit

The newly renovated 4A Medical-Surgical Unit at UPMC Somerset represents an investment in patient care across the UPMC system. The updated unit includes enhanced privacy features and upgraded clinical technology designed to support care teams and improve the patient experience.

UPMC Somerset staff, community partners, and local officials, including Pa. Sen. Pat Stefano, joined in recognizing the completion of this renovation.

The renovated unit aims to provide patients with high-quality care throughout their treatment.

"The transformation of our community hospital demonstrates UPMC's commitment and investment in the health care of our region," says UPMC Somerset President Andy Rush. "Over the past seven years, we have expanded access to primary and specialty care, recruited many new specialists, advanced our technology, improved our infrastructure, and enhanced our employee benefits."

[Learn more](#)

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UPMC Washington School of Nursing Grows to Meet Community Needs

The former Washington Health System School of Nursing has become the UPMC Washington School of Nursing. The transition reflects the program's growth and UPMC's continued investment in nursing education and workforce development in Washington and Greene counties.

In January 2026, the school welcomed its first yearly spring class. It enrolled 43 students, more than doubling the enrollment from last spring.

"By expanding our cohorts, strengthening our curriculum and integrating fully into the UPMC Schools of Nursing network, we're creating more opportunities for students to learn, grow and succeed," says Susan Shaffer, director, UPMC Washington School of Nursing.

[Learn more](#)



UPMC Leaders Partner with Pittsburgh First Lady to Highlight ELECT Teen Parenting Program

The UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital team and Alison Beam, senior vice president and chief government affairs officer, UPMC, joined Pittsburgh First Lady Katie O'Connor for a visit to the Education Leading to Employment and Career Training (ELECT) Teen Parenting Program.

The ELECT program is an initiative to support pregnant and parenting teens in Pennsylvania. UPMC Magee is proud to partner with the ELECT team in helping Pittsburgh Public Schools students find support and education during their pregnancy and beyond.



Pathways to Work Showcases Career Opportunities Across the Region Through Community Events

The Pathways to Work team engaged communities across the region through several successful events throughout February.

The team sponsored the monthly Clairton Inn community dinner. They offered a meal, a children's craft, and a presentation about UPMC careers and Pathways to Work support.

UPMC was also strongly represented at the West Mifflin High School Career Fair for 10th to 12th graders. Students explored a virtual tour of the Kamin Tower, learned about telemedicine through Women in IT, viewed lab equipment demonstrations, and met with the UPMC Schools of Nursing to discuss nursing pathways.

Additionally, the Pathways to Work Team hosted 35 leaders from 28 community organizations at the Harrisburg CareerLink office for the Central Pa. Community Partner Meeting. Attendees engaged in a productive discussion on supporting regional employment.



[LINKEDIN.COM](https://www.linkedin.com)

Celebrating Employee Appreciation Day: UPMC Honors Teams Across the Region

Meet some of the UPMC employees in a [special video](#) highlighting the unique roles and locations across our regions and the meaningful impact they have on patients, members, and one another.

UPMC President and CEO Leslie Davis expresses deep gratitude for their hard work. She reaffirms UPMC's appreciation for the people who make our mission possible in recognition of Employee Appreciation Day.

[See more](#)

New Second Harvest Marketplace at UPMC Health Plan Neighborhood Center in Erie Sees Growing Community Impact Since Opening

Second Harvest Food Bank officially opened a new marketplace in Erie earlier this year.

The new marketplace is located at the UPMC Health Plan Neighborhood Center. It was designed to improve access to healthy food options, providing free fresh produce and nutritious food to the Erie community with a full grocery store experience.

March Health Observance Recognition

On March 21, the UPMC sign on the U.S. Steel Tower lit up blue and yellow to recognize World Down Syndrome Day and celebrate the inaugural "Better Together" Gala.

The gala, sponsored by UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, benefited the Down Syndrome Center of Western PA and the Down Syndrome Association of Pittsburgh.

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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