We’re Better Together
Welcome to We’re Better Together, a new magazine from Southern Tier Health Care System, Inc. “We’re better together” is our motto and it is also the philosophy at the core of everything we do. We’re excited to share our story with you and the communities we love. Our mission is simple: To improve the health and wellness of the rural communities we serve. But we know we can’t achieve our mission alone. Improving health and wellness is a community problem that demands community solutions.

Improving health care is difficult, particularly in a rural environment with limited resources. We address limited resources by encouraging innovative and collaborative approaches. Our vision at Southern Tier Health Care System is to serve as the conduit for collaboration between health care and community-serving agencies. We think of ourselves as the hub of a wheel with spokes linking agencies to the communities we serve.

We’re Better Together highlights how Southern Tier Health Care System brings together our member agencies and community partners to address specific threats to community health and ensure that, together, we build a brighter future for our children and community.

I’m very proud of everything we’ve accomplished together and look forward to every challenge we’ll face in the future. I know that there is nothing we can’t accomplish.

I invite you to explore We’re Better Together to learn more about our work in the community, how you can benefit from our services and what you can do to help make the Southern Tier the healthiest region in the country.

Thank you for your interest in Southern Tier Health Care System.
In 1994, a drastic shift in health care brought about a number of challenging situations to New York and, for that matter, the rest of the United States, including a large number of hospital consolidations.

To ensure the continuity of care, New York lawmakers responded quickly, creating 37 rural health care networks. One of the first to be created was Southern Tier Health Care System, Inc., or STHCS, serving Allegany, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua counties in Western New York. The mission of STHCS, a nonprofit organization headquartered in Blue Bird Square in Olean, was simply stated: “To improve the health and wellness of the rural communities we serve.”

**Key to cooperation**

Right out of the gate, STHCS identified needs and began making significant impacts to improve health care in its rural communities. Howard Howlett, a founding member and former chairman of the Healthcare Trustees of New York State, brought an unquestionable wealth of public health experience when he agreed to serve on the STHCS Board of Trustees. Today, Howlett serves as STHCS Chairman of the Board.

“We cover a lot of territory with these three counties,” Howlett said. “Understandably, there are a number of health care concerns. Because of the vast area and number of concerns, we realized one of the most important things we had to do to improve health care was communicate effectively.

“Bringing about effective communication between all health-care providers in the three-county area and getting everyone to work together has been the single greatest positive impact of STHCS.”

Donna Kahm, STHCS President and CEO, agrees. She said the agency has made great strides in fostering cooperation among providers in the area.

“One of the biggest barriers to health care reform when we were created was a general lack of collaboration. At that time, agencies were unwilling to work together. Fortunately over time, that has changed,” Kahm said. “I firmly believe there is nothing we can’t accomplish by working together. It’s like our motto says, ‘We’re better together.’

**On the vanguard**

STHCS is member-driven, Kahm explained, with membership including hospitals, physician groups, county departments of health, home care providers, and ambulatory medical care providers.

STHCS programs include the Southern Tier Child Advocacy Center (STCAC), the Southern Tier Emergency Medical System (STEMS), the Southern Tier Child Health and Safety Team (CHST), the Southern Tier Overdose Prevention Program (STOPP) and the Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner (SAFE) Program. STHCS also provides navigation assistance for the region’s residents who are seeking health insurance through the New York State Health Benefit Exchange.

STHCS performs extensive community outreach and conducts education programs on various general health-related issues, and also on specific issues such as asthma, diabetes, dental health, obesity, nutrition, physical activity and developmental
disabilities. STHCS has been recognized locally and regionally for its impact on health care in its catchment area. In fact, Business First of Buffalo has honored STHCS as a Health Care Hero for distributing more than 40,000 File of Life refrigerator magnets free of charge to people in the three counties it serves. The File of Life is a magnetized pouch containing a person’s medical information that is placed on the refrigerator in case of emergency. In rural areas, the information—obtained immediately by first responders who know where to find it—can mean the difference between life and death. Hospital emergency departments report that the File of Life significantly speeds the triage process, especially for elderly and disoriented patients. The File of Life program has continued for the past 12 years.

MAKING LOCAL HEALTH CARE WORK

This is just one example of what STHCS can do. Working with its member agencies, STHCS coordinates a number of ongoing efforts and programs that identify and remove barriers to health care, and foster healthy lifestyle choices for rural residents. Members of STHCS utilize the rural health-care network to coordinate training seminars, facilitate collaborative community health efforts, research and write grants and other administrative tasks. Funding from state and federal grants and private foundations supports STHCS. It receives no funding from its member organizations.

Network members in addition to STHCS include:
- Allegany County Department of Health
- Cattaraugus County Department of Health
- Cuba Memorial Hospital
- HomeCare & Hospice
- Jones Memorial Hospital in Wellsville
- Lutheran Social Services in Jamestown
- Olean General Hospital
- Olean Medical Group
- The Resource Center in Jamestown
- StarFlight emergency medical aviation service
- Lake Erie Regional Health System
- Trans Am Ambulance Services
- WCA Hospital in Jamestown

Howlett said that STHCS works closely and communicates regularly with federal and state elected officials so they know the health-care challenges facing the Southern Tier region. “The ability of Southern Tier Health Care System to work with federal and state elected officials is extremely important,” Howlett said. “We are their pipeline to the health-care system and they are our pipeline to the government system. We rely on each other.”

Providing quality health care is an uphill battle during these challenging times, Kahm said, “But it’s a battle we can win as long as we work together.”

FILE OF LIFE
To receive a File of Life for you or a loved one, call Southern Tier Health Care System, Inc. at (716) 372-0614 or admin@sthcs.org

Southern Tier Health Care System
Rural Health Network Programs

STHCS is supported by a grant from the New York State Department of Health.

I firmly believe there is nothing we can’t accomplish by working together. It’s like our motto says, ‘We’re better together.’

DONNA KAHM
STHCS PRESIDENT
AND CEO

Southern Tier
Child Health and Safety Team

STHCS founded the Allegany County Child Fatality Review Team (CFRT) through a grant from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). The CFRT reviews the causes of accidental, preventable child deaths and issues recommendations to involved agencies and the community to prevent similar deaths in the future. For example, taking proactive measures, the team launched a community awareness campaign after four accidental drowning deaths in nearby Pennsylvania communities.

STHCS received a grant to expand the team to include Cattaraugus County and renamed it the Southern Tier Child Health and Safety Team (CHST). CHST member agencies include:
- STHCS
- The OCFS Buffalo Regional Office
- New York State Police
- Cattaraugus County Sheriff’s Office
- Allegany County Department of Social Services, Department of Health, County Attorney’s Office, District Attorney’s Office and Coroner’s Office
- Cattaraugus County Department of Social Services, Department of Health, County Attorney’s Office, District Attorney’s Office and Coroner’s Office
- Olean General Hospital
- Olean Medical Group
- Jones Memorial Hospital in Wellsville
- WCA Hospital in Jamestown

Sexual Assault
Forensic Examiner Program

STHCS created the Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner (SAFE) program to help adult victims of sexual assault and rape in Allegany, Cattaraugus and Cattaraugus counties. The SAFE program has helped more than 160 victims since it was founded. STHCS also created a SAFE nurse training program, which is one of only six certified by the New York State Department of Health. SAFE program partners include:
- Olean General Hospital
- Jones Memorial Hospital in Wellsville
- WCA Hospital in Jamestown

Southern Tier
Overdose Prevention Program

The Southern Tier Overdose Prevention Program (STOPP) is a community-based opioid overdose prevention program and Narcan distribution program supported by the New York State Department of Health and amFar. Through its STOPP program, Southern Tier Health Care System provides free training in the use of Narcan and free Narcan kits to non-EMS first responders, basic life support first responders, members of law enforcement and the friends and family members of those most likely to suffer an overdose from heroin and prescription opiates like Oxycodeone.

Southern Tier
Emergency Medical System

STHCS created the Southern Tier Emergency Medical System (STEMS) to serve the training and compliance needs of the 92 emergency medical service (EMS) agencies in Allegany, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua counties. STEMS researches the educational needs of EMS agencies and designs and hosts trainings throughout the region to meet them. STEMS holds EMS educational seminars, and trains and credentials more than 1,500 EMS providers each year. It also ensures EMS agencies comply with New York State Bureau of EMS regulations and protocols. More than 220 EMS providers attend the annual STEMS Spring Training Conference.

NYS Health Benefit
Exchange Navigation

To help people access health care, Southern Tier Health Care System, Inc. (STHCS) provides navigation assistance and guidance to residents seeking health insurance through the NY State of Health insurance marketplace. STHCS has trained NY State of Health-certified navigators and certified application counselors on staff to help guide people through the application process. This free, in-person enrollment assistance is available to any New York State resident applying for coverage through the state’s health-benefit insurance marketplace. NY State of Health is an organized marketplace designed to help people shop for and enroll in health insurance coverage. Individuals, families and small businesses use the NY State of Health marketplace to compare insurance options, calculate costs and select coverage.

Southern Tier Child
Advocacy Center

STHCS opened the Southern Tier Child Advocacy Center (STCAC) to serve child victims of physical and sexual abuse from Allegany and Cattaraugus counties. The STCAC provides free medical, therapeutic and victim services to abused children and their non-offending caregivers. In October 2009, STHCS created a satellite STCAC in Allegany County. The STCAC is accredited by the National Children’s Alliance and has helped more than 2,000 children and their families since it opened.

The ability of Southern Tier Health Care System to work with federal and state elected officials is extremely important,” Howlett said. “We are their pipeline to the health-care system and they are our pipeline to the government system. We rely on each other.”

Providing quality health care is an uphill battle during these challenging times, Kahm said, “But it’s a battle we can win as long as we work together.”

Southern Tier
Health and Safety Team

STHCS created the Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner (SAFE) program to help adult victims of sexual assault and rape in Allegany, Cattaraugus and Cattaraugus counties. The SAFE program has helped more than 160 victims since it was founded. STHCS also created a SAFE nurse training program, which is one of only six certified by the New York State Department of Health. SAFE program partners include:
- Olean General Hospital
- Jones Memorial Hospital in Wellsville
- WCA Hospital in Jamestown

To receive a file of life for you or a loved one, call Southern Tier Health Care System, Inc. at (716) 372-0614 or admin@sthcs.org
Protecting Our Children

Southern Tier Child Advocacy Center eases the recovery process for young victims of abuse

The statistics are simply heart-wrenching.

- One in 10 children will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday.
- Nearly 70% of all reported sexual assaults occur to children ages 17 and younger.
- In Allegany and Cattaraugus counties alone, each year nearly 300 child abuse cases are investigated. To better respond to these heartbreakingly telling situations, something had to be done.

In September 2007, Southern Tier Health Care System, Inc., working with community partners, opened the Southern Tier Child Advocacy Center (STCAC) to provide a better system to help abused children in these counties.

Donna Kahm, President and CEO of Southern Tier Health Care System, said the genesis of the center came out of a conversation she had with former Cattaraugus County District Attorney Edward Finan who is also a member of the Southern Tier Health Care System Board of Directors.

Finan said that when he worked in Niagara County, the creation of a child advocacy center there increased convictions and improved services for abused children.

Kahm formed a committee to explore the possibility of creating a child advocacy center (CAC) for the Southern Tier.

“It took 18 months of planning and hard work, but by working together with our community partners and other agencies we opened the Southern Tier Child Advocacy Center on Sept. 25, 2007,” Kahm said.

“That kind of turnaround would have been impossible without the full support of our community.”

Streamlined To Be More Sensitive

The idea behind a CAC is to create a centralized location and system in which child victims of abuse and their family members can work to heal, while also participating in the process to bring legal action against their abusers.

At a CAC, a multidisciplinary team works together to manage cases from the initial investigation through prosecution and treatment. The center provides specialized forensic interviews designed to gather evidence from victims, as well as medical, therapeutic and victim services to abused children and their nonoffending caregivers.

“The Southern Tier Child Advocacy Center brings together agencies in one child-friendly setting that is physically and psychologically safe. In doing this, we reduce unnecessary duplication of services,” said Karen Hill, Program Director.

When children enter the legal and therapeutic processes that follow a revelation of abuse, they can get caught in a revolving door of sorts, telling their story and reliving their trauma over and over again. The CAC allows health practitioners and members of law enforcement to work closely together to relieve the burden placed on these young victims.

“This collaborative approach is proven to reduce the trauma experienced by child victims and support the healing process,” Hill said.

One Team, The Entire Time

At the center, a group of trained professionals representing the district attorney’s office, law enforcement, child protection, family advocacy, medical and mental health providers make up what’s known as a multidisciplinary team.

“Helping abused children and their families requires a coordinated and collaborative response that addresses the physical, psychological and legal aspects of abuse,” Hill said.

While an entire team of professionals works to help them, abused children and their families also have a family advocate, one person whose role it is to provide support and help navigate the system. The advocate is a constant person that stays with the family through the entire process from intake through completion of services.

This kind of support system helps provide children and their families with a safe, comfortable environment where they can talk about their abuse and receive specialized medical evaluations and mental health treatment, Hill explained.

“Support throughout the process is imperative. It is our goal that the healing process will begin as soon as children enter our center,” Hill said.
FEATURES OF THE CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER

Multidisciplinary Team Response
A team of professionals works together to coordinate the investigation, prosecution, child protection and treatment efforts to meet the needs of the child and family.

Family Advocacy
Every child and family is assigned a Family Advocate to provide support and information while ensuring access to needed services.

Mental Health Treatment
Specialized mental health treatment is provided to address the immediate and long-term effects of child abuse and trauma.

Forensic Interview
The interview is conducted in a child-sensitive, unbiased, developmentally and culturally appropriate manner and is coordinated to avoid duplicative interviewing.

Medical Evaluations
The focus of medical evaluations is to ensure the physical and psychological health and well-being of the child.

Outreach and Training
Trainings focus on prevention efforts and creating a best-practice response to suspicions of child abuse.

FACILITATING THE LEGAL PROCESS
In an article by the Olean Times Herald, Allegany County District Attorney Keith Slep and Cattaraugus County District Attorney Lori Rieman talked about the benefits the STCAC provides to the community.

Beyond the vast benefit it provides to the child’s recovery, the CAC team approach greatly enables the prosecution process, said Slep, a member of the Southern Tier Child Advocacy Center Multidisciplinary Team Council.

He said child abuse cases are among the most disturbing to investigate, and the most difficult to prosecute.

“Without the STCAC and the team, many cases would be impossible to pursue criminally,” he said. “With the STCAC and the multidisciplinary team, we have been able to discover abuse, uncover greater details and successfully prosecute the abusers. The STCAC also helps to root out false claims, saving valuable law enforcement time for the real victims.”

Rieman, also an STCAC Multidisciplinary Team Council member, said the STCAC supports victims and helps build strong cases against child abusers, something that wasn’t as common before the advocacy center.

“Prior to the child advocacy center, child victims often stood alone throughout the entire aftermath,” Rieman said.

Now, the child does not stand alone. There is a place where he or she can find support and strength. As a prosecutor, I have the same kind of support from the team and do not feel alone when I sit in the courtroom.

PROVEN MODEL OF SUCCESS
Hill said studies show that children involved with a CAC receive better treatment. Sixty-six percent of cases at the STCAC include a referral for mental health services, versus only 21% in a non-CAC community.

Forty-eight percent of children in a CAC community receive a medical evaluation versus only 21% in a non-CAC community.

In addition, the multidisciplinary approach supports collaboration among agencies. In a CAC community, law enforcement investigators were involved in 81% of Child Protective Service investigations of sexual abuse compared to only 52% of cases in comparison communities, according to the National Children’s Advocacy Center.

The team approach ensures all professionals involved in a case are informed and collaborating throughout the life of a case, Hill explained.

“Together we work to build strong cases to reduce the likelihood that children are forced to testify in court in front of their abusers, who all too often are close family members or someone they know and trust,” she said.

“Our primary goal is to reduce the trauma associated with child sexual and physical abuse while holding the offender accountable for their victimization of children.”

PREVENTING FURTHER TRAUMA
The child advocacy center model has seen tremendous evolution and growth since the opening of the first center in Huntsville, Ala., in 1985, Hill said.

Key to the success of this growth is a CAC’s ability to create a program that meets the needs of the community that each center serves.

“In our community our team has worked to create a best-practice, trauma-informed approach to child abuse interventions and response,” Hill said.

“Our team provides opportunities for community outreach, education and training to assist professionals working with children. We continue to work to enhance our programming to include child abuse prevention programming for children and adults.”

Prevention is key to keeping children safe, Hill emphasized. Every adult, she said, has a responsibility to create a society where these horrific crimes are not tolerated.

“However when we are unable to prevent abuse from happening, it is imperative that we support a system that responds in a manner that helps prevent any further trauma to the child,” she said.

“We all must keep in mind that while children may only represent 30% of our current population, they represent 100% of our future.”

PUT AN END TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE
Darkness to Light provides awareness and educational programs to equip adults and organizations with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively protect children from sexual abuse. You can request a training through Southern Tier Health Care System. For more information, go to www.sthcs.org/Darkness-to-Light.html.
A Game Plan for Safety

Child Health and Safety Team works to reduce child fatalities

An infant suffocates during the night. A teenager was involved in a deadly ATV accident. Maybe a quick trip to the grocery store ends tragically for a pre-schooler who wasn’t properly secured in the car seat. These are the storylines of nightmares. Sadly, though, these events are too often not imagined. Rather, they are real-world causes of child fatalities. Even more heartbreaking is that accidents such as these are entirely preventable.

The Southern Tier Child Health & Safety Team (CHST), a program of Southern Tier Health Care System, Inc. (STHCS), is working to reduce preventable child fatalities and accidents.

“The children shouldn’t be dead,” said John Eberth, CHST Outreach and Education Coordinator and STHCS Communications Coordinator. “This is why we meet.”

According to the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), an average of 270 children who are involved in child welfare programs die each year. Supported by a grant from the New York State OCFS, the Child Health & Safety Team reviews all child deaths that were accidental and preventable. The team’s ultimate goal is to prevent future fatalities and improve the health and safety of all youth in Allegany and Cattaraugus counties.

“We see trauma and tragedy in our work that people cannot fathom,” said Julie Tomasi, Deputy Commissioner for the Allegany County Department of Social Services. “We have the underlying belief that every child death could be prevented. We try to prevent a family’s worst nightmare from coming true.”

Identifying the causes of these preventable deaths, the team creates educational campaigns targeting parents and caregivers. The team also connects grieving families and emergency medical service providers to counseling services.

TEAM PLAYERS

Covering Cattaraugus and Allegany counties, the CHST is the only joint county child fatality review team in New York State. The interdisciplinary team comprises professionals who represent public health, social services, health care, law enforcement, child welfare and behavioral health.

“Everyone at the table brings expertise from their field. You can tell by how everyone speaks just how deeply they care. You sense the passion. And our efforts are highly collaborative,” said Amber Kerling, Cattaraugus County Assistant District Attorney at and member of the CHST.

Getting input from professionals in a variety of fields helps everyone look at the problem in a different way, which leads to solutions, said Gina Kocosis, Supervisor of Child Protective Services for Allegany County.

“There are different folks at the table providing different perspectives,” she said. Those multiple perspectives help the team review fatalities for prevention trends.

CLOSING THE KNOWLEDGE GAP

The team’s interdisciplinary examinations revealed that while parents may be knowledgeable of current safe practices for sleeping environments, car seats and bike helmets, a knowledge gap exists with grandparents who are active caregivers.

“Grandparents often rely on the habits they used to successfully raise healthy children without realizing family environments have dramatically changed,” Tomasi said.

Cooperation with local agencies helps disseminate up-to-date safety information throughout the community and increase communication between the generations. Educational materials are distributed anywhere a caregiver might receive services—hospitals, schools, local offices for the aging.

SAFETY BY SEASON

In addition to reviewing the causes and circumstances of fatalities for prevention purposes, the team also looks at regional patterns to implement preventive measures. In the Southern Tier, seasonal safety becomes paramount.

In conjunction with Mercy Flight of Western New York, STHCS hosts a Kick off to a Safe Summer event where it distributes CHST informational materials about sunburn protection, heat exposure, water consumption and ATV safety, and the Cattaraugus County Sheriff’s Office helps keep kids safe by providing free bike helmets and car seat safety checks. In fall, through schools and fire departments, parents are urged to check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Winter focuses on frostbite prevention.

Not many people are aware of the wealth of child safety information available, Kerling said, and sharing this information with as many people as possible is crucial to CHST’s mission.

“I was really surprised at all the resources that are out there for families but only known to a niche group of people. Getting the word out there that these resources are available is huge,” she said.

SAFE SLEEP FOR BABIES

A baby sleeps safest when he or she is:

1. Alone in a crib, for safety by season

2. Back to sleep, for safety by season

3. In a crib, for safety by season

Remember that sharing a bed with your baby is always unsafe. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, unintentional suffocation accounts for nearly 1,000 infant deaths annually.

The danger of your child suffocating increases if:

- You smoked during pregnancy, or if you or your partner smoke now.
- Your baby was born too early or at a low birth weight.
- You were not present during your baby’s sleep.
- Your partner used to smoke but has not quit.
- Before going to bed, you or your partner consumed drinks, medications or drugs that make you sleepy.

So, what should you do to prevent suffocation?

- Never sleep with your baby in a bed, on a couch or in a chair.
- After nighttime feeding, return your baby to the crib.
- Remove soft bedding and stuffed animals from your baby’s crib.
- Use a one-piece sleep sack to keep your baby warm.
- Lay your baby on his back whenever sleeping.
Help is on its Way

Emergency medical service program ensures excellent care for the Southern Tier

Deep in a rural section of the Southern Tier, a man suddenly has difficulty breathing. His wife calls 911. An ambulance arrives with a skilled team of emergency medical technicians (EMTs). All are trained and knowledgeable in the most current techniques that assure he will be cared for, comfortable and safe. The team stabilizes his breathing, reassures him, and brings him to a hospital where medical treatment continues seamlessly. His life is saved, and his family, friends and community are grateful.

Scenarios like this occur more than 52,000 times each year throughout Allegany, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua counties. If you live in the Southern Tier, chances are high that you have been affected by the region’s network of EMTs, a team of emergency medical system (EMS) professionals and volunteers brought together by Southern Tier Emergency Medical System, or STEMS.

Breaking down STEMS

STEMS is a program of Southern Tier Health Care System, Inc. (STHCS), as well as an EMS program agency for the Southwestern Regional EMS Council (SWREMSCO).

There are 19 program agencies contracted by the New York State Department of Health (DOH) to meet an extensive list of specific EMS deliverables. Collectively, these agencies provide the skeletal structure for the state’s emergency support systems. SWREMSCO represents Allegany, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua counties. STEMS also supports the Western Regional Emergency Advisory Committee (WREMAC).

Under STEMS, all EMS stakeholders for each county are represented, including EMS providers, medical directors, hospitals and EMS supervisory organizations.

Those involved with STEMS are committed to engaging and helping the community, said Lee Burns, Director of the DOH Emergency Medical Services Bureau.

“It’s a very robust council,” she said. “The folks are confident and passionate about the program. Motivations are intrinsic. They turn to the community for ideas and provide excellent newsletters, information and communication.”

Three key functions

Think of STEMS as a liaison between the New York State Department of Health and the WREMAC.

STHCS is contracted through the Department of Health to support WREMAC, SWREMSCO and EMS agencies in Allegany, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua counties. STHCS created STEMS to provide those contracted EMS services.

“It’s STEMS’ responsibility to make sure that our region’s EMS complies with any policy or regulation set by New York State,” said Dr. Brian Walters, EMS Medical Director with Chautauqua County and Chairman of WREMAC.

It’s helpful to think of STEMS as providing three key functions. First, STEMS must ensure all EMS providers, both professional and volunteer, are current with their certifications. To do this, STEMS providers need access to education. This leads to STEMS’ second function: providing and coordinating educational channels for compliance. In its third function, STEMS provides administrative support and management to volunteer and professional EMS providers.

STEMS AT A GLANCE
- Ensure EMS professionals and volunteers are certified.
- Provide and coordinate EMS education.
- Provide administrative and management support to EMS providers.
STEMS is a wonderful resource that we have in our corner. They really make an effort to sponsor classes and are a resource when we need help. They always find the answers.

CHRIS ROLL
CERTIFIED BASIC EMT WITH THE SINCLAIR VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

Why STEMS Matters
So, why is STEMS ‘work important to you? Because it means you’re guaranteed to get the care you need.

“STEMS’ efforts mean better access to quality, emergency medical care,” said Todd Reisner, General Manager for Trans Am Ambulance Services and a Paramedic.

And that medical care extends to 911 calls. “As a citizen you know that when you call 911 you’ll get someone who meets or exceeds the standards of care to treat your condition,” Walters said. “It doesn’t matter if that person is a paid professional or a volunteer.”

While STEMS’ key functions may sound straightforward, it has to provide these services in the face of some difficult challenges. Allegany, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua counties are sparsely populated.

While this openness is often considered a benefit to living in the Southern Tier, the downside is that there is a lot of territory to cover. In addition, local EMS service depends on volunteers, and right now, there’s a shortage of people volunteering.

These realities create a double whammy. Not only is it difficult to recruit adequate EMS service providers who are readily available, but those people who want to volunteer are faced with driving prohibitively long distances to get the training they need to obtain their certification.

This is what makes STEMS’ efforts and cooperation among all the agencies so remarkable. Working together, they find creative solutions to provide a standard of excellence in EMS education that enriches emergency services in the Southern Tier.

“STEMS is a wonderful resource that we have in our corner,” said Chris Roll, a certified Basic EMT with the Sinclair Volunteer Fire Company. “They really make an effort to sponsor classes and are a resource when we need help. They always find the answers.”

Beyond Certification
For EMTs throughout New York State, certification is valid for three years. But the Southern Tier wanted to do better. WREMAC advised STEMS that annual credentialing was the only way to guarantee that all Southern Tier EMTs are certified on the latest emergency treatment techniques and have accurate knowledge on current health-related issues.

To make it easier for volunteers to achieve the annual credential requirement, STEMS hosts skill fairs throughout the region each year where participants fulfill their credentials. This approach has helped quickly and efficiently certify more EMTs on the use of important medications like epinephrine and Narcan.

STEMS also hosts numerous lectures, classes and presentations for providers to satisfy their annual requirement of continuing medical education. The highlight of each year is the annual STEMS Spring Training Conference.

“It’s very beneficial,” said Phil Wilson, EMS Clinical Operations Manager for ALSTAR EMTs.

“STEMS searches hard to find good content and educational experiences so the volunteers enjoy themselves. And the food is good, too!”

Supporting the Volunteers
For a region where volunteers are the backbone of EMS, administrative oversight becomes paramount. Managing the administrative component is another way STEMS makes it easier for volunteers. “It is difficult to track and maintain paperwork and compliance,” Walters said.

STEMS removes the headache and hassle of managing classes, certifications and continuing medical education by overseeing all aspects of administrative work. Part of the administrative support STEMS provides includes managing and maintaining the website STHECS.org/STEMS, which is a central source of information on classes, announcements and alerts from the DOH.

Going the Distance so You Don’t Have To
STEMS’ appetite for improvement has led to some clever and innovative solutions, namely the new distance learning paramedic class. With input from the EMS community, STEMS identified a growing problem across the region: The Southern Tier lacked a robust paramedic education program. It needed adequate, available opportunities for advanced life support paramedic training. STEMS stepped in with the answer: distance learning.

Classes are taught in Jamestown or Olean, eliminating the need for students to drive 50 to 100 miles to attend classes. Having a single class in two locations also helps each class size meet minimum size requirements.

“Once STEMS realized the gap, it worked in coordination with all regions to develop a regional paramedic program that pools resources and allows us to have a paramedic class,” Walters said.

Per DOH specifications, each class has a certified instructor and assistant. Emergency medical doctors are also among the instructors. Students can ask questions in real-time to either instructor. The assistant helps with the hands-on learning component, an important part of EMT training. This setup benefits students in a number of ways.

“Traditionally, there is one class with one instructor. This model gives students access to three experts while providing one single voice of education to the region. Instruction isn’t fractured and it lowers costs and time,” Wilson said.

A Model of Unity
Between meeting and exceeding state expectations, overcoming regional challenges and cooperating to implement creative solutions, STEMS has established a reputation of excellence across the state.

“We’re a cohesive group and a model to other regions. That’s STEMS,” Walters said.

And it’s this unified effort that allows STEMS to successfully serve the region.

“Only by working together can we meet the needs of the rural community,” Reisner said.
10 Reasons to Become an Everyday Hero

They comfort the distressed. They save lives. They are always there for you. They are the everyday heroes of the Southern Tier, members of the emergency medical service (EMS) agencies in Allegany, Chautauqua and Cattaraugus counties. What you may not realize is that these agencies are primarily fueled through volunteer efforts. And the need for volunteers has never been greater.

Between going to work, raising kids and taking care of their families, people are busy. As a result, EMS volunteer numbers are critically low. Yet every volunteer will tell you the effort is absolutely worth the time and energy.

1. **Anyone is eligible**
   
   Many people mistakenly think they are not qualified to be an EMS volunteer, but Dr. Brian Walters, EMS Medical Director of Chautauqua County, assures people they will receive all the training they need. Plus, there are a wide array of positions available.

   “Volunteering is open to anyone. You will see all types of people in all aspects of public service,” Walters said. Gregory Payne, EMS Captain for the Machias Volunteer Fire Department in Cattaraugus County, agrees, saying you don’t necessarily need to have a certain background to volunteer.

   “There is no one stereotypical EMS provider,” he said.

2. **Help people when they need it most**
   
   As a volunteer, you can make a huge difference in someone’s life. Allegany Rescue and EMS alone averages 800 to 900 calls each year, according to EMS Lieutenant Ron Higley. Each of those calls represents someone who needs help.

   “We directly impact someone on his worst day when help is needed the most,” said Dan Imfeld, Deputy Chautauqua County Fire Coordinator for Hazardous Materials Response Team.

   “We impact lives significantly,” Imfeld said. “You may not get back as much as you put in. You might think you’ve only helped them, but they’ve really helped you. They’re not just000 family that you trust with your life. They are the everyday heroes of the Southern Tier, members of the emergency medical service (EMS) agencies in Allegany, Chautauqua and Cattaraugus counties. What you may not realize is that these agencies are primarily fueled through volunteer efforts. And the need for volunteers has never been greater.

   Between going to work, raising kids and taking care of their families, people are busy. As a result, EMS volunteer numbers are critically low. Yet every volunteer will tell you the effort is absolutely worth the time and energy.

   **1. Anyone is eligible**
   
   Many people mistakenly think they are not qualified to be an EMS volunteer, but Dr. Brian Walters, EMS Medical Director of Chautauqua County, assures people they will receive all the training they need. Plus, there are a wide array of positions available.

   “Volunteering is open to anyone. You will see all types of people in all aspects of public service,” Walters said. Gregory Payne, EMS Captain for the Machias Volunteer Fire Department in Cattaraugus County, agrees, saying you don’t necessarily need to have a certain background to volunteer.

   “There is no one stereotypical EMS provider,” he said.

   **2. Help people when they need it most**

   As a volunteer, you can make a huge difference in someone’s life. Allegany Rescue and EMS alone averages 800 to 900 calls each year, according to EMS Lieutenant Ron Higley. Each of those calls represents someone who needs help.

   “We directly impact someone on his worst day when help is needed the most,” said Dan Imfeld, Deputy Chautauqua County Fire Coordinator for Hazardous Materials Response Team.

   “We impact lives significantly,” Imfeld said. “You may not get back as much as you put in. You might think you’ve only helped them, but they’ve really helped you. They’re not just.

   **3. Realize your potential**

   EMS volunteers aren’t exclusively first responders, emergency medical technicians and paramedics.

   Volunteers can answer 911 calls, be ambulance drivers, help with outreach education, direct traffic, retrieve gear, carry stretchers and help out at the fire hall.

   Once you get involved, you may surprise yourself. Chris Roll, a volunteer at Sinclairville Volunteer Fire Company, got certified as an EMT Basic when he discovered the department needed more EMS providers.

   “You are much more capable than you realize,” he said.

   **4. Impact your community**

   As a volunteer, you will feel more connected with, and have a positive influence in, your community, something Walters has seen happen when people come together and interact with one another.

   “I can say with absolute certainty that there are people who are alive in our community because we were there,” Walters said.

   **5. You’re always learning**

   You learn a lot as a volunteer, and that keeps your mind sharp. You’ll have numerous educational opportunities through Southern Tier Health Care System, Inc. STHCS is the New York State Bureau of EMS Program Agency for Allegany, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua counties. STHCS provides classes and learning opportunities for EMS volunteers and helps EMS providers comply with New York State Department of Health protocols and regulations.

   “The amount of learning is a real unexpected benefit,” Imfeld said.

   “If you told me 30 years ago that I’d know this much about safety and chemicals, I wouldn’t have believed you. My knowledge helps me make better daily choices in my personal life,” according to Payne. “You take something away from giving back,” he said.

   **6. Make close friends**

   An incredible sense of camaraderie develops among EMS volunteers. Not only are you sharing an experience with people, but you also learn to depend on them in challenging situations. Many EMT volunteers describe it as inheriting a second family that you trust with your life.

   **7. Build your confidence**

   The knowledge you gain as a volunteer could also help you outside of volunteer work—when you’re with family and friends. In fact, Imfeld relied on his training when his young daughter choked on a hot dog. His wife panicked. He calmly performed the Heimlich, and stopped the choking episode.

   “At that moment, all the time I spent becoming an EMT was worth it,” he said.

   The confidence you gain from volunteer work grows when you accomplish things you never thought you could do before.

   **8. Do something meaningful**

   EMS makes you part of a network of people helping people. It can help you find greater purpose outside of the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

   “Our world is so busy with work, cell phones, computer updates and Facebook rather than worrying about the neighbor next door,” Higley said.

   While the emergency aspect of EMS provides some excitement, there is also a deeper sense of fulfillment, according to Payne. “You take something away from giving back,” he said.

   **9. Gain a new perspective**

   Being an EMS provider keeps things in perspective. Things you thought were a big deal before aren’t so important.

   “A bad day at work is not as bad as a heart attack,” Higley said.

   **10. If not you, who?**

   What would happen if you called 911 and no one answered? You would be alone and you’d have to find help yourself. That’s how crucial volunteers are to the community.

   “It’s vital to understand that many rural areas are completely served by EMS volunteers,” Roll said.

   “It’s utterly necessary to have these people. If it weren’t for volunteers no one would show up.”
Doctors, police, first responders and families work to prevent overdose deaths

It may be hard to believe, but our society is facing a heroin crisis, and overdose deaths from the drug are on the rise. A combination of increased availability, affordability and potency has created a sinister threat against communities, families and the lives of those who suffer from addiction. Many people wrongly believe the drug is outside their social networks, but its reach extends much farther than what you might think.

“We’re seeing an influx of the white powder in communities where you would have never seen it,” said Dr. Kevin Watkins, Cattaraugus County Public Health Director. “It can affect anyone and everyone from an adolescent to an attorney to a police officer to the homeless. Heroin has no boundaries.”

Southern Tier Health Care System, Inc. (STHCS) is fighting back. Through its successful Southern Tier Overdose Prevention Program (STOPP), the health care system is putting the power to save lives into the hands of the region’s citizens.

**MAKE THE CALL TO SAVE A LIFE**
People who witness an overdose often delay calling 911. They fear that when police respond, anyone using illegal drugs or underage drinking will be arrested. New York’s Good Samaritan Law prevents criminal charges for possession of controlled substances against people who call 911. This protection applies to both the person seeking assistance in good faith as well as to the person who has overdosed. If someone is suffering an overdose, call 911. It’s a matter of life or death.

**TRAIN TO SAVE**
STOPP provides free Narcan training programs throughout the year for the general public, first responders and law enforcement. Trainings teach participants what to do during an overdose and how to:
- Recognize overdose signs and symptoms.
- Distinguish between different types of overdose.
- Administer Narcan.
- Perform rescue breathing.

Participants receive a free overdose prevention kit provided by the New York State Department of Health, which includes two doses of intranasal Narcan. STOPP also has a training program for firefighters, basic life support first responders and law enforcement in Allegany, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua counties. For more information, go to www.STHCS.org/Narcan-Training or call (716) 372-0614.

**THE START OF STOPP**
The numbers are chilling. According to the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, hospitalizations from opiate overdose increased 116% across New York state from 2004 to 2013. In upstate New York, the number is even more startling: Admissions have increased by 222%.

STHCS recognized that, until there was a way to mitigate heroin trafficking, it had to focus on the immediate problem: decreasing mortality rates from overdoses.

“New York City was the first to let us know that they saw a heroin epidemic,” Watkins said. “Based on this knowledge we had to develop a drug task force.”

That’s where STOPP comes in, developing a program that could save people’s lives, in order to get them on the road to recovery.

“The end game should be to decrease the use of heroin and help people overcome their addictions. But people can’t do that unless they’re alive,” Lamothe said. “STOPP was developed to save lives.”

**THE START OF STOPP**

**A LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL**
Since its inception, STOPP has provided free Narcan training and free Narcan kits to first responders and law enforcement agencies, as well as to the friends and family members of people at a high risk of overdose death.

Narcan, also called Naloxone, is a nasal spray that immediately and temporarily reverses symptoms of an overdose from heroin and prescription opioid painkillers. Narcan works by blocking opioid receptors in the brain. There is no risk to the person administering it. It can prevent an overdose death and give a person critical time to get the treatment and services they need to survive.

“Narcan has been extremely successful. It has saved lives. The use has increased in demand and utilization,” Lamothe said. “A lot of people care about these individuals. Narcan is a light at the end of the tunnel.”

It can affect anyone and everyone from adolescents to an attorney to a police officer to the homeless. Heroin has no boundaries.

**DR. KEVIN WATKINS**
CATTARAUGUS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTOR
We’re better together
Southern Tier Health Care System, Inc.

Imagine suffering the fear and trauma of being sexually assaulted, and being on your own. You’re alone, traumatized and frightened. You need medical care and assurance, support and counseling. You need someone who understands how to collect evidence and report it in a court of law, should you choose to proceed. Most of all, you need a place where you feel safe—immediately and unconditionally.

A collaborative, multi-organizational effort orchestrated by Southern Tier Health Care System, Inc. (STHCS) has brought three safe havens to the Southern Tier in the form of Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner (SAFE) Centers. Three hospitals across the Southern Tier—Jones Memorial Hospital in Wellsville, Olean General Hospital and WCA Hospital in Jamestown—provide SAFE Centers where victims of sexual assault will find the compassionate, patient-centered care they need in the hours following the incident.

At WCA Hospital, Emelia Lindquist-Harley, Director of Nursing and Emergency Department Manager, is the SAFE Program Coordinator. Denise O’Neil, Director of Nursing at Olean General Hospital, and registered nurse Mona Carbone, Director of the Emergency and Cardiopulmonary departments at Jones Memorial Hospital, are both SAFE-certified for their institutions. They shared their passion and knowledge regarding the critical, comprehensive care that a sexual assault patient needs to heal physically, emotionally and socially.

Medical providers have always cared for patients who have suffered the trauma of sexual assault. But until SAFE, the complex nature of a patient’s needs weren’t always addressed. Victims feared lack of confidentiality. Care providers unknowingly used subtle but judgmental body language and verbal cues when communicating with patients. Evidence was at risk of being gathered in a way that rendered it ineffective or less impactful in a court of law. Traumatized victims would have to sit in emergency department triage rooms.

“Years ago, if a patient didn’t have any visible, severe injuries, they waited amongst people staring at them,” O’Neil said. “Physical wounds may not be visible but these patients need immediate and urgent care.”

As a result of the 2001 Sexual Assault Reform Act (SARA), the New York State Department of Health (DOH) developed standards to improve comprehensive care for victims. DOH officials believe that providing a specialized standard of medical care and evidence collection to victims of sexual assault will improve recovery and prevent further injury or illness arising from victimization. Additionally, it may increase the successful prosecution of sex offenders for victims who choose to report crimes to law enforcement.

Lindquist-Harley said there is an extensive depth and breadth of compassion and knowledge applied to caring for each patient who comes to a SAFE Center. “Everyone is striving to handle the experience in a unified fashion,” Lindquist-Harley said. “It’s become a specialty on its own.”

SAFECARE provides services and counseling to sexual assault survivors and gathers evidence needed to convict sexual predators.

(Victims) are afraid of being judged. Afraid their privacy will not be upheld. Afraid of retribution. Afraid they sustained physical harm. Afraid to make a report because they don’t want the police involved.

MonA Carbone
SAFE-CERTIFIED REGISTERED NURSE

BEFORE IT WAS SAFE

Victims feared lack of confidentiality. Care providers unknowingly used subtle but judgmental body language and verbal cues when communicating with patients. Evidence was at risk of being gathered in a way that rendered it ineffective or less impactful in a court of law. Traumatized victims would have to sit in emergency department triage rooms.

“Years ago, if a patient didn’t have any visible, severe injuries, they waited amongst people staring at them,” O’Neil said. “Physical wounds may not be visible but these patients need immediate and urgent care.”

A BETTER WAY

As a result of the 2001 Sexual Assault Reform Act (SARA), the New York State Department of Health (DOH) developed standards to improve comprehensive care for victims. DOH officials believe that providing a specialized standard of medical care and evidence collection to victims of sexual assault will improve recovery and prevent further injury or illness arising from victimization. Additionally, it may increase the successful prosecution of sex offenders for victims who choose to report crimes to law enforcement.

Lindquist-Harley said there is an extensive depth and breadth of compassion and knowledge applied to caring for each patient who comes to a SAFE Center. “Everyone is striving to handle the experience in a unified fashion,” Lindquist-Harley said. “It’s become a specialty on its own.”

RESPECTING PRIVACY

The authenticity of SAFE’s patient-centered care is also evident in how it handles patient privacy. “A victim’s identity, medical records and experience are held in the strictest confidentiality,” Carbone said.

It’s entirely up to the patient to decide if family members or a spouse should be notified. Information is not shared with physicians or medical insurance.

A SAFER WORLD

In an ideal world, sexual assault would become obsolete. Until then, STHCS, through the SAFE program, is giving sexual assault victims the care and respect they need to heal, while collecting the evidence needed to successfully prosecute their attackers. That makes the community safer for everyone.

Finding a
SAFE Haven

Highly trained collaborative staff helps victims of sexual assault

CALL TO LEARN MORE
For more information about the SAFE program, call (716) 372-0614 or fill out a contact form online at www.sthcs.org/safe.html.

Finding a SAFE Haven
Highly trained collaborative staff helps victims of sexual assault

CALL TO LEARN MORE
For more information about the SAFE program, call (716) 372-0614 or fill out a contact form online at www.sthcs.org/safe.html.

Finding a SAFE Haven
Highly trained collaborative staff helps victims of sexual assault

CALL TO LEARN MORE
For more information about the SAFE program, call (716) 372-0614 or fill out a contact form online at www.sthcs.org/safe.html.
Six SAFE Center Specifics

Fear plays a huge role in affecting a victim’s decision to come to the hospital. They are afraid of being judged. Afraid their privacy will not be upheld. Afraid of retribution. Afraid they sustained physical harm. Afraid to make a report because they don’t want the police involved,” Carbone said.

The SAFE Center goals outlined by the DOH reflect an interdisciplinary approach to treating a victim that will hopefully remove these fears. But how do these goals translate to the real world? What does a SAFE Center, like the ones in the Southern Tier, look and feel like?

1. Provides timely, compassionate, patient-centered care in private settings that provide emotional support and reduce further trauma to the patient. From the moment a victim tells a hospital staff member that he or she has been sexually assaulted, that person goes to a designated exam room that is quiet and private. A specialized patient advocate is called into the hospital. The advocate ensures the patient has the guidance, resources, and emotional support she needs to progress through each phase of recovery. The advocate will provide transportation (including a ride home) as well as facilitate follow-up care appointments with counselors and law enforcement agencies, should a patient choose to report the incident to law enforcement.

2. Provides quality medical care to sexual assault patients, including evaluation, treatment, referral and follow-up. The medical exam is conducted by SAFE-certified nurses or physicians. During the exam, physical wounds and bruises are treated. Important medications are administered to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy, and treat HIV. A shower is readily available. At every stage, a patient is treated gently with respect and compassion.

3. Ensures the quality of collection, documentation, preservation and custody of physical evidence by utilizing trained New York State Department of Health (DOH)-certified Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners to perform exams. Exam rooms have specialized equipment used to collect, preserve and document evidence. Examiners explain exactly what they will do during every step of this process. Evidence is sealed and securely stored at the hospital for 90 days in what’s called a rape kit. During this time, a patient can decide if he or she wishes to report the attack to police authorities. This removes pressure for the victim to do so immediately. A patient advocate is called into the hospital at the patient’s request to ensure the patient has options and the support she needs to progress through each phase of recovery.

4. Utilizes an interdisciplinary approach by working with rape crisis centers and other service providers, law enforcement and prosecutors’ offices to effectively meet the needs of sexual assault victims and the community. “I think the perspective of law enforcement has become much more supportive and victim focused,” said Lindquist-Harley. In addition to a coordinated response with law enforcement and rape crisis centers, SAFE Centers in the Southern Tier work closely with service providers at local universities to be a resource for the growing problem of campus rape.

5. Provides expert testimony when needed if patients choose to report crimes to law enforcement. The SAFE program provides a continuum of care that provides the legal advocacy and support for the victim. “A key piece of SAFE is to know how to collect evidence and know how to testify with that evidence,” O’Neill said.

6. Improves and standardizes data regarding the incidence of sexual assault victims seeking treatment in hospital emergency departments. The current SAFE standards are born out of real-world interactions, observations and experiences with health-care providers, law enforcement, counselors and victims. Improvements depend on continued collaboration within these networks. STHCS is instrumental in nurturing these cooperative, results-driven relationships.

Expressed in the Southern Tier, look and feel like?

HOW TO HELP A FRIEND

Sexual assault is a horrible, traumatic event. If you know someone who was assaulted, the Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner program offers these guidelines on how you can help your friend.

Believe your friend. Accept unconditionally that the rape or assault was not the survivor’s fault.

Offer non-judgmental support. Do not question or judge what the survivor had to do to survive.

Let your friend make decisions. Let your friend decide who to tell.

Address and acknowledge your own emotions too. Offer to go with your friend to the hospital, police or counseling sessions.

Help your friend find appropriate local resources.

PROFILE OF A SAFE CENTER EXAMINER

Should you ever need to go to a SAFE Center, a certified SAFE examiner will bring an extensive set of interdisciplinary skills and specialized education that can help every dimension of your physical, social and emotional needs. In addition to being a licensed health-care practitioner, recognized by the New York State Department of Health, SAFE examiners receive training in the following:

- Education in the anatomy and physiology of sexual assault. They are trained to recognize common injuries and the psychological effects of sexual assault, and understanding the grieving process.
- Four hours shadowing law enforcement officers to learn their perspectives and responsibilities, and how they interact with victims.
- Four hours of courtroom observation to become familiar with the process of trial preparations, presentations and giving testi- mony.

Each SAFE provider conducts 12 to 15 pelvic exams on non-traumatized patients under simulated supervision.
- Two hours of crime lab observation to understand procedures and techniques utilized to process DNA evidence.
- Conduct three to five SAFE exams, interviews and SAFE rape kit compilations.

If you are a licensed health-care practitioner interested in learning more about SAFE training, contact STHCS at (716) 372-0614 or email admin@sthtcs.org.

VICTIMS OF ASSAULT

The Journal of Traumatic Stress estimates that 1 in 3 women and 1 in 12 men will be victims of sexual assault at least once in their lifetime.

It is estimated that there is one sexual assault every 90 seconds in the U.S.

SOURCE: NEW YORK STATE COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT
We’re better together
Southern Tier Health Care System, Inc.

Affordable health insurance is the key to good health.

To help people access health care, Southern Tier Health Care System, Inc. (STHCS) provides navigation assistance and guidance to residents seeking health insurance through the NY State of Health insurance plan marketplace.

STHCS has trained NY State of Health-certified navigators and certified application counselors on staff to help guide people through the application process. This free, in-person enrollment assistance is available to any New York State resident applying for coverage through the state’s health-benefit insurance marketplace.

Southern Tier Health Care System has provided health insurance enrollment assistance to people in the Southern Tier for more than 16 years. Its facilitated enrollees helped more than 22,000 people apply for health insurance from 2000 to October 2013, when the New York State of Health Marketplace opened. Since then, its navigators have helped more than 1,200 people apply for health insurance.

STHCS’ navigators have also educated more than 4,000 people about the health insurance marketplace and their health insurance options.

NY State of Health is an organized marketplace designed to help people shop for and enroll in health insurance coverage. Individuals, families, and small businesses use the NY State of Health marketplace to compare insurance options, calculate costs and select coverage.

Premium costs and co-pays are based on income, the size of your household and the level of health insurance coverage chosen. Qualified health plans offer differing levels of coverage to ensure everyone can find a plan they can afford.

NY State of Health is the only place where consumers can qualify to get help paying for coverage through premium discounts in the form of tax credits.

STHCS also helps parents and caregivers apply for health insurance for their children through New York State’s Child Health Plus program, and they help individuals who qualify apply for Medicaid health insurance.

Each fall, NY State of Health holds an open enrollment period during which the uninsured can apply for health insurance. The open enrollment period varies from year to year but will always be announced in advance.

People can also apply for coverage following other qualifying life events such as loss of health insurance due to job loss or divorce, getting married, moving to New York State or aging off a parent’s health insurance plan.

The health-plan marketplace was created in response to the Affordable Care Act.
Home Fire Safety Checklist

Cooking Safety
- "Keep an eye on what you fry." Stay in the kitchen when frying, grilling or using an open flame.

Fireplaces, Space Heaters, Baseboards, etc.
- 3 feet from the heat. Furniture, curtains, dish towels and anything that could catch fire are at least 3 feet from any type of heat source.

Smoking Safety
- Never smoke in bed.

Electrical and Appliance Safety
- Large and small appliances are plugged directly into wall outlets.

Children Playing
- Matches and lighters are locked away.

Smoke Alarms
- Change smoke alarm batteries every year unless it has a long-life battery.
- Replace smoke alarms every ten years.
- Test your smoke alarms each month. If they’re not working, they can’t get you out the door.

Home Fire Escape Plan
- At least twice a year, practice your fire escape plan with all family members.
- Practice makes perfect! After each fire drill, mark down your escape time.

What's Your Escape Time?
Make sure everyone can escape in two minutes or less.

Drill 1

Drill 2

Are You an Everyday Hero?
There are many different options in order to get involved:

EMT
PARAMEDIC
EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATOR
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Volunteer with your local EMS Agency Today!

Who Can Volunteer

- Men, women, and teens (over the age of 14) are invited to join
- You don’t need any prior EMS or medical experience
- Everyone is asked to contribute in whatever way they can
- Everyone can offer a valuable contribution

We Need You

- Do you want to make a difference in the community?
- Are you looking for a fulfilling and rewarding way to spend your time?
- Would it feel good to help others?
- Does the thought of saving lives excite you?
- Are you interesting in gaining experience in preparation for a medical career?
- Do you want to be better prepared to help your loved ones in case of emergency?

Ready to Volunteer?
Southern Tier Health Care System
(716) 372-0614
sthcs@sthcs.org
Visit us on the web: www.sthcs.org

If you answered YES to any of the above, volunteer today!
Interested in Making a Difference in Your Community?

**Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner (SAFE) Training**

Are you compassionate, kind-hearted individual who would like to make a difference in your community while earning extra cash?

**Who is Eligible/Who Should Attend?**

A licensed health care practitioner as defined by the NYS Department of Health: MD, DO, PA, NP, RN, or Licensed Midwife *must be one year out of post-grad*

40-Hour Online SAFE Training Program will offer:
- Instruction on how to assess and collect forensic evidence in cases of adult or adolescent sexual assault/rape
- Eligibility to become a NYSDOH certified SAFE provider
- Course text and manual

Benefits of becoming a SAFE provider:
- $250 reimbursement for each SAFE exam performed
- $150 per year toward CME credits
- Certification through NYSDOH as a SAFE-A
- Paid malpractice coverage with a $1 million/$3 million limit

Helping those who are victims of sexual assault/rape in your community

To learn more about SAFE training contact: Southern Tier Health Care Systems, Inc. Vanessa Molina *(716) 372-0614 admin@sthcs.org*

---

**The ABCs of Safe Sleep: Babies sleep safest Alone on their backs In a crib**

Learn more at www.sthcs.org

---

"We're better together. Southern Tier Health Care System, Inc."

**HOSPICE is there so they can share more special memories together.**

**HomeCare & Hospice** assists caregivers in providing comfortable and compassionate care to loved ones when end of life is near.

Call us at 716-372-5735 to learn more about our hospice care services.

www.HomeCare-Hospice.org

---

The Regional Paramedic Program is a collaboration between several medical facilities and medical transportation services to bring EMS education to rural areas where it is not available.

The regional approach brings only the best resources to students who would otherwise have to travel long distances to get the educational and skills training needed to become Paramedics.

**Current Class Locations:**

ALSTAR EMS Training Center
335 East Third Street
Jamestown NY 14701

Olean General Hospital
515 Main Street
Olean NY 14760

**Class Duration:**

- Usually held two nights a week for 4 hours per class.
- Some weekends will be required.

---

**Innovation**

**Distance-Learning Technology**

**Collaboration**

To Apply Please Visit: www.sthcs.org/paramedic-program

For Detailed Information, Please Call:

ALSTAR EMS
Training Center
716-664-8319

Through this collaboration we are able to cost share, enhance efficiency, ensure EMS providers have the training they need to ultimately protect our families, friends and neighbors by providing state-of the-art pre-hospital care.
**Olean Medical Group**  
Serving the Southern Tier since 1948  
716-372-0141 * 800-577-7767  
www.oleanmedicalgroup.com

---

**ALSTAR EMS**  
Regionally Preferred & 30 Years Strong  
ALSTAR EMS is Always at Your Service

Whether it is our Communications Center, Paramedics and EMT’s in the field, or the customer service representatives in the billing services department, our team is dedicated to serving you.

- Ambulance Services
- Health Practice Management
- Fly Cars
- Wheelchair Van Transportation
- Event Coverage

---

**Trans AM Ambulance Services Inc.**  
Trans AM Ambulance Services Inc.  
305 N. 8th St. Olean N.Y. 14760  
PHONE 372-5871 FAX 372-7497

---

**ALSTAR EMS**  
28 Maple Street, Jamestown NY 14701  
716-664-7353  
www.wcaservices.com

---

**Southern Tier Health Care System Inc.**  
The mission of Southern Tier Health Care System Inc. is to improve the health and wellness of our rural communities through our programs:

---

**The Olean General Hospital Heart Program**  
We Can Find and Fix Heart Problems

---

**Interventional Cardiac Catheterization Lab**  
A partnership with  
Gates Vascular Institute  
A Kaleida Health Facility

---

**Olean General Hospital**  
A Member of Upper Allegheny Health System  
www.ogh.org/heart  
716.375.6163
Robotic Surgery at WCA Hospital is changing the way surgeries operate and the way patients recover. Robotic surgery is performed through a few tiny incisions or one small single-port incision through the belly and offers many potential benefits.

What are the patient benefits of robotic surgery? Although every patient and every surgery is unique, robotic surgery offers important advantages for patients including,

- Precise, minimally invasive surgery procedure
- Short hospital stay
- Quick recovery
- Minimal scarring
- Faster return to normal activities of life

Surgeons at WCA Hospital use robotic surgery to treat conditions affecting the,

- Adrenal glands
- Anti-reflux
- Appendix
- Colon
- Gallbladder
- Inguinal hernia
- Kidney
- Prostate
- Spleen
- Uterus
- Ventral hernia

Listen to what our patients are saying about robotic surgery. Go to www.wcahospital.org/roboticsurgery to watch our patients videos and contact one of our credentialed robotic surgeons who can discuss if a robotic procedure is an option for you.

WCA Robotic Surgeons

General, Vascular & Minimally Invasive Surgery

GAŁO GRIJALVA, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Board Certified Surgeon
Credentialed Robotic Surgeon
WCA Hospital
To schedule surgery, call 483-7870

TIMOTHY C. BROWN, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Board Certified Surgeon
Credentialed Robotic Surgeon
JAMA Physician Member
To schedule surgery, call 483-1183

MATTHEW S. CHANG, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Board Certified Surgeon
Credentialed Robotic Surgeon
JAMA Physician Member
To schedule surgery, call 483-1183

RUSSELL D. LEE, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Board Certified Surgeon
Credentialed Robotic Surgeon
JAMA Physician Member
To schedule surgery, call 483-1183

Urology & Minimally Invasive Surgery

ICHAÑDO JUNG, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Board Certified Urologist
Credentialed Robotic Surgeon
Western New York Urology Associates
To schedule surgery, call 338-9200

RYAN WHITE, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Board Certified Urologist
Credentialed Robotic Surgeon
Western New York Urology Associates
To schedule surgery, call 338-9200

Gynecology

MINIMALLY INVASIVE SURGERY

ROBERT DANIELS, M.D.
Board Certified OB/GYN
Credentialed Robotic Surgeon
Lane Women’s Health Group
To schedule surgery, call 484-9194
The mission of Southern Tier Health Care System, Inc. is to improve the health and wellness of our rural communities through our programs: