Announcing
Cayuga Health System
In October Cayuga Medical Center and Schuyler Hospital announced the establishment of the Cayuga Health System. This is an expanded, integrated health-care system that serves the entire region while preserving our focus on local health-care priorities and delivery. It’s an exciting time, a juncture in our organization’s history that holds great promise for our future.

The creation of this new health system is the biggest event for Cayuga Medical Center since it became a private, not-for-profit community hospital in January 1981. Now, as then, our board undertook a diligent review and planning process. In close collaboration with Schuyler Hospital, we carefully considered the needs of our communities, the sustained viability of these important community assets well into the future, and our mission to provide leading-edge health care that is comprehensive and safe.

Cayuga Health System unites our two organizations through an active parent holding company, without requiring a complete merger of Cayuga Medical Center and Schuyler Hospital. Our new corporate structure is flexible and proactive. Should we choose—based on strategic merit—to invite other hospital and health-care related entities to join Cayuga Health System in the future, we have the adaptability to do so.

The advantages of health systems
Health systems bring together individual health-care providers to serve a larger geographic area and enhance the health of its residents. In the case of Cayuga Medical Center and Schuyler Hospital, serving this broader population base has several benefits. First, it supports our ability to attract and retain exceptionally well-trained medical and surgical specialists who are recruited nationally. These physicians provide a high level of care in specialties such as neurosurgery, interventional cardiac care, and oncology. In fact, we are attracting the caliber of experts necessary to create centers of excellence, as we have in the Cayuga Center for Orthopedics and Sports Medicine with subspecialties in shoulder, hand, foot and ankle, joint revision and replacement, endurance sports, and physical therapy. In serving an expanded client base, our subspecialists keep their skills well honed by treating a higher volume of patients.

Another significant advantage of health systems is that they enable multiple organizations to offer more efficient patient care. Over the years Cayuga Medical Center has collaborated with several major medical centers to help our patients gain timely access to services we don’t deliver locally. When a patient from Tompkins County needs open-heart surgery, we can provide that patient with a direct connection to Rochester General Hospital’s highly rated Sands-Constellation Heart Institute. We share medical records and technology, so our doctors can be in immediate contact with each other. This continuum of care now encompasses Schuyler Hospital, Cayuga Medical Center, and our collaborations with the Sands-Constellation Heart Institute at Rochester General Hospital, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, University of Rochester Medical Center’s Departments of Neurosurgery and Orthopedics, and Mayo Medical Laboratories.

Since Cayuga Medical Center and Schuyler Hospital started collaborating three years ago, both hospitals have realized cost savings, which is the third major advantage to a health-systems approach. Our ability to provide a higher level of care to a larger population base supports our core values, as well as our business goals. Each of our organizations is strengthened through benefits derived from economies of scale. We can reduce costs by reducing duplication of services. We can deploy our talent more wisely and cost efficiently, while remaining focused on the needs of our communities. In a preliminary step toward the formal establishment of a new health system, a number of physicians have obtained reciprocal medical staff privileges at both hospitals. This provides residents of Schuyler County with local access to orthopedists, cardiologists, general surgeons, and oncologists. Patients also have direct access to all of the services at Cayuga Medical Center, only twenty-five miles away.

Health care issues are local and this model of affiliation recognizes that. The board of directors of each hospital will continue to focus on the quality and provision of care at the local level, while the system will consider the region’s needs from a broader perspective. With the creation of Cayuga Health System we are embarking on a more robust, agile, and progressive approach to serving the people in this region, enabling us to have an even greater impact on the health and well-being of those we serve. We are ready for the future and the challenges it is sure to bring.

John Rudd, President and CEO
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Cayuga Health System is a newly formed health-care system that unites Cayuga Medical Center and Schuyler Hospital. Our current service area covers the southern Finger Lakes and central New York region.

What is it?

Cayuga Health System is a newly formed health-care system that unites Cayuga Medical Center and Schuyler Hospital. Our current service area covers the southern Finger Lakes and central New York region.

How is this health system structured?

- Cayuga Health System is structured in a way that recognizes and respects the value of each organization. Each hospital will maintain its own board of directors, whose jobs are to focus on quality, patient care and safety, and the needs of their respective communities.
- The parent company, Cayuga Health System, will look at the bigger, regional picture and concentrate on the ways in which its members can work cohesively. The goals of the health system are to enhance the quality of patient care, the health of the communities we serve, and the efficiency with which care is delivered. Better patient care delivered through a well-coordinated system has the added benefit of holding health-care costs in check.
- A board of directors oversees the work of Cayuga Health System. That board is made up of board members, physicians, and administrators from Cayuga Medical Center and Schuyler Hospital.
- Should we choose to invite other hospitals and health care-related entities to join Cayuga Health System in the future, based on strategic merit, we will have the flexibility to do so.
- John Rudd has been named president and CEO of Cayuga Health System. Rudd will also continue in his current position of president and CEO of Cayuga Medical Center, while Andrew Manzer will continue as administrator of Schuyler Hospital.

Who was involved in developing Cayuga Health System?

A task force including people from both hospitals worked together for more than two years and, with the assistance of experienced consultants, carefully designed Cayuga Health System.

The Task Force

- Larry Baum
- Michael Eisman, MD
- David Evelyn, MD
- Gary Ferguson
- Sami Husseini, MD
- Andrew Manzer
- Holly Mosher
- John Neuman
- John Rudd
- Benjamin Saks, DO
- Jeffrey Snedeker, MD
- Rob Swinnerton
- Fred Tanneberger
- Richard Weakland

Cayuga Medical Center and Schuyler Hospital continue to operate under the direction of their own boards of directors. A separate board, with representation from Schuyler Hospital and Cayuga Medical Center, oversees the work of Cayuga Health System.
Cayuga Health System

Why is this a good move for Cayuga Medical Center and Tompkins County?

- Specialists in areas such as interventional cardiology, neonatology, neurosurgery, oncology, and orthopedics are experts in treating unusual and complex problems and in performing uncommon procedures. An expanded client base insures that these specialists will maintain and advance their expertise by treating more patients. The affiliation of Cayuga Medical Center and Schuyler Hospital provides this critical mass of patients.

- Increased reciprocity between doctors from Cayuga Medical Center and Schuyler County means that many more patients from Schuyler County are choosing Cayuga Medical Center over other hospitals in the region.

- Participation in a broader, clinically integrated care-delivery network is attractive to patients, physicians and clinical staff, employers, and payers (including health insurance companies and government programs, such as Medicare and Medicaid).

- Cayuga Health System positions our hospital well for future growth in services and capabilities.

- Economies of scale benefit both hospitals by helping them maintain cost-effective operations.

Why is this good for Schuyler Hospital and Schuyler County?

- Through the Cayuga Health System, Schuyler Hospital is currently providing Schuyler County residents with local patient-care services in orthopedics, cardiology, general surgery (including anesthesiology and outpatient surgery), pathology, and oncology. Specialized care for chronic wounds will be available in the near future, and other services will be developed as needed.

- Being part of a larger organization helps to secure funding and grants to assist with capital needs and strategic priorities.

- The many benefits Cayuga Medical Center derives through its collaboration with large, tertiary-care centers are now available to Schuyler Hospital, as well. Among these advantages are proven quality-assurance methods, cutting-edge medical research, esoteric laboratory testing, and direct access to the highest level of care for complex medical and surgical problems.

The name of Cayuga Health System

“We went into the naming process with very open minds and considered many different possibilities,” says John Turner, vice president for public relations at Cayuga Medical Center. Turner and his colleagues at both institutions wanted to make sure that the naming process was a thorough, thoughtful undertaking. To that end, Turner held a number of focus groups bringing together many people from Schuyler and Tompkins counties. He asked community leaders, employees, and physicians to share their feedback and to brainstorm ideas for the name of this new health system.

“It was very clear from the focus groups in both counties that people had strong, favorable associations with the ‘Cayuga brand.’ The Cayuga name came up in different variations in every single focus group,” says Turner. “Market research confirms that the Cayuga brand has grown in the eyes of our consumers in a very positive way,” he adds. “We concluded that instead of starting from scratch with a new name, we would build on the established momentum of this identity.

“The two most valuable assets of this new health system are the two hospitals and the fact that each is highly regarded in their respective communities,” continues Turner. “For this reason, the names of each of our hospitals will remain front and center, with a more subtle reference to Cayuga Health System. Our plan is to continue to build on the names and solid reputations of each hospital, even as we promote our newly established health system.”
Easy Patient Access through Regional Health Care

The residents of Schuyler County now have access to an array of new health services right where they live. These services, which have come on line over the past three years at Schuyler Hospital, are provided in collaboration with Cayuga Medical Center, Cayuga Medical Associates, and Surgical Associates of Ithaca.

**Orthopedics and Sports Medicine**
Office visits and outpatient surgery at Schuyler Hospital, through Cayuga Center for Orthopedics and Sports Medicine at Schuyler Hospital. Anesthesia for outpatient surgery provided by Cayuga Anesthesia Associates.

**Cardiology**
Office visits and outpatient cardiac testing at Schuyler Hospital and September Hill, through the Cayuga Heart Institute. Immediate, direct link to emergency cardiac care at Cayuga Medical Center.

**General Surgery**
Office visits and outpatient surgery through Surgical Associates of Ithaca. Anesthesia for outpatient surgery provided by Cayuga Anesthesia Associates.

**Laboratory Services**
Pathology services provided by Dr. Daniel Sudilovsky, director of pathology and laboratory medicine at Cayuga Medical Center.

**Oncology (Cancer Care)**
Office visits in Dr. James Winkler’s Montour Falls office for new and established oncology patients, provided by Oncology Services of Cayuga Medical Associates at Schuyler.
The beginning of July 2014 marked the opening of Cayuga Birthplace, a state-of-the-art maternity and newborn-child care unit at Cayuga Medical Center. Twice the size of the previous unit, Cayuga Birthplace was designed to serve the growing population of our region well into the future—and to serve it in style. “Our patients expect an extraordinary experience and our staff and physicians are happy to deliver it,” says Terri MacCheyne, RN, director of the Cayuga Birthplace.

Under MacCheyne’s seasoned leadership, nurses and doctors came together to plan a new unit that would support the shared goal of delivering the highest standard of patient care. “Everyone involved in this project took it very, very seriously,” says Susan Nohelty, vice president for patient services. “Our nurses and doctors are passionate about the care they deliver. The process of patient care was foremost in all of their decision making.” HOLT architect Sarah Galbreath, who worked closely with MacCheyne and her team, echoes that sentiment. “They were unique in what they wanted; it all came down to what was best for the patient,” says Galbreath. “The Cayuga Medical Center team came to the design process with that deep sense of serving their patients. For them, it was all about creating a better, safer, more personal experience for their patients.”

The amenities of Cayuga Birthplace combine aspects of advanced technology with the comfort of a spa. Large private rooms awash in natural light, walls painted in soft, inviting hues, abundant comfy furniture, and scenic views create the ideal surroundings for laboring mothers. Every LDR (labor, delivery, recovery) room has a luxurious bathroom with whirlpool tub, providing welcome relief to mothers coping with labor pain. Telemetry for those patients requiring fetal monitoring is available throughout Cayuga Birthplace. This means that mothers can move freely throughout the unit—even climbing into the whirlpool tub—and still be monitored. Couches in each room fold flat, enabling partners to stay overnight and maintain family support at this crucial time.

Separate lounges allow extended family members to wait in comfort. Babies remain in their mothers’ rooms, which encourages bonding. Nurse lactation specialists are available to coach mothers on breast-feeding, and there is a dedicated lactation room for additional teaching if needed. “We don’t just birth babies here; we birth families,” observes MacCheyne. “We want to provide the best possible start for families; we want mothers to have the birth experience they desire. We have a great team,” she adds. “Nurses, obstetricians, midwives, pediatricians, neonatologists all work very collaboratively with the patients’ best interests at heart.”

Operating swiftly and safely

Dr. Steven Gelber, an obstetrician on staff at Cayuga Medical Center, says he is especially pleased with the location of a new operating room within Cayuga Birthplace. “The setup of the previous maternity unit required that we transport mothers needing C-sections to the surgical services department,
which was located in another area of the hospital. A surgical team had to be called in to assist the obstetrician,” says Gelber. “The location of an operating room right in the unit means that patients needing surgery are simply moved across the interior corridor. We save valuable time and that has the potential to save the lives of babies and mothers.”

In preparation for the opening of Cayuga Birthplace, maternal-child health nurses learned the skills required to assist obstetricians during surgery, while hospital aides on the unit went through operating-room technician training. This makes it unnecessary to call in a surgical team, which saves time. “Operating-room nursing requires a whole different set of technical skills. It was like going back to school again,” says Linda Crumb, RN, assistant vice president for patient services. Maternal-child care nurses assisted obstetricians in the operating room for three months prior to the opening of Cayuga Birthplace. “We are really proud of our nursing staff,” says Nohelty. “They’ve done an incredible job of embracing these new, additional responsibilities.”

“These improvements increase the safety of babies and mothers when a Cesarean section becomes necessary, and they also reduce suffering,” says Gelber. “When a woman’s labor is not going well and she and her physician have made the decision to have a C-section, any time spent waiting before surgery is very difficult for the patient. Additionally, in those situations when surgery is needed to stop bleeding following a vaginal delivery, the close proximity of this special operating room is a major advantage.

“Everyone here is focused on excellent outcomes for mothers and babies, and we all work toward the same result,” says Gelber. “Our nurses love what they do and they have embraced learning the skills needed to start a new operating room on the unit.”

Our babies’ parents come from all over the world!
Cayuga Birthplace medical staff

- Six board-certified obstetricians and four certified nurse midwives serve on the medical staff of Cayuga Medical Center. They are in practice at Ob-Gyn Associates of Ithaca and Cayuga Women’s Health. Nurse midwives, who work in collaboration with our obstetricians, deliver low-risk obstetrical patients at Cayuga Birthplace (between 40–50 percent of all vaginal deliveries).

- Two board-certified neonatologists provide care in the level 2B neonatal intensive care unit (NICU).

- Fourteen board-certified pediatricians serve on our infant care team, including three subspecialists in pediatric infectious disease and pediatric gastroenterology. They are in practice at Buttermilk Falls Pediatrics, and Northeast Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine. Pediatric ophthalmologist Peter Schwartz, MD, is also on staff.

Sarah Galbreath and her husband, Steve Hugo, met at HOLT Architects, where she is an architect specializing in health care and he is a partner specializing in higher education and community projects. Galbreath’s most recently completed project was the design of Cayuga Birthplace, a project she says was a labor of love. Two weeks after its grand opening on July 7, she delivered their second child there, a beautiful son named March.

Their three-year-old daughter, Iona, was delivered in the previous Maternal-Child Care Unit. “Her birth was amazing,” says Galbreath. “At that time we had already started planning for the new maternity wing. During my labor, Steve and I were both taking architectural notes with ideas for the new project. Those notes informed some of our design decisions for the new unit.”
We arrived at the medical center for Sarah’s induction in the morning, knowing that we would be spending the next three days there. It’s a beautiful and quiet space full of friendly, sociable people who were interested in us and our baby. —Steve

The labor and delivery area was quiet, efficient, and sunny, which describes the staff, too. Our nurse, Sue, kept us company the whole day. She was vibrant and positive and very comforting. —Sarah

Everyone mobilized immediately when I went to the nurses’ station to tell them that Sarah’s labor was changing. She didn’t even realize that the whole bottom of the bed she was lying in disassembled for the delivery. —Steve
When push came to shove, the staff was really on the ball. The birth process was very well orchestrated and Dr. Milner was a great coach. —Sarah

I had my eyes closed for the last hour so those memories are mostly auditory. The voices of the staff and my husband were so calm, encouraging, and positive, telling me “You can do it!” There was a lot of love and support in the room. —Sarah

The new space gave us more privacy and more room for our family to gather comfortably. —Steve

I love the architecture of the unit. I was part of the design team and this is my “professional baby.” But if the nurses and doctors at Cayuga Medical Center had not been as wonderful as they were, we would have delivered our baby someplace else. It’s the staff that shines. —Sarah
Local neonatal intensive care keeps families together

Our level 2B special care nursery is currently equipped to take care of infants who are born up to eight weeks premature and who have a birth weight of more than 1,500 grams (about 3.5 pounds). However, over the next two years our neonatologists and NICU staff will be working toward the goal of taking care of even smaller newborns.

According to NICU medical director Dr. Srisatish Devapatla, this transition will take place in two stages over a two-year period. “By the end of 2016, my vision is that we will be taking care of newborns born at 30 weeks and above, or weighing 1,250 grams or more at birth,” says Devapatla. This translates to babies born ten weeks premature and weighing as little as 2.75 pounds. “Of the twenty-six level 2B NICUs in the state,” he adds, “Cayuga Medical Center will be one of the few hospitals taking care of preemies this small.”

Admission

Babies born with infections, respiratory problems, metabolic problems, anemia, jaundice, and other...
issues are admitted to the NICU. Babies who need assistance breathing benefit from either conventional mechanical ventilation or continuous positive airway pressure (C-PAP).

Extremely sick newborns who need a higher mode of ventilation or any surgical intervention, as well as babies born at less than 32 weeks’ gestation, are stabilized and transferred to a level 3 NICU in Syracuse or Elmira.

Round-the-clock specialty care is provided by two highly experienced board-certified neonatologists. Additional specialty care includes:

• Board-certified specialists in pediatric infectious disease, pediatric gastroenterology, and pediatric ophthalmology
• Neonatal respiratory therapists for advanced respiratory care
• Imaging Department support for diagnosis of neonatal hip dislocation
• Pediatric tele-echocardiography, available through an affiliation with Crouse Hospital in Syracuse. An echocardiogram performed in our NICU can be observed and interpreted in real time by a pediatric cardiologist in Syracuse, which enables us to quickly diagnose and transfer infants who are born with heart defects.
• Cleft Palate and Facial Deformities Team, which provides expert help and consultation both prenatally and right after the baby’s birth to ensure multi-specialty coordinated care and to provide guidance to mothers and families
• Total parenteral nutrition (TPN) delivering intravenous nutrition to low birth weight babies.
• 24-hour pharmacy support, which ensures appropriate life-saving medications for at-risk newborns.
• Lactation specialists offer invaluable information and support for breastfeeding, which is vital to all newborn babies. Cayuga Medical Center has one of the highest breastfeeding rates in New York State.
• Additional consultations are available, as needed, from board-certified specialists in neurology, to diagnose and initiate treatment of babies with suspected seizures; ear, nose, and throat, for emergency ENT issues; orthopedics, for consultation and treatment for orthopedic problems.
• Occupational therapy and speech therapy support

Help before the baby is delivered
We often know ahead of time when a baby is at risk for complications, and in those instances one of our neonatologists is on hand during the delivery to provide immediate care for the newborn. “Sometimes babies are delivered early due to medical complications experienced by the mother, such as high blood pressure, gestational diabetes, placenta previa or placental abruption that can cause heavy bleeding,” explains Devapatla. “Our neonatologists support our obstetricians whenever a Cesarean section is performed or when there is perceived fetal distress during a vaginal delivery.”

Parents in the NICU
The active involvement of parents whose babies are in the NICU is strongly encouraged. The staff teach and encourage “kangaroo care,” which is skin-to-skin contact between newborn babies and their parents. This conveys critically important nurturing to help tiny babies thrive.

In support of premature newborns who are stable and need a slightly less intensive level of care but who still require the expertise of the NICU for monitoring and medications, Cayuga Birthplace offers a unique service called the “Family NICU.” Single-family NICU rooms are directly adjacent to the NICU.

“The Family NICU is an unusual service. Most hospitals don’t let babies come out of the NICU until

Welcoming Dr. Ramesh Vidavalur

Cayuga Medical Center is pleased to welcome neonatologist Ramesh Vidavalur, MD, MBA, to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). Known to patients and staff as “Dr. Ramesh,” Vidavalur has trained abroad and in the United States. He comes to Ithaca from Cumberland, Maryland, where he was an attending neonatologist for five years. “I was drawn here by the beauty of the area, the diversity, and the school system,” says Vidavalur. “It has been a wonderful experience working with the staff in the NICU and with the medical center’s management team, and I’ve had good support from the local pediatricians.”

Vidavalur has special interest and expertise in treating drug-addicted babies, which is a growing problem in this country. “I am also interested in global health, specifically neonatology in developing countries,” he says. He is hoping to join with local university students who are working to create low-cost technologies that could improve mortality rates among newborns in the developing world.
Early Arrival

When we met the Jawo family to talk about Rosemarie’s birth, they were preparing to move from Ithaca to Durham, North Carolina, to be closer to family. Lori Bruce-Jawo is well known to Ithaca as the Ithaca City School District’s former chief excellence officer. Her husband, Anthony Jawo, has been staying home with Rosemarie, who is clearly thriving under his care. At nine months old she weighed eighteen pounds and was twenty-eight inches tall, which put her right on target for her age. says Lori Bruce-Jawo, describing her daughter. Born six weeks early in September 2013 and weighing a mere two pounds, 15 ounces, Rosemarie Jainaba Jawo fit into the palm of her father’s hand. “I was forty-four years old and I had experienced several previous miscarriages,” says Bruce-Jawo. “Discovering that I was pregnant was a wonderful surprise but I was also worried.” Dr. Jose Torrado of Cayuga Women’s Health was Bruce-Jawo’s obstetrician. “I was very pleased with his care, which was important because I was anxious about the pregnancy,” she says. “I had faith in him and in the people working in his office.”

The Jawos went in for one of Lori’s regularly scheduled two-week appointments on September 10. Torrado had been watching Lori’s blood pressure, which was high due to her pregnancy. “I saw him on a Tuesday,” she recalls. “He calmly explained that because of potential complications related to my blood pressure he wanted to deliver the baby early.” The Jawos went from the doctor’s office directly to Cayuga Medical Center. “Dr. Torrado assured me that I was fine and the baby was fine and that the medical center had the capability to take care of her even though she was coming six weeks early.”

The Jawos spent the night in the hospital, while mother and baby were closely monitored. The next morning Torrado performed a Cesarean section—the baby was in the breech position—and tiny Rosemarie was born. A team of nurses and doctors attended the birth because Lori was a high-risk mother and because the baby was premature. “My husband, Tony, went over to the NICU with the baby,” says Lori. “She was little but she was feisty right from the beginning. A few hours later they took me to the NICU. As soon as I spoke to her, she perked right up and looked around because she recognized my voice. She had lots of ‘with-it-ness,’ even at that stage.”

Rosemarie’s major issues were her weight and jaundice. She was too tiny to regulate her own body temperature, so she was kept in a warm bed under special lights to protect her eyes and treat her jaundice. Her mother’s colostrum (first milk), IV fluids, and a special weight-gaining formula helped Rosemarie gain weight. “At first she was so tiny she was fed with an eyedropper like a baby bird,” says Lori.

The Jawos moved into a room next to the nursery during Rosemarie’s stay in the NICU. “The involvement of parents with babies in the NICU is very important, so we encourage parents to stay,” explains Terri MacCheyne, RN. “We offer parents courtesy rooms here for a nominal fee. Naturally, the availability of rooms for parents is based on our patient census at the time.” The ability to be so close by enabled Lori to breastfeed the baby every three hours. Both Lori and Anthony participated in daily kangaroo care, holding Rosemarie next to their bare chests to provide the skin-to-skin contact that is so beneficial for newborns, especially premature infants. “The nurses checked in on us often, answered our questions promptly, and treated us well. We felt at home,” says Anthony.

“She is our miracle baby,” says Lori Bruce-Jawo, describing her daughter. Born six weeks early in September 2013 and weighing a mere two pounds, 15 ounces, Rosemarie Jainaba Jawo fit into the palm of her father’s hand.

“The nurses checked in on us often, answered our questions promptly, and treated us well. We felt at home,” says Anthony.

“Dr. Satish is a saint,” Lori adds, speaking of Dr. Srisatish Devapatia, neonatologist and medical director of the NICU at Cayuga Medical Center. “I can’t imagine anyone better—he has the head and the heart for this work. He believes strongly in emotional and physical bonding and feels that it is as important as the IV and the meds. We got to touch Rosemarie every three hours and it made all the difference.” Anthony adds, “I’m sure it made it all easier for Rosemarie, knowing that we were right there.”

“We had confidence and faith in the people taking care of the baby. We felt they were not only knowledgeable but they were able to communicate well with us and they cared about us,” says Lori. “This was not just about a clinical experience: they connected with the hearts and minds of our family; they anticipated what we were feeling and what we needed. Everyone understood what an emotional roller coaster we were on. I cannot imagine the anxiety of having to travel to a special care nursery out of town at a time like this,” she adds.

Three weeks after she was born, Rosemarie’s weight was up to four pounds. She was big enough to leave the hospital and the Jawo family was able to go home.

“When we moved to Ithaca, we didn’t think it was possible for us to have kids,” says Lori. “I feel like Ithaca gave us our baby.”
they are ready to go home,” says Terri MacCheyne, RN. “Our philosophy is that we want parents to learn to care for their baby while they have the support of our staff. We want parents to learn what to look for in terms of potential problems and to feel confident in their skills in caring for their newborn. Some of these preemies receive nourishment at first from tube feeding. Before they go home they have to learn about breast-feeding and how to take milk from a bottle. The Family NICU helps us support these families through this important time.”

Drawing back the best and the brightest

Srisatish Devapatla, MD, first came to Ithaca in 2002 to establish the medical center’s NICU, for the diagnosis and treatment of premature and sick newborns. Under his guidance, newborn care at Cayuga Medical Center took a significant step forward. Long known to his patients and staff as “Dr. Satish,” Devapatla is an abundantly knowledgeable neonatologist with the skills and compassion to help newborns and their families through what are typically serious, distressing circumstances.

Devapatla has a vision for this NICU. “I have a growth plan in mind and a strategy for making us even better.” He received his MBA at Binghamton University in 2011, graduating first in his class and earning the honor of valedictorian, all while serving as medical director of Cayuga Medical Center’s NICU. “I wanted to apply the tools of lean sigma management,” he explains. “By organizing our work using lean principles I knew we could deliver more efficient patient care. The ability to do things quickly and well for sick newborns is essential for best patient outcomes.” He brainstormed his ideas with Dr. David Evelyn, vice president for medical affairs at Cayuga Medical Center.

In 2012, a family commitment took the Devapatla family to Raleigh, North Carolina. “It was a very difficult decision for me, but we moved,” says Devapatla. He could not, however, bring himself to completely sever ties with Cayuga Medical Center or the NICU he had helped to build. One week a month he returned to Ithaca; during the other three weeks he commuted to a hospital in Virginia. “You don’t really know how good our hospital is until you start working somewhere else,” says Devapatla.

Devapatla found he was missing Cayuga Medical Center and with the demands of his travel schedule, his children were missing their father. “When Dr. Evelyn asked me to return to Ithaca,” says Devapatla, “I didn’t take a minute to decide.” This was a decision, according to Terri MacCheyne, RN, for which his many colleagues are deeply grateful.

As medical director of the NICU, Devapatla had been on call 24/7 for ten years. “While I was working in Virginia, I met Dr. Ramesh Vidavalur and he decided to come to Ithaca,” Devapatla continues. “He has been an excellent addition to the staff. We have similar philosophies of patient care.” Both neonatologists hold MBAs, which help them in all management aspects of the NICU.

“The staff and I have grown together over the years,” says Devapatla, who is an enthusiastic mentor and coach. “Our nurses are very proficient and their abilities in managing the care of small babies are exemplary. They approach every project we undertake to improve care with a high level of energy,” he adds. “Many of our nurses are eager to take on leading roles, and our young nurses are very ably supported by our seasoned registered nurses.”

Everyone’s hard work has paid off. The hospital has been able to initiate increasingly higher levels of care to babies as recognized by the designation of level 2B nursery status. With Dr. Devapatla back at the helm, we can look forward to continued growth of services for the tiniest patients we serve.
When Cayuga Medical Center clinically linked with the
Department of Neurosurgery at the University of Rochester
Medical Center (URMC) in 2013, our neurosurgery services
took a significant step forward. As part of the collaboration
neurosurgeon Dr. James Metcalf Jr. joined the medical staffs at
URMC and Cayuga Medical Center, as well as the practice of
Dr. Barry Pollack at Progressive Neurosurgery of Cayuga Medi-
cal Associates. Dr. Metcalf and Dr. Pollack perform surgeries
on the spine, including the management of lower back and
neck issues. They also manage medical and surgical issues
that affect the brain, including traumatic brain injury, prima-
ry and metastatic brain tumors, hydrocephalus (a condition
in which fluid accumulates in the brain), and brain infections.

“Our medical center has much more of a regional pres-
ence than it did when we first established our neurosur-
gery program eighteen years ago. It makes sense for us to
enhance our neurosurgery program now in a way that’s
similar to what we’ve done in other areas,” explains Rudd.

“Just as we enriched our oncology and cardiology services
through collaborations with Roswell Park Cancer Institute
and the Sands-Constellation Heart Institute at Rochester
General Hospital, we’re advancing our neurosurgery pro-
gress through a direct link to one of the most
highly rated neurosciences programs in the nation.
Patients who can be treated in Ithaca will stay here,
while patients with more complicated brain and spinal
cord injuries or aneurysms that require highly special-
ized care will be referred to Rochester. This tiered system
is a very effective model of care that avoids unnecessary
transfers of patients who are best served locally.

Extraordinary collaborators
Dr. Webster Pilcher, MD, PhD, has been chairman of the
Department of Neurosurgery at the University of Roch-
ester Medical Center for twelve years. Under his leader-
ship, physician specialists in the neurosciences are
working more closely than ever to provide top-quality
care, both at URMC and across the health systems of the
greater Rochester and upstate New York region. He has
recruited subspecialists from around the country to join
the URMC medical team. The results are notable, with
increasing recognition for a level of care at URMC that
is widely recognized as among the best in the nation.
It’s a win-win-win situation, with our patients at the center of the equation.

U.S. News and World Report has ranked URMC among the top hospitals in the country and the number one hospital in the Rochester metro area.

Pilcher is passionate about the field of neurosurgery and the work he does for patients. He is also passionate about improving care by joining forces with other physician specialists and making the benefits of advanced care more widely accessible to the people of upstate New York. He is accomplishing this through collaborative programs of excellence such as STAR (Stroke Treatment Alliance of Rochester) and SOAR (Spine Outcomes Alliance of Rochester). He is also realizing his goals by establishing meaningful relationships with other communities and hospitals in the region, including Cayuga Medical Center.

Pilcher found a very interested collaborator in John Rudd. “This kind of alliance allows Cayuga Medical Center to stay current with the protocols and technology in a rapidly moving field,” says Rudd. “The relationship is beneficial to everyone involved, and we expect it to flourish in the coming years.”

“I’ve been impressed with Cayuga Medical Center for a long time,” says Pilcher. “It’s a well-organized, thoughtfully run hospital in its approach to patient care and it’s clear to me that Cayuga Medical Center is focused on quality. By establishing a close relationship, we can make sure that the criteria and protocols we use for stroke patients and spinal surgery patients at URMC are available at Cayuga Medical Center.”

Neurosurgeon Dr. Jamie Metcalf was recruited to join both medical staffs. “We wanted to get another top-notch surgeon in Ithaca,” says Pilcher. “Dr. Metcalf graduated with honors, he received excellent training, and he has a great reputation in the field. He’s a terrific talent and has the kind of academic background that makes him a good fit both for URMC and for Tompkins County. He is committed to Ithaca and wants to help the neurosciences move forward there.”

Above: James Metcalf Jr., MD, in surgery; left: Mattison Burt III, MD, anesthesiologist
Neurosurgeon Dr. James Metcalf Jr. has been in practice for twenty-six years and for nineteen years served as a clinical professor at the University of Tennessee. He and his family moved to Ithaca from Albany, Georgia, in the summer of 2013 to join the medical staffs of URMC and Cayuga Medical Center. In spite of the polar vortex gripping the region during the 2013–2014 winter, Dr. Metcalf says he is delighted with his move up north.

How would you characterize the affiliation thus far?

It’s been a very healthy working environment because I have colleagues at URMC I can be in immediate touch with to discuss questions and cases. I can send them imaging studies performed at Cayuga Medical Center and have an answer to a very complex question within a couple of hours. The power of this affiliation is that I am able to get access to world-class advice very, very quickly.

One of our primary goals has been to provide a quality of service that allows more patients to have their neurosurgery procedures performed locally when feasible and to provide access to tertiary care when it’s needed. We’ve had local patients requiring very complex brain surgery and we’ve been able to get them scheduled right away at URMC, which is a tremendous advantage.

We’ve doubled the number of cases done here in the last six months. The majority of surgery I’m doing right now is spinal work, equally divided between surgery on the neck and surgery on the lower back. I’m also performing surgery for head disease, trauma, and brain tumors. A lot of people think of neurosurgeons as brain surgeons but much of what we do involves the spine. I think we need to help people understand more about the role of neurosurgeons in the treatment of back pain.

Any other developments you can share?

We’ve recently added the capability of monitoring the intracranial pressure of patients, which is very helpful for people with brain tumors, head trauma, strokes, or any type of intracranial issue. We are also looking at developing a multidisciplinary approach to treating back pain and diseases of the spine, which will involve our physical therapists and our pain management specialists. We want to reinforce a comprehensive approach to spinal wellness and enhance the nonsurgical side of how we help patients improve who are suffering with back pain.

Building blocks

Rudd and Pilcher agree that the building blocks are in place at Cayuga Medical Center to create a robust neurosurgery subspecialty and to drive the program forward in brain and spine care:

- Cayuga Neurologic Services of Cayuga Medical Associates, a very experienced neurology group including Dr. Jody Stackman, Dr. James Gaffney, and Dr. Susan Cowdery
- Outstanding neurological imaging by Radiology Associates of Ithaca
- A talented team of intensive-care specialists and hospitalists, under the leadership of Dr. Peter Hannon and Dr. Martin Stallone
- One of the most consistently highly rated physical medicine rehabilitation units in the country, under the direction of physiatrists Dr. Andrew Morpurgo and Dr. Melissa Thibault
- One of the most comprehensive outpatient physical therapy programs in the region, including practitioners with experience and training in problems of the neck and spine, under the leadership of Brian Lee, PT, OCS
- The Ithaca Center for Pain Management, staffed by physiatrist director Dr. Andrew Morpurgo and Dr. Anthony Sanito, who is board certified in both anesthesiology and pain management
- A well-established neurosurgery program made stronger by this important new affiliation

“Sometimes patients and families feel that they have to get to a big hospital for proper care,” says Pilcher, “but it’s important to understand that the neurosurgeons at Cayuga Medical Center are part of a big hospital system. We talk on the phone whenever necessary, look at shared digital images in real time, consult about the best course of action, and decide what is best for that patient.

“If we are going to maintain a world-class program at URMC we have to serve a large population of patients. We need to keep our surgeons busy and we need the most sophisticated endovascular and intracranial surgery equipment available, which is very costly,” Pilcher explains. “In return, local hospitals with excellent neurosurgery programs like Cayuga Medical Center benefit from what we know. We will help ensure that the care at Cayuga Medical Center is excellent and we have the patient outcome data to prove it.”

It’s a win-win-win situation, with our patients at the center of the equation.
Help along the Way
Antoinette Di Ciaccio, 49, has many interests. She became curious about wine after moving to Schuyler County in 1997 and living among lush hillsides covered with grapevines.
Di Ciaccio was afraid of chronic lymphedema if she had the surgery. She talked with Bael about wanting to get a second opinion, which he encouraged her to do. “Before I went out of town for that appointment, Dr. Bael called me and told me that whatever I decided to do he would support me 100 percent. It was so wonderful that he called; it felt so good to have his support.”

Di Ciaccio chose not to have additional lymph nodes removed but she did go on to have the recommended chemotherapy and radiation therapy at the Cayuga Cancer Center. Dr. Bael and DiCiaccio agreed upon a course of eight treatments over a period of sixteen weeks. “Chemotherapy was difficult but I expected it to be worse than it was,” says Di Ciaccio. “There are no words to describe my chemotherapy nurses [at CHOA],” she says, tearing up. “I feel like I was part of a family there: they were so fun and loving. I looked forward to seeing Kate, Hanna, Jodessia, Jilian, Amy, and Jenn; they do hospitality well and they are very caring. This is clearly not just a job for them.”

Once she finished chemotherapy, Di Ciaccio began radiation therapy with radiation oncologist Dr. John Powell. “Dr. Powell has a very special presence, one that I have never experienced with any other doctor in my entire life,” she says. “When I met with him I was feeling like, here I go again, and dreading it. He looked me in the eye and put me right at ease.” Di Ciaccio had reservations about her radiation therapy and once again considered getting a second opinion. “Dr. Powell took the initiative, contacted the doctor I had seen at Sloan Kettering, and then shared their e-mails with me, which I thought was very unusual. But he wanted me to have all of the data he was looking at, which I really appreciated.”

The Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes has a room right across the hall from the CHOA chemotherapy suite and its volunteers also cover the reception area of the Radiation Oncology Department. “Having their staff and volunteers right there was extremely helpful to me when I was making my decisions,” says Di Ciaccio. “When I left my chemotherapy and radiation treatments it was refreshing to have that personal connection; to see those smiling faces was really special.” In appreciation for their care and support, Di Ciaccio raised $4,000 for the Cancer Resource Center’s Walkathon and 5K in 2013.

A year after completing her treatment for breast cancer Di Ciaccio is cancer-free and her prognosis is good. But she says the experience of having cancer has changed her. “I’ve learned that just because I am done with treatment, I’m not necessarily done with the experience of cancer. I’m figuring out what comes next and where I go from here.” To help her on that part of her journey, she will be participating in the new Survivorship Program offered through the Cayuga Cancer Center.

“I’m grateful for my life and for my wonderful husband,” says Di Ciaccio, “but in those quiet hours alone, knowing you have cancer can be very frightening. Once I got into my cancer care, I was able to build a whole different kind of family to lean on during my treatment. They were a really good team.”
Cancer Care | UPDATES

Patient-focused Care

The Commission on Cancer (CoC) surveys accredited cancer programs every three years to confirm that caregivers are meeting the latest standards of cancer care. These standards are revised frequently, leading to more effective approaches to patient care. Dr. Charles Garbo, oncologist and chairman of the cancer care program at Cayuga Medical Center, leads the team in charge of implementing new recommendations from the CoC.

“We will be surveyed again in 2015,” says Garbo. “There are additional standards of care we will need to meet for this upcoming survey; however, we already have the new services in place right now.” These standards include:

- **Survivorship Plan of Care**: A plan to help patients who have completed part or all of their therapy, with guidelines for monitoring and maintaining their health and improving their quality of life following cancer treatment.

- **Screening for Psychosocial Distress**: A patient screening tool to evaluate psychosocial distress and to provide distressed patients with helpful resources. At Cayuga Cancer Center, this program includes the services of an oncology social worker.

- **Expanded Navigation Services**: To help newly diagnosed cancer patients, our oncology navigators are liaisons between cancer patients and their care providers, serving as patient advocates, interpreters, and educators for cancer patients and their families.

Regional Cancer Care: More Accessible and Advanced Than Ever

The quality of care at the Cayuga Cancer Center draws patients from around the region for diagnostic and treatment services. With the establishment of the Cayuga Health System, the availability of seamless, comprehensive cancer care extends even more readily to the residents of Schuyler and adjacent counties.

A recipient of the Outstanding Achievement Award from the American College of Surgeons’ Commission on Cancer, the accredited cancer-care program at Cayuga Cancer Center is one of only six hospitals accredited at this level in upstate New York.

Our certified cancer care program includes:

- State-of-the-art technology, modern facilities, and experienced medical specialists to diagnose and treat cancer, using the latest and most effective therapies

- A multidisciplinary team approach to coordinate the best treatment options for specific cancers

- Close affiliation with the Roswell Park Cancer Institute, designated by the National Cancer Institute as a comprehensive cancer center

- Nurse navigation services to help patients with a new cancer diagnosis

- Access to cancer-related information, education, and community support programs with the Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes and the American Cancer Society

- Psychosocial support and palliative care services to manage symptoms

- A cancer registry for the collection of data on types and stages of cancer and treatment results, with patient follow-up

- Information about new treatment options and clinical trials, as well as participation in selected clinical trials

- Education and support for cancer survivors, including individualized survivorship plans after the completion of treatment

- Community cancer screening, prevention education, and technology for early detection

Our radiologists, pathologists, surgeons, medical and radiation oncologists, nurse navigators, cancer-care nurses, palliative care specialists, medical social workers, quality improvement specialists, and tumor registrar work as a close-knit team to deliver well-coordinated, leading-edge care. They collaborate at weekly Tumor Board meetings that benefit cancer patients with a multidisciplinary approach to care. They also work closely with primary care physicians at local and nearby hospitals to facilitate referrals and communication.
“We know from the volume of services we provide that our cancer program has a very positive impact in the Finger Lakes region.”

John Powell, MD, Radiation Oncologist

Advances in Radiation Therapy

Just within the past six months there have been two significant developments in radiation therapy at the Cayuga Cancer Center. Radiation oncologist Dr. John Powell explains these new capabilities.

Stereotactic body radiation therapy (SBRT) makes it possible for us to administer pinpoint radiation throughout the patient’s body with exquisite precision and has given us a whole new set of treatment options. In certain cases we can administer very strong individual doses, which enables us to reduce what was traditionally a long course of radiation therapy—perhaps six or seven weeks—down to between one and five treatments. Radiation oncologists are currently in the process of exploring how SBRT can be applied to different types of cancer. However, we already know from several national clinical trials that there has been great success in treating earlier-stage lung cancers with SBRT. It is noninvasive and well tolerated by patients and we have treated a number of patients with early-stage lung cancer, with very positive results.

The second important development involves a new technology called “rapid arc” or volumetric modulated arc therapy (VMAT). This technology is used to administer intensity modulated radiation therapy (IMRT), which allows for the creation of complex, irregular dose distributions that essentially sculpt the radiation around normal healthy tissues to reduce risks and side effects. The standard delivery of IMRT is time consuming and requires the machine to deliver treatment from multiple angles. The advantage of VMAT is that the treatment machine rotates in an arc as it delivers IMRT. This increases our ability to focus the radiation and avoid healthy tissue while reducing the time of the actual radiation treatment by more than half. VMAT is currently being used very successfully in treating prostate cancer.

We know from the volume of services we provide that our cancer program has a very positive impact in the Finger Lakes region. Significant advances in technology enable us to offer a very wide spectrum of radiation treatment options, some of which are typically available only in large cancer centers. Patient safety is our highest priority. Our PhD physicist, Sanjay Raina, works closely with our colleagues at Roswell Park Cancer Institute and the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston on rigorous quality-assurance review so that we consistently meet the very highest standards for accuracy and safety.
Bringing Cancer Care to Schuyler County

“If you look at the New York State Cancer Registry, about 100 cases of cancer are diagnosed every year in Schuyler County,” says Dr. Charles Garbo, oncologist and chairman of the cancer care program at Cayuga Medical Center. Until recently Schuyler County residents were without any local oncology services but that is changing now for the better.

The change began when Cayuga Medical Center initiated laboratory pathology services at Schuyler Hospital, through the efforts of Dr. Daniel Sudilovsky, director of pathology and laboratory medicine at Cayuga Medical Center. Last fall, Surgical Associates of Ithaca started outpatient general surgery services at Schuyler Hospital. In July 2014, oncologists from Oncology Services of Cayuga Medical Associates at Schuyler began seeing outpatients in Schuyler County two days a month. “There had been a void in cancer care services there,” says Ellen Dugan, vice president for service lines at Cayuga Medical Center. “We recognized this need and we wanted to be there for Schuyler County.”

Dr. Garbo and his colleagues Dr. Tim Bael and Dr. Julie Campbell now rotate visits to Schuyler County, seeing patients in the offices of Dr. James Winkler, located in the old train depot in Montour Falls. “I think it’s wonderful for the Schuyler community to have the resources of our medical oncology services. Our oncologists are excellent doctors, very well trained, and they provide exceptional care. Working closely with primary care physicians in Schuyler County will enable our oncologists to provide much more seamless care,” Dugan concludes.

“I think it’s wonderful for the Schuyler community to have the resources of our medical oncology services.”

Ellen Dugan, vice president for service lines
Lost and Found
Bartolis did not come easily to her decision about having weight-loss surgery. A yo-yo dieter for her entire adult life, she had tried every popular diet plan available. She always lost weight, she says, only to gain it back with a few extra pounds added on. The excess weight she carried aggravated her rheumatoid arthritis. She slept with a CPAP machine for obesity-related sleep apnea, she was on medication for high cholesterol and high blood pressure, and she had trouble shaking off colds. After work she would go home and sit on the couch. “I didn’t want to go out,” she says.

“Everyday things other people take for granted, I couldn’t,” says Bartolis. “One of my weight-loss goals was to be able to shut the door in a public restroom stall without having to straddle the toilet in order to close the door,” she confesses. “I also wanted to ride the roller coaster with my kids without wondering if the safety bar on the seat would snap closed. I wanted to be able to get on an airplane without being afraid the seat would be too small.”

Two years ago, Bartolis spotted an ad in the newspaper for an informational seminar about weight-loss surgery featuring a talk by bariatric surgeon Dr. Brian Bollo from Surgical Associates of Ithaca. She had already done a lot of research and decided that the opportunity to hear a surgeon, a nurse, and a nutritionist speak about the surgery would be helpful. At the end of the program, she signed up to find out more about what the surgery entailed. In that meeting, they talked in more detail about the different surgical options.

The bariatric surgeons at Cayuga Medical Center, Dr. John Mecenas and Dr. Brian Bollo, perform three types of surgery: laparoscopic adjustable gastric banding, roux-en-Y gastric bypass, and laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy. Knowing herself—and having done the research—Bartolis felt that roux-en-Y gastric bypass surgery was the right choice for her.

“The people at the Cayuga Center for Bariatric Surgery gave me a whole packet of information. They have developed a system for people who are having bariatric surgery and if you follow it you will be successful,” says Bartolis. The process of learning about food after surgery is partly trial and error, she admits, because people’s tastes change following surgery. But the program recommendations about when, what, and how much to eat were extremely helpful.

“My health has changed. I no longer have sleep apnea and I haven’t taken medications for high blood pressure or high cholesterol since the day of my surgery. My energy level is higher and I am constantly on the go with my kids,” says Bartolis. As a budget analyst and internal auditor for Ithaca College, she must travel all over the hilly campus to different departments. “I couldn’t breathe by the time I finished climbing campus stairs,” she says. “I used to do everything I could to avoid stairs so I often drove to meetings. Now I walk to meetings and I take the stairs.

“I’ve maintained this weight for ten months so I think this is where I should be,” Bartolis says. “I eat what I’m supposed to eat and I am doing what I should to maintain my loss. I no longer like the feeling of being full or the ‘food coma’ that comes from overeating. For me, this is about portion control and listening to my body telling me I’m done eating. I haven’t so much changed what I eat, but I have changed how I eat. I stay active and walk regularly, and I have weights and exercise DVDs to do at home a few times a week.”

In her not-so-spare time, Bartolis is also a Pampered Chef consultant, demonstrating recipes and cookware products.

Dr. John Mecenas is Bartolis’s bariatric surgeon. Mecenas established the bariatric surgery program at Cayuga Medical Center in 2002 and was later joined by Dr. Brian Bollo. “Dr. Mecenas came very highly recommended, and he is amazing,” she says. “He is very thorough and he has a great manner about him.” Bartolis knows people who have had weight-loss surgery elsewhere with surgeons who were not as supportive as Mecenas. She says the resources weren’t as good as they are here, and these people gained their weight back.

Bartolis points out that weight-loss surgery is just one tool for losing weight; it is not the entire solution to the problem of obesity. “People considering bariatric surgery need to ask themselves why they want it,” she says. “You have to be willing to work at it continuously. If food is an addiction, as it was for me, you have to be willing to look at that. You have to reach some important understandings about yourself and the program first, or it’s not in your best interest to go through the surgery.”

When she and her daughter look at old family pictures, Bartolis realizes that she has lost the equivalent of the weight of a whole person. “The surgery definitely changed my life,” she says. “It was the best decision I ever made.”
“People come to us from afar,” says Tiffany Bell, RN, bariatric program coordinator. “They are choosing us even if they are closer to centers with their own bariatric program: we have patients from Auburn, Syracuse, Elmira—all over the region.

“Many of our referrals come from word of mouth; the person knows someone who came to us and had a really good outcome,” Bell continues. “We’ve also had patients who went to other programs and then came to us. They tell us that the care they were getting just wasn’t good enough—that they felt like just another person in line for surgery. So they come here to get really individualized care.”

The Center Is You
Individualized, comprehensive attention is the hallmark of the Cayuga Center for Bariatric Surgery, through a collaborative effort between Surgical Associates of Ithaca and Cayuga Medical Center. Patients are under the care of a multidisciplinary team of weight-loss experts, including two bariatric surgeons, nurse practitioners, dietitians, a psychologist, and Bell, a registered nurse who coordinates patient care and the monthly team meetings.

“At the team meetings we talk about individual patient cases to determine the issues each particular patient is facing,” explains Bell. “Weight loss is very personal and everyone has different hurdles in their lives. Maybe you work the third shift and the only places open for food on your drive home are fast-food places. You might be sleep deprived and find yourself eating more. Maybe you are on food stamps and you’re finding it difficult to eat healthfully.”

Each team member brings their own expertise and their own knowledge of each patient to the patient-care process, which leads to a highly personalized plan.

Every patient seeking weight-loss surgery is evaluated and receives pre-operative care at the Cayuga Center for Healthy Living, as well as pre- and post-operative support. Those same resources are available throughout their weight-loss journey. People tend to lose weight quickly in the months immediately following surgery; however, between twelve and eighteen months, people’s weight often reaches a plateau. Most will gain back a few pounds. Crucial support is available through the established support groups and also from the bariatric program staff members.

“We have an open door. If you are experiencing a weight gain, we would very much like to talk with you. We have the resources to help,” says Bell. “Sometimes when people have weight gain they are embarrassed to come back to us. It is never the wrong time to get back to us for help—whether you have gained two pounds or forty pounds, come back and see us. Keep us in the loop.”

Obesity is a disease that affects many people and there is still a great deal left to discover about its causes. One of the things we do know, however, is that obesity is a disease with many co-morbidities, including diabetes, high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, sleep apnea, and musculoskeletal problems. “All of these problems affect quality of life and many of them improve following weight-loss surgery,” says Bell.

“For many people struggling with obesity, bariatric surgery may be the best long-term solution for regaining their health.”
Welcoming New Physicians

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce new members of our medical staff. They come to Cayuga Medical Center and the Cayuga Health System with exemplary training and experience. Please join us in welcoming these talented physicians.

**Anesthesiology and Pain Medicine**

**John S. Tashman, MD**
Cayuga Anesthesia Associates, Cayuga Medical Center

**Certification:** American Board of Anesthesiology  
**Medical School:** State University of New York at Stony Brook (Stony Brook, NY)  
**Internship:** Mary Imogene Basset Hospital (Cooperstown, NY) – Surgery  
**Residency:** State University of New York at Stony Brook (Stony Brook, NY) and Geisinger Medical Center (Danville, PA) – Anesthesiology

Dr. Tashman completed medical school with distinction in research. He served as chief resident while in the Department of Anesthesiology at Geisinger Medical Center, where he was named the Robert D. Dripps Outstanding Resident. He previously served on the medical staff of Cayuga Medical Center for seven years.

**Qi Zhang, MD**
Cayuga Anesthesia Associates, Cayuga Medical Center

**Certification:** American Board of Anesthesiology  
**Medical School:** State University of New York (SUNY) Upstate Medical University (Syracuse, NY)  
**Residency:** University of Rochester Medical Center (Rochester, NY) – Anesthesiology  
**Fellowship:** University of Rochester Medical Center (Rochester, NY) – Pain Medicine

Dr. Zhang earned a bachelor of arts degree in biological sciences with a concentration in neurobiology and behavior from Cornell University. She was recognized for scholarship during medical school with the merit-based J. Ladoff Scholarship. Dr. Zhang will be dividing her time between anesthesia and the Ithaca Center for Pain Management at Cayuga Medical Center. She is fluent in Mandarin Chinese.

**Family Medicine**

**Carol T. Berlin, MD**
Family Medicine Associates of Ithaca  |  209 West State Street  |  8 Brentwood Drive, Ithaca, NY  |  (607) 277-4341

**Certification:** American Board of Family Medicine  
**Medical School:** Sidney Kimmel Medical College (formerly Jefferson Medical College), Thomas Jefferson University (Philadelphia, PA)  
**Residency:** St. Luke’s University Hospital (Bethlehem, PA) – Family Medicine

Dr. Berlin graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor of science in neuroscience with chemistry minor, from Cedar Crest College in Allentown, Pennsylvania. She was a recipient of the Eakin’s Legacy Fund Scholarship during medical school and was named to the Hobart Amory Hare Medical Honor Society. Dr. Berlin served as chief resident of family medicine at St. Luke’s University Hospital, where she was awarded the Resident Teaching Award for Family Medicine.
**Family Medicine, continued**

**Elizabeth Bogel Ryan, MD**  
Cayuga Family Medicine | 320 West Seneca Street, Ithaca, NY | (607) 697-0360

**Certification:** American Board of Family Medicine  
**Medical School:** Boston University School of Medicine (Boston, MA)  
**Residency:** Swedish Family Medicine Residency-First Hill, University of Washington School of Medicine (Seattle, WA) – Family Medicine  
**Fellowship:** Swedish Family Medicine Residency-First Hill, University of Washington School of Medicine (Seattle, WA) – Geriatrics

Dr. Ryan served as chief resident during her training at Swedish Family Medicine at First Hill. She was awarded the Otto Trot Swedish Family Medicine Award for Wilderness Medicine and the Bristol Myers Squibb American Academy of Family Physicians Award for Excellence in Graduate Medical Education. Dr. Ryan, who was a National Health Service Corps scholar while in medical school, received the Excellence in Humanism and Community Service Award from the Department of Family Medicine and the Gold Humanism in Medicine Award from Boston University School of Medicine. She is a sports enthusiast and was captain of the Women’s Rugby Football Club while an undergraduate at Princeton University.

**Sailaja Malla, MD**  
Cayuga Family Medicine | 320 West Seneca Street, Ithaca, NY | (607) 697-0360

**Certification:** America Board of Family Medicine  
**Medical School:** Kasturba Medical College, Manipal Academy of Higher Education (Manipal, India)  
**Internship:** Kasturba Medical College and Hospital (Manipal, India); Mid-Hudson Family Health Institute (Kingston, NY) – Family Practice  
**Residency:** Middlesex Hospital (Middletown, CT) – Family Practice

Before completing her family practice internship in Kingston, Dr. Malla spent two years as a clinical observer at the Urban Health Center in the Bronx. She then worked at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in New York as the regional research coordinator for a study entitled “Multi-Ethnic Study of Atherosclerosis,” which was funded by the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Malla comes to Ithaca from Western Maryland Health System in Cumberland, where she was in family practice.

**Emergency Medicine and Urgent Care**

**Shawn Martin Borich, MD, MPH, FACEP**  
Cayuga Medical Center

**Certification:** American Board of Emergency Medicine  
**Medical School:** Michigan State University College of Human Medicine (East Lansing, MI)  
**Internship and Residency:** Medical College of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University (Richmond, VA) – Emergency Medicine

Dr. Borich earned his undergraduate degree cum laude in biological anthropology from Albion College. He entered the MD/MPH program at the University of Michigan School of Public Health, where he earned a master of public health in health management and policy prior to entering medical school. Dr. Borich comes to Cayuga Medical Center from Virginia, where he has been practicing emergency medicine with Virginia Emergency Physicians, LLP. Dr. Borich is the regional medical director for Emergency Consultants, Inc., which is the Emergency Department staffing and management group for Cayuga Medical Center. He is a fellow of the American College of Emergency Physicians.

**Hospital Medicine**

**Michael Berlin, MD**  
Hospitalists of Cayuga Medical Associates, Cayuga Medical Center

**Certification:** American Board of Family Medicine  
**Medical School:** Albert Einstein College of Medicine (Bronx, NY)  
**Residency:** New York Presbyterian-Weill Cornell Medical Center (New York, NY) – Internal Medicine

Dr. Berlin graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor of science in chemistry from Skidmore College. He entered a doctoral program in chemistry at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas prior to pursuing his degree in medicine. Dr. Berlin gained global health experience during his training in Tanzania, Thailand, and Bolivia. While at New York Presbyterian-Weill Cornell Hospital he was active in quality assurance initiatives and research. He sees inpatients at Cayuga Medical Center.
Internal Medicine

Ronald Merino, MD
Internal Medicine Associates of Cayuga Medical Associates  |  16 Brentwood Drive, Ithaca, NY  |  (607) 277-2170

Certification: American Board of Internal Medicine
Medical School: Universidad Peruana Cayetano
Heredia (Lima, Peru)
Residency/Fellowship: Hospital Nacional Edgardo Rebagliati (Lima, Peru) – Cardiology
Fellowship: Raritan Bay Medical Center (Perth Amboy, NJ) – Internal Medicine

Dr. Merino practiced as a cardiologist in Lima, Peru, for almost nine years before entering his internal medicine residency in Perth Amboy, New Jersey. After completing his internal medicine residency, Dr. Merino worked for Jamestown Area Medical Associates in Jamestown, NY, before joining the medical staff at Cayuga Medical Center. During his cardiology training, Dr. Merino served as chief resident for two years. He also won a prestigious cardiology scholarship at the Mount Sinai Medical Center and Miami Heart Institute.

Neonatology

Ramesh Vidavalur, MD, MBA, FAAP
Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Cayuga Medical Center

Certification: American Board of Pediatrics – General Pediatrics, Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine
Medical School: Kurnool Medical College at the University of Health Sciences (Andhra Pradesh, India)
Residency: University of Connecticut (Farmington, CT) – Pediatric Medicine
Fellowship: University of Connecticut (Farmington, CT) – Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine

Dr. Vidavalur comes to Cayuga Medical Center from Western Maryland Regional Medical Center in Cumberland, Maryland, where he was an attending neonatologist for five years. He has practiced pediatrics and neonatology in India, England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. Dr. Vidavalur recently completed his master’s degree in business administration at West Virginia University in Morgantown, West Virginia. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Orthopedics and Sports Medicine

Shawn Mills, MD
Orthopedic Services of Cayuga Medical Associates  |  1301 Trumansburg Road, Suite R, Ithaca, NY  |  (607) 272-7000

Certification: American Board of Orthopedic Surgery
Medical School: University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) (Galveston, TX)
Internship: University of Massachusetts (Worcester, MA) – General Surgery; Critical Care
Residency: University of Massachusetts (Worcester, MA) – Orthopedic Surgery
Fellowship: University of Massachusetts (Worcester, MA) – Emergency Medicine

While at UTMB, Dr. Mills earned clinical honors in pediatrics, psychiatry, and internal medicine. He was appointed to Who’s Who in American Medical Schools and Universities for leadership and for the conception and implementation of a working health service for students at UTMB. Dr. Mills practiced orthopedics for a number of years in New England, and comes to Cayuga Medical Center from Oswego Health/Advanced Orthopedic Group in Oswego, New York. He is interested in orthopedic reconstructive surgery, sports injuries, and trauma care.

Fnu Seemant, MD
Cayuga Sports Medicine and Athletic Performance  |  Island Health Center, Suite 5A, Taughannock Blvd., Ithaca, NY  |  (607) 252-3580

Certification: American Board of Family Practice; Certificate of Added Qualification in Primary Care Sports Medicine; Certificate of Added Qualification in Geriatrics
Medical School: Lala Lajpat Rai Memorial Medical College (Meerut, India)
Residency: MetroHealth Medical Center at Case Western Reserve University (Cleveland, OH) – Family Medicine
Fellowship: MetroHealth Medical Center at Case Western Reserve University (Cleveland, OH) – Geriatrics
Fellowship: State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo (Buffalo, NY) – Primary Care Sports Medicine

Dr. Seemant received awards of excellence in several rotations during his family medicine residency and in his third year served as education coordinator for the Department of Family Medicine at MetroHealth Medical Center. His special interests include comprehensive concussion care to help athletes return to play safely and he is a credentialed IMPACT consultant (CIC), which is computer-based neuropsychological testing for concussion patients. He has special expertise in diagnostic and interventional musculoskeletal ultrasound, percutaneous needle tenotomy and platelet-rich plasma injections to help heal chronic injuries, and sacroiliac joint injections to treat low back pain.
Enhancing Capabilities in Pulmonary Medicine and Sleep Medicine

Cayuga Medical Center is especially pleased to welcome two experienced specialists in pulmonary medicine and sleep disorders. Pulmonary medicine, a subspecialty of internal medicine, focuses on diseases of the respiratory tract. The most common pulmonary problems include the diagnosis and treatment of asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema, tuberculosis, and lung cancer. Pulmonologists are also specialists in intensive care and the management of patients requiring mechanical ventilation. The field of sleep medicine is closely aligned with pulmonary medicine because many patients suffering from chronic fatigue and the inability to sleep soundly are diagnosed with sleep apnea, which is a respiratory problem.

Dr. Lavanya Kodali serves as the medical director of both Pulmonary Medicine and the Sleep Disorders Center, while Dr. John Suen is focusing primarily on pulmonary medicine.

Psychiatry

Khris Lampon-Torres, MD
Behavioral Services, Cayuga Medical Center

Dr. Torres was on the Dean’s List during medical school and was selected as Intern of the Year during his internal medicine internship. He served as chief resident during his psychiatry residency at Ponce School of Medicine. Dr. Torres will be seeing patients in the Behavioral Services Unit at Cayuga Medical Center. He is certified in family therapy and is fully bilingual in Spanish and English.
Pulmonary Medicine and Sleep Medicine

Lavanya Kodali, MD
Pulmonary Services of Cayuga Medical Associates | The Sleep Disorders Center, Cayuga Medical Center
201 Dates Drive, Suite 312, Ithaca, NY (607) 882-2277

Certification: American Board of Internal Medicine; Pulmonary Disease, Critical Care Medicine
Medical School: Guntur Medical College (Andhra, India)
Residency: New York Methodist Hospital (Brooklyn, NY) – Internal Medicine
Fellowship: New York Methodist Hospital (Brooklyn, NY) – Pulmonary Medicine and Critical Care
Fellowship: University of Texas (Houston, TX) – Sleep Medicine

Dr. Kodali won a number of awards during her training at New York Methodist Hospital, including the Certificate of Meritorious Research, Senior Resident of the Year, and Meritorious Certificate for Best Performance. Dr. Kodali will be seeing pulmonary medicine patients at her offices in the Cayuga Medical Office Building. She is the medical director of both Pulmonary Medicine and the Sleep Disorders Center at Cayuga Medical Center. Dr. Kodali is fluent in English, Hindi, and Telugu.

John S. Suen, MD
Pulmonary Services of Cayuga Medical Associates
201 Dates Drive, Suite 312, Ithaca, NY (607) 882-2277

Certification: American Board of Internal Medicine, Certification in Pulmonary Disease, Critical Care Medicine, Sleep Medicine; American Board of Preventive Medicine, Certification in Undersea and Hyperbaric Medicine
Medical School: University of Toronto (Toronto, Ontario, Canada)
Residency: University of Toronto and Affiliated Teaching Hospitals (Ontario, Canada) – Internal Medicine
Fellowship: Case Western Reserve University and University Hospitals (Cleveland, OH) – Pulmonary Disease and Critical Care Medicine

Dr. Suen is a fellow of the American College of Physicians, American Academy of Sleep Medicine, American College of Chest Physicians, and the Royal College of Physicians of Canada. He has extensive experience in treating all pulmonary diseases and sleep disorders, and is currently board certified in five medical specialties. Dr. Suen is active in clinical research studies. He has special expertise in advanced bronchoscopy and pleural techniques.

Radiology

A. Daniel Sasson, MD
Radiology Associates of Ithaca, Cayuga Medical Center | 101 Dates Drive, Ithaca, NY 14850 | (607) 274-4376

Certification: American Board of Radiology, Diagnostic Radiology; Certificate of Advanced Qualification, Neuroradiology
Medical School: Baylor College of Medicine (Houston, TX)
Internship: St. Vincent’s Medical Center (Bridgeport, CT) – Transitional
Residency: Stanford University Medical Center (Palo Alto, CA) – Diagnostic Radiology
Fellowship: Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions (Baltimore, MD) – Diagnostic Neuroradiology;
Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions (Baltimore, MD) – Interventional Neuroradiology

Dr. Sasson graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Cornell University, where he was a College Scholar and the recipient of the Howard Hughes Fellowship for Undergraduate Research. While at Baylor College of Medicine he was nominated to Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society. During his residency, Dr. Sasson was selected as an Applied Radiology Leader on the Horizon. He has served as an expert panelist for HealthTech Imaging Forecasts and Logistics: The Future of Medical Imaging. Prior to joining Radiology Associates of Ithaca, he was an attending interventional neuroradiologist at Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn and was a member of Radiologic Associates of Middletown, NY.
With the skilled leadership of Jan Hertel, executive director of the Cayuga Medical Center Foundation, and Gala cochairs, Mindy Oakes and Margaret Munchmeyer, the September 2014 Gala broke all previous records. Under the elegant tent at the Country Club of Ithaca, 415 attendees and 22 sponsors raised $110,800. Auctioneer David Hall of National Book Auctions and Laurie Linn of Communiqué Design and Marketing presided over a lively auction of trips, gifts, and packages. All proceeds from the Gala are earmarked for the newly expanded, state-of-the-art Department of Surgical Services, scheduled to open in 2015. Thank you, one and all!
Updates

KUDOS

Introducing World’s Smallest Implantable Cardiac Monitor

Cayuga Medical Center became one of the first hospitals in the world to adopt the smallest long-term, implantable heart-monitoring device for patients with recurrent fainting, heart palpitations, unexpected stroke, or atrial fibrillation. Cayuga Heart Institute cardiologist Dr. Lynn Swisher, FACC, successfully completed the first implant in a patient earlier this year. Approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in January 2014, the Reveal LINQ™ Implantable Cardiac Monitor from Medtronic is about 80 percent smaller than other such devices currently on the market.

We’re Cookin’!

Our team from Nutrition and Dining Services finished first in the Peoples’ Choice Award at the 2014 Annual Chili Cook-off held in downtown Ithaca. Not ones to rest on their laurels, our team also took first place in the Foodnet Meals-on-Wheels Mac ‘n’ Cheese Bowl in March 2014.

Volunteer Recognition

In April 2014 Cayuga Medical Center held its Volunteer Recognition Dinner to pay tribute to our many talented volunteers. Their collective service totals 20,000 hours annually (the equivalent of ten full-time employees), and they volunteer in twenty different medical center departments. To find out more about how you can join this group of beneficent individuals, please call (607) 274-4011 and ask for our volunteer coordinator, Tina Rappeleye.

MATERNAL-CHILD UNIT HEALTH WORKSHOPS

Our maternal-child care experts offer monthly workshops to the public on a variety of important topics. Call (607) 274-4408 for information and to register. Fees are $15-25 per family unless otherwise indicated. These workshops take place in our brand new maternity-newborn care unit, Cayuga Birthplace, located on the first floor of Cayuga Medical Center.

Expectant Parent Workshops:

Daylong program. Fee $75 per family.

Siblings Are Special:

For children ages 3–8 years who are about to become big brothers and sisters.

Breastfeeding Plan for Success:

For new and experienced moms and their partners.

Infant Care and Safety Class:

The basics of care, feeding, and safety of your baby in the first few weeks.

CAYUGA MEDICAL CENTER

BECAUSE WE CARE ABOUT YOUR HOSPITAL EXPERIENCE. BECAUSE WE CARE ABOUT YOUR HOSPITAL EXPERIENCE.

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CAYUGA CENTER FOR HEALTHY LIVING

If you are looking for help in making medically necessary lifestyle changes, check out the Center for Healthy Living (CCHL) at the Island Health Center. Classes at CCHL include:

Diabetes Education Classes: To learn and practice the skills you need to manage diabetes.

Nutrition for Two, Healthy Eating during Pregnancy: To learn more about healthy eating and proper nutrition before and during pregnancy, covering topics such as healthy food choices, essential nutrients, calorie needs, appropriate weight gain, food safety, gestational diabetes, and facts and myths.

Healthy Living with Type 2 Diabetes: To learn to use the principles of lifestyle management to help control type 2 diabetes.

Cardiovascular Disease Prevention & Cardiac Rehabilitation: To help people with cardiac-related medical conditions learn strategies to improve these conditions. This program includes supervised exercise, dietary counseling, stress management, and education about your disease and its medical management.

Transition to Exercise: Exercise guidance for people who have difficulty being active due to chronic medical conditions. In addition to supervised exercise in the workout areas of our cutting-edge fitness facility, we offer aquatic supervised exercise in our warm water pool to improve strength, flexibility, balance, and cardiovascular endurance in the buoyancy of water.

Optifast® Weight-Loss Program: A twelve-week partial-meal-replacement program that combines weekly clinic visits, ongoing education, and support to help participants achieve and maintain long-term weight loss. If you are serious about losing weight, don’t wait!

Healthy Weight Class: To help you monitor and maintain your weight loss. The professionals at CCHL help you with workable strategies to look and feel your best and to better manage such conditions as pre-diabetes, diabetes, and high blood pressure. Open to all current and former attendees at CCHL.

Tobacco Cessation: To help you quit your habit. Tobacco cessation support groups are offered on a monthly basis for anyone who is thinking about quitting, is ready to quit, or is trying to maintain being tobacco-free. Join in, no matter where you are on your quitting journey.

Call (607) 252-3590 for CCHL class dates, information, and fees.
In this age of computer technology and the Internet we are all so inundated with vast amounts of information, it is sometimes hard to remember the basics. Here are some basic guidelines about what to do if you think you or someone you are with might be having a heart attack.

**HEART ATTACK SYMPTOMS**

- An important, little-known fact is that most heart attack patients do not experience severe pain. Most people describe their symptoms as a sensation of “discomfort,” such as heaviness, pressure, indigestion, an ache, or a feeling of tightness. Some patients do have intense pain, but this is less common.
- Symptoms can occur in the center of the chest, from the bottom of the ribs to the neck, and may also involve the throat, arms, jaw, and back.
- Symptoms do not go away—they are constant.
- Symptoms may be accompanied by shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting, and sweating.

**TAKE THESE STEPS**

1) **Call an ambulance. Do not delay.**
   - The emergency medical personnel who ride with ambulances are trained to perform an EKG as soon as they reach you. Doctors in the Emergency Department can diagnose a heart attack from that EKG before you are in transit to the hospital. They will mobilize the interventional cardiac care team immediately, which saves valuable time.
   - During a heart attack the lack of blood (and oxygen) circulating in the heart damages heart muscle, which is why swift, safe transportation is crucial. This lack of oxygen can also set up a dangerous heart rhythm, which the ambulance crew is equipped to handle. If you decide to be driven by a friend or family member, that driver will not be able to deal with arrhythmia and other life-threatening issues that can occur.
   - If you are having a heart attack, you need to get to the nearest hospital that offers PCI (percutaneous coronary intervention) to reopen the blocked artery. Not all hospitals in the region offer PCI. The ambulance crews know which hospitals have PCI and will transport you to an appropriate institution.
   - Do not drive yourself because you may have a car accident on the way, possibly injuring yourself or someone in another car. If you are not transported to the hospital in an ambulance, the diagnostic process cannot start and the PCI team cannot be mobilized until you reach the emergency room and are examined. This wastes valuable time.

2) **Have baby aspirin in the house.**
   - If you think you’re having a heart attack—and you are not allergic to aspirin and do not have a history of bleeding problems—it is a good idea to chew four baby aspirins. I recommend flavored baby aspirin because most people find it very difficult to chew adult aspirin in the best of circumstances. You can do this while you wait for the ambulance.

3) **Call a support person.**
   - If you are alone, call your neighbor and ask that person to come over immediately to stay with you while you wait for the ambulance.

4) **Unlock your front door and stay close by it.**

Cayuga Medical Center’s Cayuga Heart Institute has an experienced interventional cardiac care team, providing PCI to treat patients having heart attacks. Emergency patients come to us from all around the Finger Lakes region. If you are not positive you are having a heart attack, but you think you might be, call an ambulance. We would much rather have a false alarm than miss the opportunity to save your life.
“I won life’s lottery. I survived sudden cardiac arrest.”

Pete Saltonstall
Treleaven by King Ferry Winery
King Ferry, New York

Cayuga Heart Institute:
- Six fellowship-trained, board-certified cardiologists
- Percutaneous Coronary Intervention (PCI)
- Nationally accredited Chest Pain Center with PCI
- Extensive invasive cardiology program including pacemakers and defibrillators
- Comprehensive cardiac rehab program
- Clinically linked with the Sands-Constellation Heart Institute at Rochester General Hospital, a Cleveland Clinic Heart Surgery Center

Amit K. Singh
MD, FACC, FASNC
Medical Director of the Cayuga Heart Institute at the Cayuga Medical Center; Physician Practice Leader of the Cayuga Heart Institute of Cayuga Medical Associates

A Member of Cayuga Health System

For more information, call or visit us online:
101 Dates Drive
Ithaca, New York 14850
(607) 274-4590
www.cayugamed.org