

MD NEWS

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C ON THE COVER

A cornerstone of cardiovascular care, Upstate's Cardiology Division (shown here) combines deep expertise in adult cardiology with the fastest growing team of specialists across disciplines. Working collaboratively, with Upstate's clinicians and colleagues in the community alike, Upstate ensures comprehensive, patient-centered care, advancing heart health for communities throughout Central New York.

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

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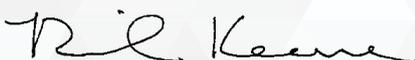
Thank you very much for reading the
March-April edition of *MD News*.
Once again, we examine the world-class health care
available right here in Central New York.

Our cover story focuses on the Cardiovascular Program at Upstate. As both the region's largest employer and Central New York's only academic medical center, Upstate University Hospital serves as an important hub of healthcare leadership in the communities in and around Syracuse. A major component of Upstate's patient-centered medical innovation is seen within the hospital's cardiovascular program, which has experienced steady growth in both clinical and research programs over recent decades. Within the past few years, this expansion has accelerated and made major advancements in cardiovascular care directly accessible to patients in the Central New York area.

In our interior feature, we examine the multi-talented Dr. Martin Stallone. On December 1, 2025, Stallone joined Excellus BCBS as Executive Vice President and Chief Healthcare Services Officer, bringing a rare blend of clinical insight, operational expertise, and mission-driven leadership to the executive team. In his new role, he is focused on shaping healthcare delivery strategies across the organization—including clinical quality initiatives, data-informed programs, and pharmacy management—with the goal of supporting providers and improving outcomes for members.

Once again, I would like to thank all those who come together to create our magazine. Here at MD News, we are dedicated to delivering an engaging reader experience, one with real local relevance. In each issue, we highlight distinguished and accomplished physicians and practice groups. We also provide updates on the latest medical studies, pointers for managing your practice and a unique look at what is happening in the local medical community. We love to receive nominations for our cover stories, current news within your organization and feedback on articles. I would also like to suggest that you visit www.centralnewyorkmdnews.com to discover a wonderful resource for health care marketing. We are here to serve the physician and health care community.

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UPSTATE CARDIOVASCULAR PROGRAM

Expanding for Comprehensive, Innovative, Patient-Centered Care

By Elizabeth Landry



The C3 (Complex Clinical Cases) multidisciplinary conference is held weekly, drawing cardiology, imaging, electrophysiology and surgical teams together to collaborate on complex patient management decisions.

As both the region's largest employer and Central New York's only academic medical center, Upstate Medical University is an important hub of healthcare delivery through its clinical system of two hospital campuses and nearly 70 specialty clinics. Patient-centered medical innovation is accelerating in its hospital's cardiovascular program—which has long-established clinical and research activities—to make its major advancements in cardiovascular care available to patients in the region.

“The advancements I’m seeing at Upstate in cardiovascular care are going to make

a world of difference for patients in Central New York,” said Amy Tucker, MD, MHCM, Upstate’s Chief Medical Officer. She pointed to the recruitment of Cynthia C. Taub, MD, MBA, Chair of Medicine in 2023 as a major highlight and the start of a new focus for the cardiovascular program. Upstate’s current expansion in Adult Cardiology is one of its core priorities and an anchor of the service line.

“Dr. Taub is a cardiologist of international reputation,” said Dr. Tucker. “She will assume the role of President of the American Society for Echocardiography

in July 2026 and is an expert in the use of cardiovascular imaging to support cardiovascular care.”

Dr. Tucker explained that Dr. Taub’s expertise in cardiovascular imaging has helped Upstate become increasingly sophisticated in its diagnostic approaches to cardiovascular disease. Since joining Upstate, Dr. Taub has recruited several highly trained and specialized cardiologists to join the team this year: Adeeb Al-Quthami, MD, RPVI, FACC, FSCMR, Ankur Kalra, MD, MSc, FACP, FACC, FSCAI, and Jorge Romero, MD, FHRS, FACC. Combining expertise in

UPSTATE CARDIOLOGY TEAM



Felizen Agno, MD



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Robert L. Carhart, MD, FACC, FACP



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Christopher Nardone, MD, FACC



Charles Perla, MD, FACC



Jorge Romero, MD, FACC, FHRS



Cynthia Taub, MD, MBA, FACC, FASE



Amy Tucker, MD, FACC, FACP



Daniel Villarreal, MD, FAHA, FACP, FIACS



Theresa Waters, DO, FACC



Andrew Weinberg, DO, FACC



Ali Yildiz, MD

advanced electrophysiology, complex valve repair using minimally invasive techniques, and more. “My goal is to continue building a modern, academic cardiovascular service line here at Upstate. When talking about program building, the number one priority for me is the people – we can’t build anything without people,” said Dr. Taub. “We have excellent care here by some of the best experts in the nation. The patients and the community need to know – they don’t have to travel for state-of-the-art cardiac care anymore.”

Advanced Treatment for Atrial Fibrillation

The arrival of Dr. Jorge Romero as Section Chief of Cardiac Electrophysiology and Director of Cardiovascular Research and Innovation is a prime example of increased convenience and accessibility for patients, bringing cutting edge treatments directly into their community. Dr. Taub noted that she initially connected with Dr. Romero to refer a patient for a procedure that couldn’t be done locally.

“An anchor of our program is cardiac electrophysiology. Dr. Romero is a nationally and internationally known expert who has led numerous multi-center clinical trials and has created some newer ways of approaching ablations. He’s one of the few fellowship-trained experts in epicardial ventricular tachycardia (VT) ablation. Less than 1% of the electrophysiology workforce can perform epicardial VT ablation with finesse, and he’s one of them,” stated Dr. Taub.

Dr. Romero explained that for the past few decades, atrial fibrillation, one of the most common heart rhythm disorders, has been treated in three different ways: rate control medications and anti-

UPSTATE

MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

A cornerstone of cardiovascular care, Upstate’s Cardiology Division (shown here) combines deep expertise in adult cardiology with the fastest growing team of specialists across disciplines. Working collaboratively, with Upstate’s clinicians and colleagues in the community alike, Upstate ensures comprehensive, patient-centered care, advancing heart health for communities throughout Central New York.



Upstate patient, Susan Chadderdon is pictured with her husband, Matthew, and Ankur Kalra, MD, who performed Upstate's first same-day discharge transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) on Susan, a minimally invasive procedure used to treat severe aortic stenosis.

arrhythmic medications, each of which often come with potential side effects and complications, and catheter ablation using either radio frequency energy or cryoablation, essentially heating or freezing the tissue. He and his Upstate colleagues are using a new technology called pulsed-field ablation or PFA: A faster and much safer, targeted technique that addresses the source of abnormal heart rhythms, almost eliminating the risk of major complications.

"Instead of heating or freezing the tissue, we are creating small holes in the cell membrane, called electroporation. The beauty of this technology is that the cardiac muscle is uniquely sensitive. We only need a small dose of energy to eliminate the triggers for atrial fibrillation located in the pulmonary veins of the patient," Dr. Romero said, which avoids damage to the smooth muscle of the esophagus, phrenic nerves, and other adjacent structures. This has eliminated the risk of atrial esophageal fistula, a deadly complication that used to happen in 0.2% of ablation cases, but which hasn't occurred in the 800,000 cases of PFA that have been performed so far worldwide. This new,

“The advancements I'm seeing at Upstate in cardiovascular care are going to make a world of difference for patients in Central New York.”

Amy Tucker, MD, MHCM

safer technology greatly benefits the older population, mostly over the ages of 70, who are most likely to suffer from atrial fibrillation, offering improved quality of life and reducing long-term risks. Dr. Romero successfully performed Upstate's first ablation using the Affera Mapping and Ablation System with the Sphere-9 catheter, a multi-purpose catheter not found at any other facility in New York State outside New York city and Long Island.

PFA isn't the only cutting-edge electrophysiology technology available at Upstate. Other advanced electrophysiology offerings at Upstate include endocardial and epicardial VT ablation, cardiac and renal denervation, radiation therapy to treat ventricular arrhythmias and headless CRT system.

Dr. Romero also discussed the benefits of the Synchronicity clinical trial that's already available for patients at Upstate. "The Synchronicity trial is going to be a

landmark study comparing biventricular pacing versus conduction system pacing (left-bundle branch area pacing) for patients with ischemic and non-ischemic cardiomyopathy who are candidates for cardiac resynchronization therapy. It was recently activated, and we are enrolling patients now," he said.

Minimally Invasive Cardiovascular Techniques

Another aspect of cardiovascular care at Upstate that offers life-saving technology is in the realm of interventional cardiology. Leading the charge in minimally invasive surgical cardiovascular procedures is Dr. Ankur Kalra, Chief of the Division of Cardiology.

"Dr. Kalra is a very notable interventional cardiologist who is increasing the types of complex procedures we're able to do here at Upstate," said Dr. Tucker. "We're very excited to be able to offer less invasive,



Ankur Kalra, MD performed the first MitraClip valve replacement at Upstate, a minimally invasive, catheter-based procedure (TEER) that treats mitral regurgitation by clipping the mitral valve leaflets together to improve closure, repairing the native valve without surgical replacement.



Upstate Cardiovascular Imaging, Taft Road in Liverpool now offers AI-supported state-of-the-art cardiac CT angiography. This technology provides a sharp, motionless CT image of the heart in one heartbeat, delivering faster, clearer insights into coronary disease.

“We’re very excited to be able to offer less invasive, but effective, ways of treating valvular heart disease and coronary disease that might have required invasive surgery in the past.”

Dr. Tucker

but effective, ways of treating valvular heart disease and coronary disease that might have required invasive surgery in the past.”

The transcatheter heart valve procedures Dr. Kalra has expertise in, including transcatheter aortic valve replacement, or TAVR, are important, less invasive alternatives for patients who aren’t candidates for open-heart surgery. Dr. Kalra explained that these procedures involve replacing or repairing heart valves using a combination of wires and catheters, with valves crimped onto a balloon that can pass all the way up to the heart through vessels in the patient’s leg – a small incision compared with open-heart surgery, which requires cracking

through the breastbone to access the heart. Unlike open-heart surgery, which often requires a multi-day hospital stay, transcatheter heart valve procedures allow patients to return home the next day; in some instances, even the same day.

“It’s less morbid; recovery is fast, and outcomes are very similar to open-heart surgery,” said Dr. Kalra. “Transcatheter techniques for the aortic valve are becoming the procedure of choice. Even patients who are at low risk for complications following open-heart surgery are eligible for and favor the transcatheter heart valve due to significantly less morbidity following the procedure, and faster return to normal life.”

Transcatheter techniques also are being used at Upstate to treat patients with heart failure who are optimized on maximally tolerated medical therapy but still have leaky mitral valves. Through a procedure known as mitral transcatheter edge-to-edge repair (mTEER) (Mitral), patients can live longer with less recurrent heart failure, Dr. Kalra explained.

“We offer a comprehensive approach to patients here at Upstate,” stated Dr. Kalra. “We discuss patients as a multidisciplinary heart team that involves their cardiologist, someone like me (structural interventional cardiologist), our surgical colleagues, and cardiologists with expertise in advanced cardiac imaging, and we decide the most comprehensive, evidence-based solution for them. So, the care is individualized, multidisciplinary, and the decisions are shared.”

Enhanced Cardiovascular Imaging

Foundational to cardiovascular care is cardiovascular imaging, which is used not only for visualizing and diagnosing cardiac disease, but also during



Following a procedure in Upstate's electrophysiology lab, Jorge Romero, MD, reviews key aspects of the case with colleagues. Dr. Romero led Upstate Medical University's first ablation using the Affera™ Mapping and Ablation System with the Sphere-9™ catheter, the first Sphere-9 launch in New York State outside New York City and Long Island.

interventional procedures. Under the guidance of Dr. Adeb Al-Quthami, Director of Cardiovascular Imaging, significant investments in the latest technology have been secured for the benefit of Upstate's patients.

"Dr. Al-Quthami is truly a talented individual trained in advanced cardiac imaging including cardiac MRI, cardiac CT and nuclear cardiology," said Dr. Taub. "He's an expert in treating patients with peripheral vascular disease."

Cardiac CT (computed tomography) and cardiac MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) technology have advanced significantly in the last 10 years, Dr. Al-Quthami explained.

"We can visualize the heart to a very high degree in terms of tiny detail," he said. "If you try to take a picture of something that's moving, it's going to blur, especially if what you're trying to take a picture of is small. With the

advancements in technology, we can take a picture of the heart within a fraction of a heartbeat," identifying patients' unique anatomy and offering precise, personalized treatment for each patient.

Launched within the last year, AI-assisted plaque analysis software, called HeartFlow, is now helping the Upstate cardiovascular team to better assess a patient's risk for a future heart attack. Dr. Al-Quthami explained how this new technology offers improvement over the traditional coronary calcium scan.

"With the new AI-supported technology, we can look at the entire coronary tree and get a calcium score. But in addition, it gives us the amount of non-calcified plaque, detecting whether these types of plaques are low-attenuating or fat-filled plaques. If those reach a certain percentage, the patient is determined to be very high-risk in terms of future heart attacks," said Dr. Al-Quthami.

Planning for the Future of Heart Care

By recruiting more cardiovascular experts to Upstate and continuing to invest in the innovative technologies they use, Dr. Tucker highlighted how the Upstate cardiovascular program is committed to staying at the forefront of cardiovascular care.

"We're really hitting all three tiers of the cardiovascular care continuum: We're bringing the most cutting-edge technologies to diagnose, we're bringing in cutting-edge technologies in therapy, and we're now beginning to offer clinical trials in this space so we can identify the next wave of therapies that may be most impactful for patients," Dr. Tucker outlined. "So, patients can have a true one-stop shop experience in cardiovascular care without having to travel outside our region."

As Dr. Tucker explained, these forward-looking advancements have garnered enthusiasm and excitement within the entire cardiovascular team.

"I see a lot of enthusiasm to learn, to grow, and to continue to push boundaries," she added. "There is so much insistence on the patient-centered nature of care. That enthusiasm and dedication is palpable, and it makes it an exciting time to be a part of the cardiovascular division here at Upstate." ■

“We’re really hitting all three tiers of the cardiovascular care continuum: We’re bringing the most cutting-edge technologies to diagnose, we’re bringing in cutting-edge technologies in therapy, and we’re now beginning to offer clinical trials in this space so we can identify the next wave of therapies that may be most impactful for patients.”

Dr. Tucker

WOMEN IN HEALTHCARE



DR. MELANIE McNALLY: BRINGING LIFE-CHANGING UROLOGIC CARE FOR WOMEN TO AMP

By Elizabeth Landry

When Melanie McNally, MD first began practicing urology, she didn't anticipate developing a focus on urologic issues specific to women. However, about five years into her practice, she found many women were experiencing urologic health concerns that gynecology was ill-equipped to manage.

"I originally went into urology thinking it was going to be all kidney stones and prostate cancer," said Dr. McNally. "Then I saw that there was quite a dearth of people who knew how to take care of women effectively in urology. I eventually did a lot of self-taught management of issues that are unique to women."

Dr. McNally, who has 24 years of experience in general urology, recently returned to Associated Medical Professionals. Her practice serves patients in the Central New York area, with some patients coming from as far as Rochester, Oswego, and Binghamton. She attended the University of Buffalo for medical school, then completed her residency at the University of Rochester, graduating in 2002. Dr. McNally said one of the reasons she enjoys practicing urology is because each day is different. "It's a wonderful combination of both medicine and surgery," she explained.

Urologic Issues Women Face - and Shouldn't Ignore

There are several urologic challenges facing women that Dr. McNally treats and manages in her practice. She explained that recurrent urinary tract infections, or UTIs, and kidney stones can often be quite complicated to treat, requiring a high level of detail during diagnostics. Overactive bladder and neurogenic bladder and two separate

challenges that have similar symptoms, such as urgency, frequency and incontinence, Dr. McNally explained, but are caused by different factors.

"Overactive bladder may not have another cause other than genetics or pregnancy, whereas neurogenic bladder is directly related to a neurologic dysfunction like stroke, Parkinson's, spinal stenosis or degenerative disc disease," she said.

Dr. McNally emphasized that women shouldn't brush off urologic symptoms, especially as they age, such as sudden or significant changes in bladder behavior or blood in their urine.

"A lot of women think, 'I'm just getting older, it's not a big deal,' that leaking is inevitable, but that's just not true," said Dr. McNally. "If the bladder starts behaving significantly differently than it used to, something is going on, and in the worst-case scenario, it's bladder cancer. It's very important to take these symptoms seriously."

Advanced Treatments Improving Quality of Life

Thankfully, there have been major advancements in urological treatment that are often minimally invasive. In fact, Dr. McNally said these advancements are one of the main reasons she continues to enjoy being a urologist.

"The technology that has come through in the last 24 years has been so amazing. It's been fascinating to see how fast things have changed and how much better we are as a profession because we have embraced the technology and improved it over time," she said.

Botox has significantly improved the lives of patients with overactive bladder and neurogenic bladder, Dr. McNally

explained. Additionally, a minimally invasive procedure called posterior tibial nerve stimulation, or PTNS, has been instrumental in care for women with bladder issues. Dr. McNally also highlighted the impact of improved recurrent UTI management, which leads to less time in the doctor's office, a reduction in cost of care, and overall improvement in patients' quality of life.

"Treatment can mean the difference between patients not going out and doing anything to spending time with their grandchildren, going shopping, going on boat rides and airplanes – things they thought they would never do again because they were trapped next to their bathroom or having to pack a separate suitcase filled with adult diapers or pads," said Dr. McNally.

Looking at the future of urologic care, Dr. McNally said she's excited about an innovative implantable device for overactive bladder and various types of incontinence, advanced bladder cancer treatments and new antibiotics for UTI prevention that are being studied.

Making a Difference through Relationship-Based Care

Dr. McNally enjoys supporting patients through their long-term course of care, since urology offers the opportunity to develop long-term relationships with patients – often for many years – that many other specialties don't. And for her, helping patients achieve life-changing outcomes is what it's all about.

When asked what keeps her passionate about what she does, day in and day out, she answered without hesitation: "When people come up and hug me in Wegman's – that's a big one. That's what tells me I did a good job. That's what keeps you going." ■

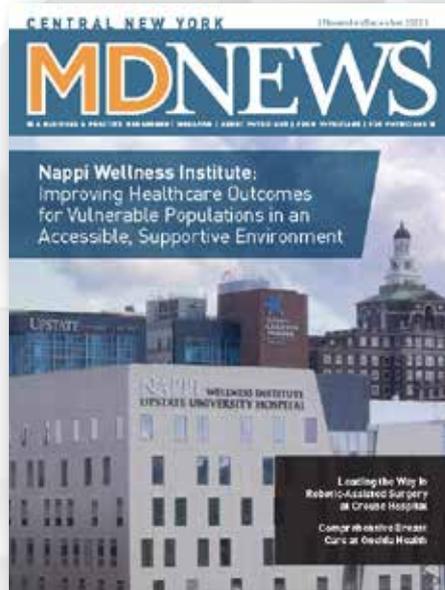
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FROM EARLY LESSONS IN SERVICE TO EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP,
DR. MARTIN STALLONE CHARTS A PATH FOR COMMUNITY-FOCUSED HEALTHCARE

By Kimberly Graf

A Lifelong Commitment to Service

For as long as he can remember, Dr. Martin "Marty" Stallone has held two unwavering truths: he wanted to be a physician, and he wanted to serve his country. Both were anchored by clear purpose.

At age 13, during recovery from routine orthopedic surgery, he recognized that his passions didn't always mirror those of peers who spent much of their time playing video games. To thrive, he needed both physical activity and mental rigor—an early awareness that would shape the trajectory of his life. Growing up near the United States Military Academy at West Point and inspired by his grandfather, a World War II veteran, Dr. Stallone was surrounded by examples of service, discipline, and purpose. That sense of direction was reinforced



Col. Martin Stallone, MD

“ Nothing I've done has been solo. It's always been a team effort. ”

at home. His parents supported him at every step, instilling the values that would guide him forward. Today, he credits his wife and six children as his “team.” “Nothing I've done has been solo,” he says, “and they are always by my side.”

Dr. Stallone pursued both callings through Cornell University's Air Force ROTC program, earning his Bachelor of Science and beginning a lifelong commitment to service. He went on to earn both an MD and MBA simultaneously from the University of Pennsylvania, and later an MA in National Security Policy Studies from the U.S. Naval War College. He also serves as an Air Force Colonel and has been with the New York Air National Guard for more than 28 years, the past seven as the New York State Air Surgeon. These accomplishments reflect a career built on discipline, leadership, and a breadth of perspective informed by medicine, business, and service.

Building Expertise on the Front Lines

As his career evolved, Dr. Stallone stepped into health system leadership roles, including serving as a hospitalist, physician leader, and former health system CEO, gaining a broader view of how care is delivered and where it often breaks down. He saw firsthand the pressures facing providers, the operational realities behind clinical decisions, and the importance of aligning strategy with real-world practice.

That philosophy continues to guide him: collaboration is essential, and understanding the system from every angle is key to improving outcomes.

Joining Excellus BCBS

That belief drew him to Excellus BlueCross BlueShield (Excellus BCBS) well before his executive appointment. Through his involvement on the plan's Central New York and Southern Tier regional advisory boards and governing board of directors, Dr. Stallone developed a deeper understanding of the organization's nonprofit mission and its commitment to community-focused care. Just as important, he learned the value of listening. “You have to understand providers, the community, payors, and the people doing the work,” he says. “That's how you design programs that actually make a difference.”

“ The best outcomes are achieved when clinicians, administrators, and organizations work together toward a shared goal. ”



On December 1, 2025, Dr. Stallone joined Excellus BCBS as Executive Vice President and Chief Healthcare Services Officer, bringing a rare blend of clinical insight, operational expertise, and mission-driven leadership to the executive team. In his new role, he is focused on shaping healthcare delivery strategies across the organization—including clinical quality initiatives, data-informed programs, and pharmacy management—with the goal of supporting providers and improving outcomes for members.

Vision for Partnership and Innovation

At the core of his vision is partnership. Drawing on his experience as both a physician and a former health system CEO, Dr. Stallone sees collaboration as the most effective path forward in an increasingly complex healthcare environment. He designs practical, sustainable, and impactful programs by grounding his strategy in the real challenges facing the healthcare system, including rising costs.

His approach focuses on solutions – including care coordination, clinical quality initiatives, and innovative pharmacy programs – that make a measurable difference in care while balancing access, affordability, and effectiveness.

“Innovation isn’t about change for its own sake. It’s about identifying what works, improving what doesn’t, and making sure solutions are built to last.”

Rooted in the Community

Equally central to his leadership is a strong sense of local responsibility. Excellus BCBS’s nonprofit mission—providing high-quality local health care that’s as accessible and affordable as possible—resonates personally. “Our employees are helping support the health of family, friends, and neighbors,” he says. “That connection matters.” For Stallone, impact is greatest when everyone involved in care understands and engages with the communities they serve.

Looking Ahead

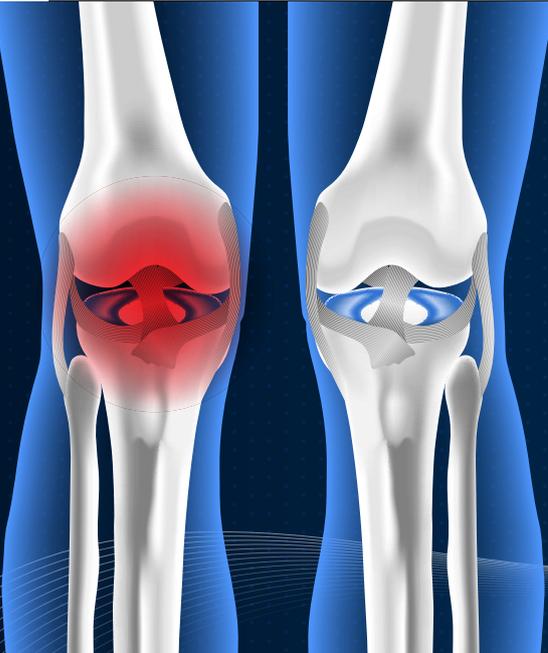
Dr. Stallone envisions Excellus BCBS as a bridge-builder, bringing together providers, health systems, and community partners to solve problems collaboratively. His focus is on creating pathways that strengthen relationships, improve coordination, and deliver measurable improvements in care—all while staying true to the organization’s mission.

From a determined child recovering from surgery to a physician, military leader, and now healthcare executive, Dr. Martin Stallone’s journey reflects a lifetime shaped by curiosity, commitment, and collaboration. Those same principles now guide his work at Excellus BCBS as he looks to the future with a clear goal: building a healthcare system that supports members, engages communities, and collaborates with providers. ■

Discover how Excellus BCBS partners with local providers and communities to deliver accessible, high-quality care at www.news.excellusbcbs.com/about-us/affordability. Making Health Care as Affordable as Possible | News | Excellus BlueCross BlueShield



Dr. Stallone in conversation with Mark Muthumbi, Senior Vice President Commercial Market Leader and Regional President CNY/ST Regions.



ORTHOPEDIC KNEE PROCEDURES:

A CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE ON TREATMENT AND INNOVATION

Generated by OpenAI. (2024), ChatGPT (40 mini) Edited by Kimberly Graf, Marketing Consultant & Contributing Writer

As one of the most intricate and load-bearing joints in humans, the knee is essential for mobility, weight-bearing, and functional activities. As such, orthopedic knee procedures continue to evolve by capitalizing on advances in surgical techniques, medical technology, and rehabilitation protocols, all of which help restore function, alleviate pain, and improve quality of life for patients suffering from knee-related conditions.

Arthroscopy

Arthroscopy is a minimally invasive procedure used to diagnose and treat many knee conditions. Using small incisions and a camera (arthroscope), surgeons make repairs with minimal disruption to the surrounding tissue. The procedure is frequently employed for meniscus tears, ligament injuries (e.g., ACL tears), and cartilage damage. Advantages include quicker recovery times and reduced risk of infection versus traditional open surgery.

Ligament Reconstruction

Knee ligament injuries, particularly those involving the ACL, are especially common in athletes required to regularly pivot and jump. When the ligament is torn, reconstructive surgery helps restore stability and function. Modern techniques, such as autografts (tissue from the patient's own body) or allografts (donor tissue), have improved surgical success rates. Advanced imaging techniques like MRI have also led to better preoperative planning, enhancing surgical outcomes.

Total Knee Arthroplasty (TKA)

When conservative treatments for knee arthritis (e.g., medication, physical therapy) fail to relieve pain and improve function, a total knee arthroplasty (TKA) may be indicated. This involves removing the damaged cartilage and bone from the knee joint and replacing them with artificial components made of metal and plastic. TKA is particularly effective in treating advanced osteoarthritis, where joint degeneration severely limits mobility. Improvements in prosthetic design, materials, and surgical techniques have led to increased longevity of implants and faster recovery times.

Osteotomy

In cases of knee misalignment or early-stage arthritis, especially in younger, active individuals, an osteotomy may be performed to realign the knee. The procedure involves cutting and repositioning bones to relieve pressure on the affected side of the joint. Though less common than TKA, osteotomy can delay the need for more invasive surgery and offer significant pain relief, allowing patients to maintain a longer active lifestyle.

Emerging Technologies and Future Directions

Advances in robotic-assisted surgery and 3D imaging are revolutionizing orthopedic knee procedures. Robotic

systems also enable surgeons to perform highly precise bone cuts and implant placements, potentially leading to more accurate outcomes and quicker recovery. Additionally, 3D imaging and patient-specific instrumentation allow for the creation of custom implants tailored to an individual's unique anatomy, further enhancing the precision of the procedure. Another promising development is the field of biologics, which includes treatments like stem cell therapy and platelet-rich plasma (PRP) injections. These therapies promote tissue healing and repair by harnessing the body's natural regenerative capabilities. While still in the experimental phase, these techniques hold great potential for treating conditions like cartilage damage, ligament injuries, and early osteoarthritis, possibly reducing the need for more invasive procedures.

Orthopedic knee procedures have seen advancements in terms of surgical techniques, technologies, and recovery protocols. The shift toward minimally invasive approaches, along with innovations such as robotic assistance and biologic treatments, offers the promise of improved patient outcomes. As these technologies continue to evolve, orthopedic knee surgery will become even more precise, effective, and patient-centered, ensuring better mobility and quality of life for patients. ■

Reference

OpenAI. (2024). ChatGPT (40 mini) <https://chatgpt.com/>

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS UPDATES

Welcoming Our Newest Members

HealthConnections is excited to welcome new Board members who bring fresh perspectives, expertise, and a shared commitment to our nonprofit work. We also want to thank our outgoing board members—your service has strengthened our network, advanced our efforts, and supported the many communities we serve across New York.

New Board Members:

Digant Nanavati,

MD, Partner, FamilyCare Medical Group

Amie Parikh,

CEO, Hudson Valley Care Coalition

Ofrona Reid,

MD, CEO, Syracuse Community Health

Felissa Koernig,

CEO, Oneida Health

Matt Glidden,

MD, Chief Quality Officer,

Upstate University Hospital

Shannon Flood,

CPA, Partner, FustCharles

Frank Eder, MD,

Executive President, UHS Medical Group

For a full listing of our Board, visit our About Us page.

Jennifer Yartym Named Guthrie Corning Hospital President

The Guthrie Clinic is pleased to announce the appointment of Jennifer Yartym as President of Guthrie Corning Hospital, effective Jan. 1. She will also maintain her role as President of Guthrie Cortland Medical Center.

“As President of both hospitals, I will focus on creating consistency and standardizing processes to deliver the highest quality care,” Ms. Yartym said. “I am fortunate to work with strong leaders and caregivers at both hospitals to support this work.”

Before joining Cortland Medical Center in 2019, Ms. Yartym was with Corning Hospital for 19 years, including time as Vice President of Operations. She also served as Interim Hospital President during the COVID pandemic, guiding response and recovery.

Her appointment at Corning Hospital comes as Paul VerValin steps down from his role as Corning Hospital President to focus on system responsibilities as Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer.

MVHS Welcomes Dr. Jalal Hyder

Jalal Hyder, DO, has joined Mohawk Valley Health System (MVHS) as a physician with the Radiation Oncology office, which is part of the MVHS Cancer Center at the Faxton Campus.

Dr. Hyder brings with him a wide range of expertise in the treatment of a broad range of conditions, including breast, prostate, lung, gastrointestinal, head and neck and central nervous system malignancies, as well as select benign diseases such as keloids, heterotopic ossification and osteoarthritis. He has extensive experience delivering advanced radiation techniques and is committed to evidence-based, patient-centered care.

Prior to joining MVHS, Dr. Hyder served as a Radiation Oncologist at Commonwealth Health Radiation Oncology at Wilkes-Barre General Hospital in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania; Nuvance Health Radiation Oncology/Vassar Brother Medical Center in Poughkeepsie, New York; and ProMedica Radiation Oncology/ProMedica Dorothy L. Kern Cancer Center in Fremont, Ohio.

Dr. Hyder earned his medical degree in Osteopathic Medicine at Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine in New York, New York. He completed his medical residency at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, Nebraska, and his Radiation Oncology residency at Detroit Medical Center/Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan.

Dr. Hyder is certified by the American Board of Radiology and can be reached at 315-624-5340.

When it comes to the role of artificial intelligence in healthcare, there's one question on everyone's mind: Can it be trusted?

Microsoft Global Chief Medical Officer and Vice President of Healthcare Dr. David Rhew sat down with Medtronic Global Chief AI Officer Rodolphe Katra to explore this very question. They discussed how AI can bridge gaps by helping doctors deliver more personalized care, reach underserved communities, and tackle the global shortage of healthcare professionals. As part of our Health Tech Untapped series, Katra and Rhew explored not just what AI can do, but what it should do for patients and clinicians alike.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Rodolphe Katra: When people think of Microsoft, healthcare isn't always the first thing that comes to mind. Can you explain your role?

Dr. David Rhew: Absolutely. There's an incredible amount of technology being developed, and it's advancing at a rapid pace, especially

when it comes to AI. My role is to translate that technology into meaningful healthcare solutions. The goal is to understand how these tools can create clinical and operational value for patients, clinicians, and healthcare systems.

Katra: Let's start with the big picture. What are some of the benefits of integrating AI into healthcare?

Rhew: AI has the potential to increase access to care and identify individuals who may have underlying conditions long before symptoms appear. It benefits patients through earlier detection, clinicians through greater efficiency, and society through improved access and affordability. AI could help address some of healthcare's biggest challenges, like the rising cost of care and access to information that helps people know when to seek help.

Katra: And what about trust? Can AI in healthcare be trusted?

Rhew: Trust is absolutely critical. It needs to exist at every level: patients, clinicians, organizations, and society. We have to ask: Is it reliable? Does it produce accurate results? Is it free from bias? That takes continuous testing, monitoring, and collaboration. The more we work together to understand how AI operates, the more effectively we can use it to improve outcomes.

Katra: Let's talk about another major issue, the global shortage of healthcare professionals. According to the World Economic Forum, there could be a deficit of 13 million healthcare workers by 2035. Can AI really help?

Rhew: Definitely. We simply don't have enough clinicians, especially in underserved areas. AI can help by supporting clinicians, automating certain tasks, and expanding access in communities that lack healthcare infrastructure. It may have the greatest impact in rural or low-resource settings, where it can empower both providers and patients to engage more effectively in care.

Katra: Before we wrap, what emerging AI trends are you most excited about?

Rhew: We're seeing AI evolve from simply analyzing data to actually taking action. This concept of “agentic AI” means the technology can perform certain tasks autonomously, under human oversight, of course. That could help reduce bottlenecks and support clinicians with day-to-day operations.

Katra: Exactly. AI is becoming more personal, predictive, and preventative, moving healthcare away from a one-size-fits-all approach to something more tailored to each individual.

AI hot takes

Rodolphe Katra has an MBA and a doctorate in biomedical engineering. He is co-inventor on more than 150+ patents granted, published, or pending. David Rhew is the CMO at Microsoft, a medical doctor, an adjunct professor at Stanford University, and a member of the Stanford Global Health Technology Advisory Board.

SLOCUM-DICKSON MEDICAL GROUP WELCOMES FOUR PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

Slocum-Dickson Medical Group (SDMG) is happy to announce the addition of Physician Assistants, Alexis Gordon, Brooke Hood, Samantha Tavez, and Giuseppina “Josie” Emmanuele. Their arrival reinforces SDMG’s commitment to expanding access to quality health care in the Utica-Rome area.

Alexis Gordon, MPAS, PA-C, is working in collaboration with Dr. N. Marino Selvarajah, in the Family Practice department. She earned her Master of Science degree in Physician Assistant Studies from St. Bonaventure University. Her commitment to providing comprehensive, quality medical care and ability to build trusting patient-provider relationships aligns with Slocum-Dickson’s mission to improve patient health. To schedule an appointment, please contact her office at (315) 798.153.

Brooke Hood, PA-C is working in collaboration with Dr. Shelly Hearn in Urgent Care. She earned her Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies from Le Moyne College. Brooke’s passion to help others with acute medical needs matches SDMG’s mission to improve community health. To reserve a space in line for Urgent Care visit SDMG.com.

Samantha Tavez, PA-C and Giuseppina “Josie” Emmanuele, PA-C will be working in collaboration with SDMG’s newest physician, Dr. Redner, in the Family Practice department. Samantha earned her Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies from Albany Medical College and Giuseppina earned her Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies from SUNY Upstate Medical University. Their desire to provide the community with medical care aligns with Slocum-Dickson’s commitment to providing quality health care. To schedule an appointment with Samantha or Josie, please contact their office at 315.798.1722.

The physicians and staff at Slocum-Dickson are pleased to welcome Alexis Gordon, MPAS, PA-C, Brooke Hood, PA-C, Samantha Tavez, PA-C, and Giuseppina “Josie” Emmanuele, PA-C. To learn more about Slocum-Dickson Medical Group physicians, providers, and services, visit SDMG.com.

About Slocum-Dickson Medical Group:

Slocum-Dickson Medical Group began in 1938 with three physicians. By joining their practices, they were able to realize the benefits of a physician-owned multi-specialty group practice to improve the quality of medical care received by the patient. Today, the group employs over 100 providers and several hundred staff members. As the group continues to expand, the focus is still on patient-centered, physician-directed, quality care. Slocum-Dickson Medical Group, generations of care in your backyard.

ST. JOSEPH’S HEALTH AND ST. PETER’S HEALTH PARTNERS EARN NATIONAL AND REGIONAL HONORS FOR MARKETING EXCELLENCE

MODERN HEALTHCARE/AD AGE AND CAPITAL REGION MARCOM AWARDS RECOGNIZE OUTSTANDING CREATIVITY, EXECUTION AND MEASURABLE RESULTS IN HEALTHCARE MARKETING

St. Joseph’s Health and St. Peter’s Health Partners are honored to announce their Marketing and Communications (MarComm) team achieved national and regional recognition for their marketing efforts at the close of 2025, with several of their advertising campaigns celebrated for excellence.

The team and its creative agency, Ayni Brigade, were honored with two Silver and two Bronze awards from the Healthcare Marketing Impact Awards, one of the most respected national programs in the industry. Presented by Modern Healthcare and AdAge, these awards recognize organizations that demonstrate outstanding creativity, strategic execution, and measurable results in healthcare marketing.

The winning campaigns were selected for their ability to advance healthcare delivery, strengthen patient engagement, and build trust through compelling, innovative storytelling. Categories included integrated marketing campaigns, data-driven strategies, and purpose-driven initiatives, establishing these honors as a benchmark for excellence among healthcare providers, insurers, suppliers, and advocacy organizations nationwide.

Award Highlights:

- Data-Driven Campaign of the Year (Silver): “Less is More” Robotic Surgery – St.

Peter’s Health Partners and St. Joseph’s Health

- Film/TV/Video Campaign of the Year (Silver): “Hear You to Heal You” Women’s Health – St. Peter’s Health Partners and St. Joseph’s Health
- Print/Out-of-Home Campaign of the Year (Bronze): “Shine On” – Burdett Birth Center
- Purpose-Led Campaign of the Year (Bronze): “Shine On” – Burdett Birth Center

“These national awards place us among the best in the country,” said Jamie Arnold, Regional Director of Marketing and Communications for the two health systems. “They reflect not only the creativity of our campaigns but also the strength of our partnerships and our commitment to telling stories that truly matter to patients and communities.”

To see the winning campaigns and read more about the awards, visit Healthcare Marketing Impact Awards 2025 winners announced - Modern Healthcare.

On a regional level, the MarComm team and its agency also earned the Integrated Marketing Campaign of the Year award at the 2025 Capital Region MARCOM Awards for its “Less is More” robotic surgery campaign. The campaign highlighted the benefits of minimally invasive robotic procedures, reinforcing the organizations’ dedication to advanced care and patient-centered outcomes.

The Capital Region MARCOM Awards, co-hosted by the American Marketing Association (AMA) Capital Region Chapter and the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Capital Region Chapter, celebrate the most impactful marketing and communications work across New York’s Capital Region. Judged by industry peers nationwide, the awards recognize campaigns that excel in creativity, strategic planning, and measurable results across categories such as integrated marketing, public relations, and digital engagement.

To read more about the 2025 awards and the winners, visit The Capital Region MARCOM Awards.

“Health care marketing is about more than promotion, it’s about trust,” Arnold added. “These honors affirm that we’re delivering messages that resonate, educate, and empower. That’s the ultimate goal. Together, these achievements highlight our unwavering commitment to innovation and excellence in healthcare marketing. As we look ahead, St. Peter’s Health Partners and St. Joseph’s Health will continue to lead the way because when patients are informed, they are empowered to make the best decisions for their health.”

ST. JOSEPH'S HEALTH WELCOMES DR. MIRANDA GONZALEZ, FAMILY MEDICINE PHYSICIAN AND HOSPITALIST

St. Joseph's Health is proud to welcome Miranda Gonzalez, MD, to its team. Dr. Gonzalez has joined St. Joseph's Physicians Primary Care in Liverpool, New York, following the successful completion of her family medicine residency at St. Joseph's Health Hospital. In addition to caring for patients in the outpatient setting, she also serves as a hospitalist, providing expert inpatient care alongside our highly skilled clinical team.

Dr. Gonzalez received her Bachelor of Arts in Biology, with minors in music and psychology, from CUNY Baruch College in New York City. While there, she received

two scholarships and later held positions as adjunct lecturer and research assistant at the college. She went on to receive her Doctor of Medicine from SUNY Upstate Medical University College of Medicine in Syracuse.

"I appreciate the smaller, yet lively city of Syracuse. I decided to stay at St. Joseph's because of the caring and compassionate environment," said Dr. Gonzalez. "It is exciting to be able to make deep connections with patients and follow long-term milestones, as well as take care of patients in their most vulnerable moments while hospitalized."

Dr. Gonzalez has been published in the American Journal of Gastroenterology for her research on non-Hodgkin's lymphoma with extra-nodal involvement of the colon.

Outside of work, she enjoys reading, hiking with her dogs, and traveling.

Dr. Gonzalez is seeing patients at St. Joseph's Physicians Primary Care at 5100 W. Taft Road, Suite 1D, Liverpool, NY 13088. Please call 315-452-2828 to schedule an appointment.

FROM MEMORY CARE TO HOME: YARI'S CAREGIVING JOURNEY

CARING FOR THE ONES WHO CARED FOR US — EXCELLUS BCBS AND WELLBE MAKE IT EASIER

When Yari Martinez-Giannillo's mother was diagnosed with progressing dementia, her family made the difficult decision to move her into a memory care unit in Atlanta. But Yari never stopped hoping to bring her mother home—back to family, familiarity and comfort in upstate New York.

That hope became reality when Yari enrolled her mother in WellBe Senior Medical, a geriatric care provider partnering with Excellus BlueCross BlueShield to assist members with complex health needs. With WellBe's guidance, Yari's mother was able to return home safely, live with family, and receive care from a team that truly understands her unique challenges.

"Keeping her in a routine, where she is comfortable in her own surroundings, is critical for her and anyone who has dementia," Yari explains.

A partnership that brings relief Through its partnership with WellBe Senior Medical, Excellus BlueCross BlueShield is providing relief to its most at-risk members and their caregivers. In the program's first 16 months, WellBe helped almost 5,000 Excellus BCBS Medicare Advantage members receive in-home care, prescription management support, and 24/7 access to urgent care services.

The Health Plan has seen the following results among members:

- 10% reduction in emergency room visits
- 20% decrease in urgent care visits
- 65% increase in primary care provider visits
- 107% increase in preventive screenings such as colonoscopies and mammograms

"As a local, nonprofit health plan, it's critical that we help our most vulnerable members access the care they need in the most affordable way possible," says Ankit Garg, MD, VP medical affairs at Excellus BCBS. "Early results from WellBe show that this program is delivering on that promise."

A team that treats the whole person The WellBe team includes medical providers, social workers, geriatric behavioral health specialists, pharmacists and a mobile urgent care.

"We not only work with patients, but family members, the member's regular doctors, anyone we can to bridge the gaps and make health care easier," explains Anna Bergeman, a WellBe Senior Medical physician assistant. "We do a detailed history, physical exam, and screenings including those for anxiety, depression and dementia. You can identify so much by being in the patient's home. You can see how they walk and identify fall risks."

Urgent care without the ER To help reduce frequent hospital admissions or visits to the emergency department, WellBe offers in-home urgent care services.

One evening when Yari's mom started showing signs of an infection, they called WellBe.

"They connected with her provider, and we had medication for her by the next morning," says Yari. Quick care like this not only improves patient outcomes but provides support for caregivers. "It doesn't feel like we are alone," she adds.

Removing barriers to access Managing multiple conditions and navigating an ever-changing healthcare system can often lead to issues accessing care, especially for members with limited mobility. Bringing care directly to the homes of these members can be life changing.

"If we didn't have WellBe, my mom would most likely still be in a memory care unit because trying to balance everything was beyond difficult," says Yari. "She has always been the center of all of us so being able to have her back at home being taken care of, monitored very closely, means the world to us."

Every partnership. Every connection. Everybody benefits.[®]

We believe in showing up for the organizations, providers, and people that shape our community. And as a part of this community, we're committed to making care more accessible – where and when it matters most.

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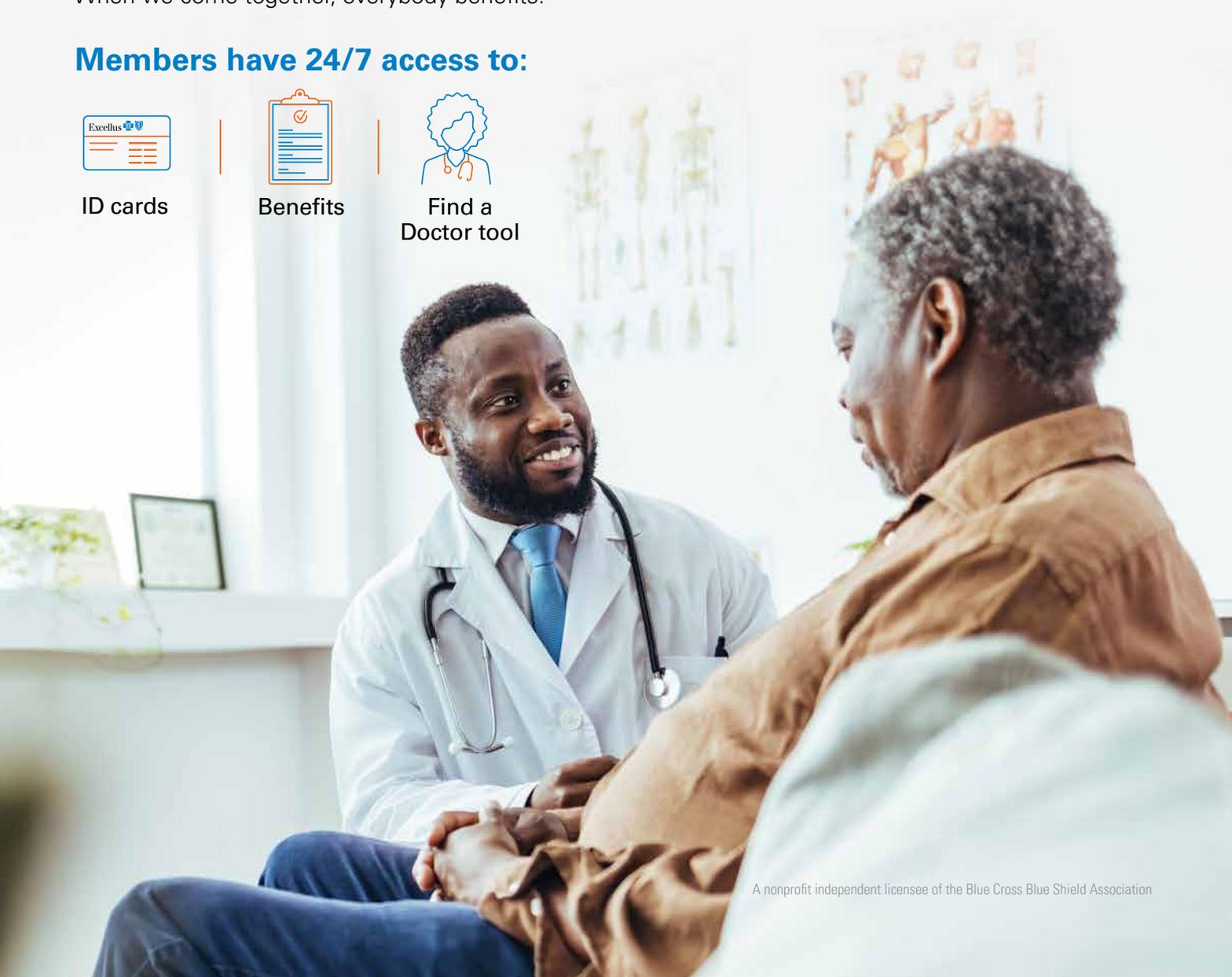
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