Welcome to the inaugural issue of Downstate Times, bringing you news, articles, and photos showcasing Downstate’s University Hospital of Brooklyn.

Our goals are to keep you informed of the good work we do, to better connect with each other, and to highlight points of pride. Our response to Hurricane Sandy, for example, is a terrific example of how well we do in a crisis. The planning and coordination of patient care and the enthusiastic relief efforts of staff, faculty, and students in the aftermath of the storm were nothing short of extraordinary.

But most of all, please consider this your newsletter. It is a way to communicate news about your activities, share best practices, and celebrate your achievements. And in order to make Downstate Times accessible quickly and broadly, we plan to come out twice a month, and distribute via email and our web site. It will also be available in a limited print edition for those who do not have Internet access.

Let us know if there is someone in your department you think is doing a terrific job, or about programs that improve care or help our systems work more efficiently. We would love to share it.

Let your voices be heard!

Dr. John F. Williams
President

Downstate Delivers Brooklyn’s First Baby of the New Year

New Year’s Eve 2013 turned out to be very busy for Downstate’s Labor and Delivery team.

We rang in the New Year by delivering Brooklyn’s first baby of the year. Little Orane Clarke made his arrival into the world at 12:12 am.

A bassinet of helpful baby items was presented to mom Nickesha Clarke, pictured here (center) with her newborn son, and the staff of Ob/Gyn and Labor and Delivery. For more information and pictures see online edition: www.downstate.edu/downstatetimes
How Downstate Stood Up to Sandy

Throughout the year, Downstate’s Emergency Preparation Committee assesses, plans, and trains so that we can respond seamlessly when a crisis arises. That’s what happened with Hurricane Sandy, the largest and hardest-hitting Atlantic hurricane on record.

Well before the storm hit, the Emergency Prep Committee swung into action. Unit by unit, emergency plans were reviewed, supplies checked, and extra days’ worth of medications, food, linens, and fuel ordered.

A critical part of planning for a crisis–and this one was no exception–is to ensure adequate staffing, even if transportation systems shut down. Every part of the hospital plays an important role in making sure operations run smoothly. And everyone is essential—from those on the front line of care, including nurses, pharmacists, Respiratory therapists, attendings, and residents, to those in Food Services, Procurement, IT, Environmental Services, and Facilities.

The response from Downstate staff was outstanding. Many people worked long shifts to take care of our community, and several hundred staff slept overnight in makeshift accommodations. Many were not only willing, but insistent on staying at their posts day and night for days on end—even though they had families at home coping with loss of electricity, heat, and light. Some staff lost their homes completely, but came in nonetheless.

Downstate opened its doors to all who needed help. Five patients on ventilators from Coney Island nursing homes and 10 patients from Coney Island Hospital were admitted at the Central Brooklyn campus.

All of Downstate’s clinical sites remained open, including the Urgent Care Center in Bay Ridge and the hospital satellite centers. With so many dialysis centers closed, Downstate’s dialysis team played an especially critical role.

“While many other hospitals struggled, we were fully operational during one of the worst disasters New York has seen,” says Astra Bain-Dowell, chief operating officer, who remained on site at Central Brooklyn throughout the hurricane and the days after and attended Command Center briefings.

“It was a tremendous group effort, and the staff deserves a great deal of credit and recognition for a job well done.”
Medical Relief to Victims of the Storm

The weekend after Sandy, Downstate’s student-run Brooklyn Free Clinic and the Center for Community Health Promotion and Wellness partnered with Assemblyman Felix Ortiz to bring medical assistance to the people of Red Hook.

More than 100 Downstate volunteers answered the call, and an urgent care clinic was quickly set up in the Joseph A. Miccio Community Center. In just four hours, nearly 50 patients were seen by Downstate physicians and nurses from pediatrics, ob/gyn, medicine, neurology, and psychiatry.

On December 15, the Brooklyn Free Clinic worked with Councilman James Sanders and the American Red Cross in Far Rockaway. Forty-one patients were seen over the course of the day in a clinic set up at the Church of Nazarene. It was truly an interdisciplinary workforce that came together to provide much-needed hope and support to our Brooklyn neighbors.

DID YOU KNOW?

Downstate Central Brooklyn is the highest situated hospital in the Borough, and we are part of the DOH emergency evacuation plan for low-lying hospitals.

Diabetes Self-Management Education Program

By Maria Yomtov, RN, MSN, CDE, and Linda Cohen, RN, MPH, MSN, CDE, BC-ADM

Four registered nurses who are certified diabetes educators had a vision for how to help address the diabetes epidemic in Brooklyn. Together Linda Cohen, Sandra Hirsh, Dawn Hagerty, and Maria Yomtov developed a comprehensive Diabetes Self-Management Education Program (DSMEP) based on guidelines established by the American Association of Diabetes Educators.

With the support of the hospital administration, Nursing Services, the Department of Medicine/Division Endocrinology, and Ambulatory Care Services, the program opened its doors in January 2012.

Classes are held in group or individual sessions and cover such topics as healthy eating, taking medications, monitoring, risk reduction, and being active. The DSMEP goals are:

- Give participants the knowledge, skills, and resources to self-manage their diabetes on a daily basis;
- Offer healthcare providers a quality program to which they can refer patients;
- Provide clinical staff and students with educational and clinical experiences.

Patients referred to the program are either newly diagnosed or have had diabetes for many years. Many already have chronic complications of diabetes. Most have never had any formal diabetes education.

To date, 110 adults have been referred to the program by UHB’s ambulatory medical and surgical services. Many of them have returned to the clinic to proudly display their improved laboratory values.
RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE

SUNY Distinguished Professor and Chancellor’s Awards for Excellence

The SUNY Chancellor’s Awards are system-wide honors that recognize superior achievement, dedication, commitment, and serving the public good. 2012 awardees, pictured here, are:

Shown left to right (back row): George Vas, MD, Distinguished Teaching Professor in Neurology; Douglas Lazzaro, MD, chair of ophthalmology, Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Faculty Service; Nicholas Galeota, MS, RPh, Pharmacy Services, Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Professional Service.

Front row: Maureen Walsh, RN, Child Life Program, Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in the Classified Service; Judith LaRosa, PhD, RN, Distinguished Service Professor of Public Health; Adanim Luboa, RN, Dialysis, Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in the Classified Service; Officer Jacqueline Murray, University Police, Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in the Classified Service; and Scott Miller, MD, Pediatrics, Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities.

AROUND DOWNSTATE

President’s Meet and Greet

Shortly after his arrival, President Williams held a series of receptions to meet faculty, staff, and students. Hundreds came out to meet our new leader.

Santa Central

This year marked another successful Downstate toy drive. Thanks to the generosity of campus members, over 2,000 toys were given to the following agencies to distribute to needy children during the holidays: Wayside MacDonough Residence, Midwood Kiddie Castle, YWCA Brownsville Early Learning Center, Faith-Kiara Day Care, and Urban Strategies. Congresswoman Yvette Clarke and Councilman Mathieu Eugene also received toys for their constituents, while City Councilman Jamaane Williams donated toys.

Left: Each year the Bryant family (shown at left) donates toys to the Child Life Program in memory of a beloved sister who was a patient at Downstate. Joining them are (far right) Child Life Specialist Katia Chenet-Casimir, Michael Harrell, assistant vice president for community affairs, and Lisa Smith, director of the Child Life Program.