



IN THIS ISSUE

Cover Story: 'Purple Unicorn' Hospitalists

Chef Vargo's Braised Lamb Shanks

Honoring Dr. Christopher Hyson

Foundation Feature: Colby Unit Grant

Cornerstone Forward: A Project Update

Finding Our "Purple Unicorns": Adirondack Health's Hospitalists

"When I think about what it has taken to build Adirondack Health's hospitalist program, one phrase always comes to mind: purple unicorns," remarked Dr. Amy Corliss, medical director of the hospitalist program at Adirondack Health. In hospital medicine, she explained, it is rare to find providers who not only bring deep clinical expertise, but who also choose to embrace a rural community—living here, raising families here, and becoming part of the everyday fabric of the Adirondacks. That commitment is what makes the current team so exceptional.

While many hospitals today contract with outside companies to provide hospitalist services, Adirondack Health has intentionally chosen a different path. Its physicians are employed directly by the hospital, an approach that reflects the organization's culture: doctors here are not temporary visitors. They are invested community members, dedicated to Adirondack Health's

mission and to the people who live here.

Dr. Corliss's own journey to Saranac Lake reflects that same blend of professional purpose and personal connection. Raised in Westfield, Massachusetts, she and her husband moved to Hawaii after residency, expecting to stay only a few years. Fourteen years and four children later, they were still there. But her husband—born and raised in Saranac Lake—felt the pull of home, and with aging parents and increasing travel challenges for their family of six, the Corliss family knew it was time to return. Adirondack Health offered Amy the chance to practice high-quality medicine in a place where physicians are not just caregivers, but neighbors and friends.

Hospital medicine, she explained, is a recognized medical specialty devoted entirely to the care of hospitalized patients.

Continued on page 2

Continued: Finding Our "Purple Unicorns"

Hospitalists are in the hospital 24/7, managing admissions, coordinating with specialists, monitoring progress, and supporting families. "When you are admitted," she said, "we are the physicians guiding you through your stay."

The modern hospitalist program at Adirondack Health began with Dr. Viscardo, whose vision for 24/7 coverage and innovative three-month block scheduling created a more sustainable and balanced model for providers. When Dr. Corliss arrived in 2020—just as Dr. Viscardo retired—the program faced significant strain. The pandemic disrupted staffing, leaving her as the only full-time hospitalist supported by one nurse practitioner and a rotating, costly group of locum providers. It became clear that long-term success required finding not just staff, but the rare clinicians who would see this hospital as home.

Over time, those "purple unicorns" appeared. Dr. Jha joined from Arizona, bringing steadiness and calm. Dr. Ricky, a fellowship-trained geriatrician, provided invaluable expertise for older patients. Dr. Atkinson, arriving from Potsdam, brought years of hospitalist experience and a strong commitment to rural medicine.

Today, Adirondack Health's hospitalist team includes four full-time physicians and four

full-time advanced practice providers, forming a deep bench of knowledge and experience. Beyond their professional strengths, they are woven into the community—coaching youth sports, skiing local trails, volunteering, and becoming familiar faces well outside the hospital walls.

The impact on patients is substantial. With hospitalists always present, care is more responsive, treatments are adjusted quickly, and communication with families is timelier. This consistency is a major reason why Adirondack Health is one of only a few acute care hospitals in New York State with a five-star rating in patient experience. Patients feel the difference that a dedicated, community-rooted team makes.

The hospitalist program has evolved from a visionary idea, through a period of challenge, into a true point of pride for Adirondack Health and the region it serves. Holding on to this extraordinary team of "purple unicorns" is essential. They elevate the standard of inpatient care, strengthen the connection between hospital and community, and represent exactly what makes Adirondack Health such a special place to receive and to practice care.



All About Books

At the Saranac Lake Health Center, a well-child visit now comes with something extra to take home: a book. Just in time for National Reading Month this March, thanks to a grant from Adirondack for Kids, we have partnered with All About Books to place age-appropriate reading materials directly into the hands of children and families. These simple moments, choosing a story, turning pages together, help spark early literacy, strengthen family connection, and nurture a love of reading that can last a lifetime.

As Darci Beiras, MD, director of pediatrics, shared "These type of programs allow us to support children's development beyond the exam room. By encouraging families to read together and providing books during well-child visits, we are helping build strong foundations for learning, connection, and lifelong health."



Make a Lasting Gift
JOIN OUR MONTHLY GIVING CLUB

Chef Vargo's Braised Lamb Shank

Spring is right around the corner (I hope!) and so with thoughts of warmer days and still-cool nights, I want to share a lovely dish that celebrates Adirondack tradition. This dish is perfect for satisfying the heartiest of appetites, while sharing comforting thoughts of spending time outdoors in the garden or hiking a newly found trail!

Ingredients:

6 hind leg lamb shanks
 2 oz butter
 2 pounds of Mirepoix (Onion, Carrots, Celery) diced
 1 cup tomato paste
 2 cups dry red wine
 6 cloves peeled garlic
 3 bay leaves
 8 sprigs of fresh thyme
 1 cup all purpose flour
 1 gallon beef or game stock
 Salt and pepper

Procedure:

Procedure: Coat the shanks with the flour and tap off excess. Place the butter into a wide deep sided pot over medium heat. Place the shanks into the hot butter and brown carefully on all sides. Add the mirepoix and tomato paste into the pot and allow all to caramelize while stirring gently. Pour in the red wine and cook for 5 minutes, while turning the shanks to coat. Add the stock to the pot, and add the garlic, bay leaves and fresh thyme. Bring to a slow simmer, cover, and cook slowly until the shanks are very tender. Remove the shanks to a serving platter, and reduce the sauce to desired consistency. Season with salt and pepper and return the shanks to the pot for service.

Recipe makes 6 servings



Together, for Good: Strengthening Care Close to Home

If you live in the Adirondacks, you know that getting where you need to go isn't always easy, especially when the weather turns or the miles add up. When it comes to healthcare, being able to stay close to home matters. That's why Adirondack Health is here, every day, caring for neighbors through routine visits, emergencies, surgeries, and some of life's biggest moments. As the only full-service health system inside the Adirondack Park, it's a place our community depends on.

Our Together, for Good 2026 Annual Fund helps ensure that care stays within reach. Providing healthcare in a rural setting brings unique

considerations, and philanthropy plays an important role in helping our hospital respond to the needs of the communities we serve.

When you give to the Annual Fund, you're helping people to get the care they need without leaving the Adirondacks.

Your support strengthens care in practical, meaningful ways. It helps keep services local by supporting specialty care, health and wellness programs, education, and updated surgical tools. It supports the people who provide that care, our clinicians, by investing in training, professional development, and resources that help them do their best work. And it

helps modernize the equipment and technology that make safe, high-quality care possible.

In rural healthcare, philanthropy isn't a bonus, it's essential. It allows Adirondack Health to keep surgeries, imaging, and diagnostics close to home, reduce transfers and delays, and plan for the future. Every gift to the Annual Fund helps protect the care our region relies on today and strengthens it for tomorrow. That's what it means to come Together, for Good. Learn more about annual giving at adirondackhealthfoundation.org/annual-giving

Meet Our 2026 Dr. Edward L. Trudeau Awardee: Dr. Christopher Hyson

The Adirondack Health Foundation will honor Dr. Christopher Hyson, a beloved primary medicine physician and steadfast advocate for rural healthcare, with the Dr. Edward L. Trudeau Award at its 2026 Summer Gala. The award recognizes Dr. Hyson's extraordinary service and enduring commitment to the people of the Adirondacks.

For more than three decades, Dr. Hyson has stood at the heart of Adirondack Health's mission—serving as both healer and neighbor to generations of families across the region. Known for his quiet strength, compassion, and humility, he has exemplified what it means to be a primary care physician in a rural community, where medicine is as much about connection as it is about care.

Throughout his more than 31 years of service, Dr. Hyson's dedication to his patients and colleagues has never wavered—even during the most challenging moments. Although he had planned to retire in July 2020, the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic changed everything.

Recognizing the immense strain on Adirondack Health's providers and patients, he made the selfless decision to postpone his retirement for another year. His willingness to remain on the front lines during a global health crisis reflected his exceptional professionalism and deep commitment to the communities he served.

His dedication extended far beyond the clinic walls. At least twice a month, Dr. Hyson could be found calling upon the local volunteer ambulance corps in Keene to help transport a patient "up the hill" to Adirondack Health.



Audrey Hyson and Dr. Christopher Hyson

Often, he rode in the ambulance himself, sitting beside the patient to provide comfort. Those who know him best say that captures his essence perfectly: present, steady, and deeply caring.

Dr. Hyson often describes primary care as both "roots and branches." The roots, he explains, are the trusting, sustained relationships physicians build with their patients over many years. The branches stretch outward, representing how primary care reaches into every aspect of medicine—coordinating care, advocating for patients, and supporting the health of entire communities. His philosophy reflects both the resilience and interconnectedness of rural medicine and the core mission of Adirondack Health.

"Primary care physicians like Dr. Hyson are the backbone of healthcare in small towns across America," said Jennifer Balog, executive director of the Adirondack Health Foundation.

"Their resilience, resourcefulness, and humanity keep communities healthy and connected. Dr. Hyson's service reminds us all of what it truly means to care."

"I am deeply humbled to have been chosen as the 2026 honoree of Adirondack Health's Summer Gala and recipient of the Dr. Edward L. Trudeau Award. I see this as a celebration of those of us who have chosen to practice medicine on the front lines of healthcare and focus our abilities and inner resources on the face-to-face care of families and individuals in our communities."

The Foundation will celebrate Dr. Hyson's legacy on Saturday, July 11, 2026, at the McKenzie Wilderness Estate in Ray Brook. Proceeds from the gala will support rural healthcare initiatives, a cause that reflects the heart of Dr. Hyson's life's work. Visit [adirondackhealthfoundation.org/events/2026-Summer-Gala](https://www.adirondackhealthfoundation.org/events/2026-Summer-Gala) for more information.

Foundation Feature: Colby Center, Compassionate Care for Seniors in Crisis

For over 25 years, the Colby Center Senior Behavioral Health Unit has quietly stood as one of our region's essential resources. As the only geriatric psychiatric unit in the tri-lakes region, this 12-bed program provides acute, short-term inpatient care for older adults experiencing severe mental health needs. Beyond its clinical role, Colby has become a place where healing, empathy, and human connection guide every moment.

The Colby Center was created to support adults 50 and older experiencing significant mental health challenges, including depression, anxiety, behavioral changes, and acute psychiatric symptoms. Patients are admitted either through the emergency department during a mental health crisis or transferred from other hospitals when they require the specialized support Colby provides.



Janine, a social worker in the Colby Center

Over the years, the unit has adapted its programs to meet the evolving mental health needs of older adults. Today, the average stay is about two weeks, and

every patient receives a personalized plan that focuses on emotional well-being, coping skills, and a supportive transition back home or to the next stage of care.

Many of The Colby Center's team members have dedicated their careers to this program. Psychiatrists, nurses, social workers, mental health technicians, and administrative staff all work together to create an environment grounded in patience, empathy, and respect for their patients. Together, they offer calm in moments of confusion, encouragement in moments of fear, and dignity in moments when it is needed most.

Meeting Basic Needs with Extraordinary Compassion

Many patients arrive at The Colby Center with few or no personal belongings. This requires them to wear only paper gowns, scrubs, or clothing that is tattered and ill-fitting. The staff at The Colby Center have long understood how deeply this affects a person's sense of self.

For years, staff purchased clothing for new Colby Center patients themselves. Their generosity spoke volumes to the compassionate care they provided, but it wasn't a sustainable practice. Once the Adirondack Health



A chalkboard in the Colby Center

Foundation found out about these kind staff members, they knew they had to help create a sustainable system to provide greater dignity for those in Colby.

The Adirondack Health Foundation established a dedicated Colby Clothing Fund, ensuring everyone entering the unit can receive clean, comfortable attire, in their proper size, during their stay, and receive a set to take home at discharge. This program officially launched last year, with its first gift from The Chapel Hill Foundation.

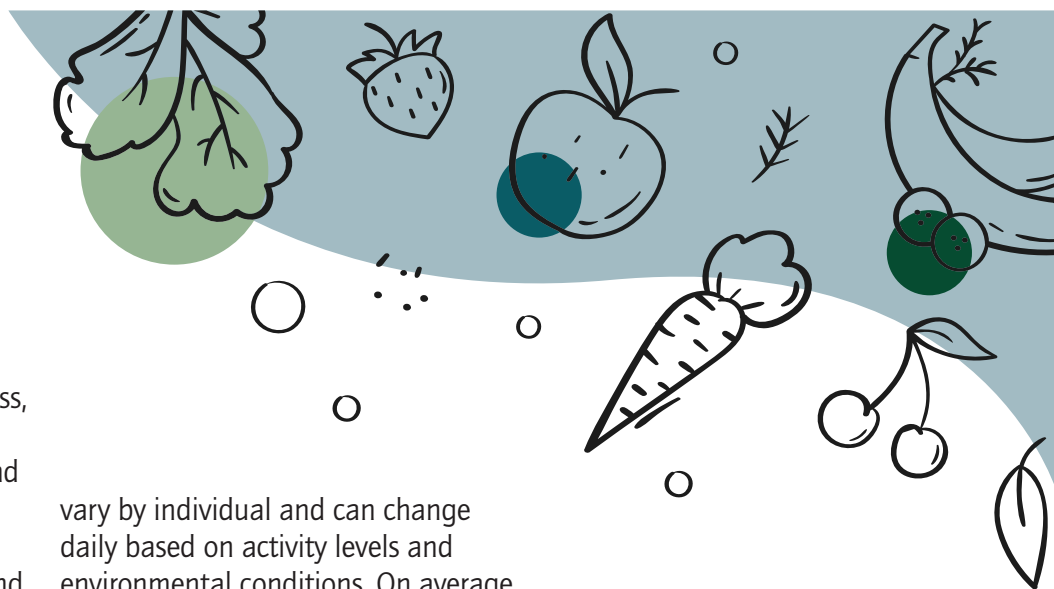
Now the Colby Center can maintain a small clothing closet stocked with new lounge sets, pajamas, slippers, and socks in a variety of sizes for new patients. These simple necessities help restore a sense of dignity during an incredibly vulnerable time.

While the Colby Center has changed over the years to better treat patients, what has remained constant is the heart of its mission: to care for each patient with dignity, skill, and compassion.

If you would like to support the work being done at the Colby Center please visit:
adirondackhealthfoundation.org/colby

Falls and Nutrition

By *Joni Gerkin, RD*



A nutrient-dense diet can play an important role in fall prevention and reducing the risk of injury associated with falls. Nutrition affects muscle mass, bone density, and hydration—factors that all influence balance, stability, and injury risk if a fall does occur.

Having enough muscle for strength and stability is critical in fall prevention. One key nutrient for building and maintaining muscle is protein. The Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) for protein is 0.8 grams per kilogram of body weight, though this is the minimum for maintenance. For building or preserving muscle mass, a higher intake of 1.2 g/kg is recommended. For example, a person weighing 150 pounds would need approximately 55–82 grams of protein per day.

Our bodies make the most efficient use of protein when it's distributed evenly throughout the day, so aim to include a source of protein in each meal and snack. Good sources include meats, eggs, dairy, beans, and nuts. For optimal recovery after exercise, aim for about 25 grams of protein within an hour, such as 3 ounces of meat or 8 ounces of Greek yogurt.

Dehydration is another major risk factor for falls. It can lead to drops in blood pressure and dizziness, which increase the likelihood of falling. Fluid needs

vary by individual and can change daily based on activity levels and environmental conditions. On average, daily fluid intake recommendations are 92 ounces for women and 124 ounces for men, with about 20% typically coming from food. Aim to drink at least 8 cups (64 ounces) of fluid each day. A good indicator of hydration status is the color of your urine—it should be pale yellow. If it's dark yellow or amber, it may be a sign you need to drink more fluids.

Being either underweight or overweight can also increase fall risk. Weight management depends on balancing calorie intake with energy expenditure. To lose weight, reduce calorie intake while focusing on nutrient-dense foods, and increase activity levels. If you're underweight and trying to gain, increase your calorie intake—frequent meals can help. Exercise remains important for maintaining muscle mass and bone health, but make sure you're consuming enough calories to support your activity level if you're trying to gain weight.

Despite our best efforts, falls can still happen. One of the most common and

serious consequences is bone fractures. Two key nutrients for bone health are calcium and vitamin D. Dairy is one of the best sources of calcium, but it's also found in fortified foods and in moderate amounts in vegetables like broccoli and spinach. Vitamin D is found in fatty fish such as salmon and tuna, as well as in egg yolks and fortified products. However, after we consume vitamin D, sunlight is needed to activate it into a form the body can use for bone health. People living in northern regions often don't get sufficient sun exposure, particularly in the winter months. In such cases, vitamin D supplementation—particularly in the D3 form—may be beneficial.

A well-balanced diet can provide all the nutrients necessary for muscle strength, hydration, and bone health. Focusing on whole foods—rather than processed or refined foods—will naturally increase the nutrient density and overall quality of your diet.

Adirondack Health Foundation's
2026 Summer Gala





Cornerstone Forward
Delivering the Heart of Patient Care

Cornerstone Forward: Progress with Care and Intention



As the seasons change in the Adirondacks, our commitment to strengthening care at Adirondack Health remains steadfast. The Cornerstone Capital Project continues to move forward with intention and momentum—guided by one clear goal: creating modern, welcoming inpatient rooms that support healing, dignity, and comfort for every patient who walks through our doors.

Following the extraordinary response from our community through the Foundation's Cornerstone Capital Campaign, Adirondack Health is finalizing important financial steps to support the project, including refinancing existing debt in partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture. While this process has taken longer than originally anticipated due to recent federal government shutdowns, our leadership team remains actively engaged to complete all approvals and keeps us on track to break ground on the Cornerstone Project later this year. The total project cost is currently projected at approximately \$21 million, representing a significant and

carefully stewarded investment in the future of inpatient care for our region.

In the meantime, meaningful progress continues across the organization. A full-scale mock-up inpatient room has been created and is being reviewed by clinical and support staff, allowing teams to walk through layouts, assess workflow, and recommend refinements that enhance both patient experience and staff efficiency. At the same time, offices are being thoughtfully relocated so that patient rooms previously taken offline for administrative use can be returned to service. This careful planning will allow all 35 inpatient beds to remain operational during construction, ensuring uninterrupted access to care for our community.

We are also pleased to share that tangible investments are already underway. New inpatient beds have been purchased, dialysis machines are being replaced, and recent state funding will further enhance renovations within the dialysis unit. In addition, Adirondack Health has been awarded \$1 million for dialysis upgrades through a Congressionally

Directed Spending appropriation, made possible with the support of Elise Stefanik and Kirsten Gillibrand—a significant step forward in strengthening critical services for our region.

In mid-January, we were proud to complete and install the Cornerstone Campaign Donor Recognition Wall, located just outside the second-floor patient unit across from the main elevators. This beautiful installation honors 691 generous donors whose support made the Cornerstone project possible. Each name represents a lasting investment in the future of Adirondack Health and a shared commitment to ensuring exceptional care close to home for our community.

Through every phase of this journey, your patience, confidence, and feedback have mattered deeply. Because of your support, we are shaping healing environments that will serve our community with compassion and excellence for decades to come. Thank you for being an essential part of the Cornerstone journey.



ADIRONDACK HEALTH
FOUNDATION

P.O. Box 120 • Saranac Lake, NY 12983
adirondackhealthfoundation.org



ADIRONDACK HEALTH
FOUNDATION



One form. A lifetime of impact.

Naming Adirondack Health Foundation as a beneficiary of an IRA or retirement account can be as easy as updating a form through your account administrator. You can change it at any time.

Start the conversation today. Contact the Adirondack Health Foundation office or scan the QR code to visit our Planned Giving page and see how easy it is to make a lasting difference.



adirondackhealthfoundation.org | foundation@adirondackhealth.org | 518-897-2348