

# CHRISTINE M. BURNS CARES CENTER

QUARTERLY  
NEWSLETTER



June 2025

Dear Partners and Supporters,

We're excited to share the latest news from our Pediatric Care Management Program—a collaborative effort dedicated to improving health outcomes for children and families in our community. Thanks to your commitment and support, we're able to provide coordinated, compassionate care that addresses the unique needs of every child. In this edition, you'll find program highlights, success stories, and ways you can continue making a meaningful impact. Together, we're building healthier futures, one child at a time.

—The Christine M. Burns CARES Team



## In this newsletter you can expect:

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**2025 Annual Back to School  
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# Help Us Help Others:

## A Message from the Director

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The Cares Center Team would like to thank all the donors over the past year who have helped us make a positive impact on the lives of families we support. Our Children's Health Home Program, Pediatrics Complex Care Telehealth Program, and Patient Navigators continue to go above and beyond, assisting families who are most in need and helping to support access to both medical care and social supports within our community.

This season, we are excited to launch our annual back-to-school drive to help children obtain the basic supplies they need for a successful start to the 2025-2026 school year. Your support is greatly appreciated.

In addition, we'd like to ask everyone also to consider supporting our food pantry, which provides basic emergency food to families when community food pantries are unavailable or SNAP benefits have been exhausted. This resource has been a vital bridge for many of our families. Unfortunately, we anticipate the need to be even higher over the coming year.

Food insecurity is rising in the Rochester area, according to Feeding America's latest "Map the Meal Gap" report. Monroe County's rate is now 13%, with the 14605 ZIP code reaching a rate of 31.7%. Local organizations, such as Rochester Hope Food Pantry, report a 30% increase in demand for their services. This situation is even worse, as food banks across the U.S. struggle to find solutions after the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) cut \$1 billion in emergency food assistance. At a conference in Rochester, organized by Foodlink, the agency reported that it's losing \$655,000 in USDA funding. With grocery prices high and the economy uncertain, experts say the timing is not good.<sup>1</sup>

To compound the problems facing food pantries, the House-passed Republican reconciliation plan would cut nearly \$300 billion from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) through 2034, based on estimates from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) — the largest cut to SNAP in history. This represents a 30% cut in SNAP, the nation's most important and effective anti-hunger program. Finally, though the CBO estimates that 3.2 million adults will be cut off SNAP, the larger number of 6 million adults at risk of losing SNAP is important. Those remaining on SNAP, could see a 30% reduction in benefits."<sup>2</sup>

We are in unprecedented times, and there will be an unprecedented demand for food. **Please consider donating \$20 at the link below to help us continue to fund our food pantry. Thank you, and special thank you to our care team partners for all the amazing work you do.**

*Rui Ventura, Director  
Care Coordination and Care Management  
Golisano Children's Hospital*



<sup>1</sup>Food banks across NY struggle with cuts as demands grows, Spectrum News - By [Seth Voorhees](#) and Dennis Yusko Rochester, Apr. 03, 2025

<sup>2</sup>House Reconciliation Bill Proposes Deepest SNAP Cuts In History,

Center on Budget and Policy Priority – May 28, 2025, By [Katie Bergh](#), [Dottie Rosenbaum](#) and [Wesley Tharpe](#)

# Seasons of Giving: Community Support Shines Bright for Health Home Families

This past holiday season, our Health Home Care Management program was uplifted by the remarkable generosity of our community. From October through December, donors and partners came together to provide essential support, meals, and holiday cheer to the families we serve.

## **October 2024 – Annual Gala Contributions**

Our 2024 Gala set the season in motion with a wide array of thoughtful donations, including headphones, earbuds, sensory toys, hats and gloves, board games, sports equipment, tablets, LEGOs, and a generous supply of winter jackets. These items were instrumental in helping us prepare holiday packages and support families with cold-weather essentials.

## **November 2024 – Thanksgiving Meal Drive**

Thanks to the kindness of PrimeTime585 donors, 31 families (141 individuals) were able to enjoy a full Thanksgiving meal together. Each meal included turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, corn, green beans, sweet potatoes, and pie—bringing warmth and comfort to homes across our program. We like to give a special thanks to PrimeTime585 staff for coordinating the donor list. We had the pleasure of meeting many of the individual donors and youth teams, including the Monster's 33 Girls Lacrosse Team, the Fairport Cheer Team, Penfield Girls Lacrosse Booster Club, Girls Travel Softball Team, and the Pittsford Mendon Baseball Team. It was a delight to see the enthusiasm and generosity of the youth in our community.

## **December 2024 – Holiday Gift Drive**

In December, 32 donors came together to provide gifts for 34 families, supporting a total of 121 children and youth. We'd like to highlight a few of the donors, including the Rochester Fire Department and the team at Pediatric Plastic Surgery, who went above and beyond this year to provide gift cards to Target and Amazon that allowed us to purchase gifts for even more families than anticipated.

Holiday donation boxes placed at the Gates Public Library and Gates YMCA collected over 225 toys, which were distributed to 31 families with 67 children. Gift items ranged from board games and crafts to baby dolls, sports gear, toy trucks, and LEGOs—bringing smiles and excitement to children of all ages. Additional toys were given to the Golisano Children's Hospital outpatient clinic for their families in need. Thank you to the staff and members of Gates Public Library and Gates YMCA!



## Let's Hear From the Families!



One of our youth members, who lives with sickle cell disease, has faced a difficult few months. After a series of hospital stays in March, her medical and mental health began to decline, and she stopped attending school altogether — missing 117 days.

Through steady support from her Care Manager — and close coordination with her social workers, school staff, and medical providers — a plan was put in place to help her take manageable steps forward.

We're happy to share that she has now returned to school and is attending three days a week through the end of the school year. She's also agreed to begin counseling services to support her mental health.

This progress is the result of strong teamwork, persistence, and trust — especially from the child and her family, who shared:

**"This program is absolutely amazing. I give it a 10. Anything I need help and support with, you guys do, and I appreciate it."**

It's moments like these that remind us how small steps can lead to big wins. Way to go to our care managers!

**A** young client, an 11-year-old child diagnosed with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), lives with a grandparent who serves as the primary caregiver. The family has faced numerous barriers to accessing timely and consistent care, particularly due to transportation challenges and difficulties navigating the behavioral health system.

Upon enrollment in our program, one of our care managers was assigned to support the family. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, the care manager prioritized medication management by contacting local pharmacies each month to verify prescription availability and coordinating home delivery to eliminate transportation-related delays.

To further support the client's behavioral and emotional needs, the care manager is actively working to connect the family with in-home therapy and behavioral health services, ensuring that care is accessible within the home environment.

Additionally, the care manager is connecting the client's participation in a local soccer camp. This opportunity aims to strengthen social skills, build confidence, and promote positive peer engagement in a structured and supportive setting.

The client's grandmother shared with the program supervisor that the care manager has been "a huge help" and expressed deep gratitude, stating they **"do not know what they would do without her support."**

This success story reflects the critical role that care management plays in addressing barriers to treatment and ensuring families have access to the services they need. Through consistent, individualized support, our care manager is helping this child build a stronger foundation for long-term well-being.



## Partner Spotlight:

### Providers share their experience working alongside Health Home care managers to support patients

The Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) Program regularly refers to the Golisano Children's Hospital Health Home Program. The referral application is straightforward and the intake staff is very responsive to inquiries. The enrollment process from referral to approval, to family outreach and care manager placement is often complete in about 2 weeks' time, in my experience. That is very valuable to our families who typically are in a high need situation. I enjoy connecting with the care managers and provide a synopsis of the family and their perceived needs. We build a relationship and partner to best support the family. I enjoy collaborating with the care managers and sharing resources and responsibilities to help children with special health care needs become more empowered and successful with managing their needs.

The CYSHCN program is open to children ages birth to 21 years who have or are suspected of having a serious or long lasting condition that requires extra health and support services. It is a no-cost program offered by Monroe County Department of Public Health. We provide resources and referrals to families to help them find support.

**Lauren Reed, BSN, RN**

Program Coordinator

Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs

Monroe County Department of Public Health



In Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics we find that the support of health home care managers is extremely beneficial to our patients and families! Having a close relationship with the GCH Health Home program is so helpful to be able to streamline supports and services for our shared patients/families. Common collaboration efforts I experience are; providing documentation for access to OPWDD eligibility, connecting children and families with follow up appointments for ongoing developmental monitoring in our office/appointment planning, brainstorming helpful resources or supports a child and family would benefit from (behavioral, therapeutic, etc.) and keeping in close contact about complex cases.

Collaborating with GCH care managers is valuable for our patients because we work together to ensure that a child's needs are being met through medical, school and community engagement. Having a child/ren with multiple chronic health conditions can be overwhelming for parents to manage in addition to family and household needs, being able to collaborate with care managers is important to me because we can work with the family and interdisciplinary team to support children and their families. I hope we can continue to strengthen our relationships together!!

**Rachel Trova, LMSW**

Pediatric Social Worker

URMC Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics



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# Supporting Families with Pediatric Complex Care: RMH House to Home Mobile Initiative

Pediatric Complex Care has partnered with Ronald McDonald House Charities of Rochester (RMH) to launch the RMH House to Home mobile unit. This first-of-a-kind vehicle brings advanced telehealth and wraparound support directly to patients' homes with the goal of eliminating barriers to care faced by families of children with complex medical needs. Since May 28<sup>th</sup>, the mobile unit has traveled across county lines to visit 9 families and provide services vital to their children's care.

Overseen by the RMH Community Health Worker, supports and services made possible by the House to Home mobile unit include:

- Advanced telehealth support by using a TytoPro hand-held medical device to capture medical exam information in real time
- Delivery of durable medical equipment
- Delivery of meals and other community-based food resources
- Assistance with completing referrals to community-based services

Pediatric Complex Care is proud to be a part of the RMH innovative House to Home initiative, with a shared goal of producing excellent patient care. We are excited to see what possibilities come from having access to this specialized form of care.



## A Care Coordinator's Day

*Jacqlene Arce, Care Coordinator  
Complex Care*

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Working as a pediatric Care Coordinator for the Complex Care Program has been an incredibly meaningful experience for me. Every day, I get to support not just the young patients but also their families, who often feel overwhelmed navigating medical appointments, treatments, and school accommodations. I strive to create a sense of calm and clarity amid what can be a confusing and emotional time. It's more than just managing schedules, it's about listening carefully to parents' concerns, helping them understand complex information, and making sure their child's needs are met across different healthcare providers and settings. Seeing a child thrive because of the coordinated care we put in place reminds me why this job matters so much. It takes patience, compassion, and a lot of teamwork, but being a part of a child's journey to better health is truly rewarding.



## Our Team

### Administration

Rui Ventura, Director  
Dana Cromheecke, Quality Assurance  
Katie Birge, Administrative Assistant

### Children's Health Home

Elizabeth Pietrantonio, Senior Social Worker  
Melissa Schaubert, Team Lead  
Ashley Knittel, Team Lead  
Michelle Tuohey, Referral Coordinator  
Kelley Switzer, Enrollment Specialist  
Stephanie Lodato, Enrollment Specialist  
Kelsey Melnyk, Care Manager  
Natalee Sherwood, Care Manager  
Sambridhi Shrestha, Care Manager  
Angela Kayhart, Care Manager  
Ashley Ryan, Care Manager  
Christine Loos, Care Manager  
Sean Bemont, Care Manager  
Isabelle Ceddia, Care Manager  
Kalia Conley, Care Manager  
Jackson Bright, Care Manager  
Megan Gagnier, Care Manager  
Al-Yash'a Wright, Care Manager  
Daniel Stetzel, Care Manager  
Jasmine Beckley, Care Manager  
Samantha Gardner, Care Manager  
Georgia Mazarella-Ennis, Care Manager

### Pediatric Complex Care Program

Dr. Neil Herendeen, Medical Director  
Ayla Leary, Program Manager  
Amanda Paganello, NP  
Heather Shultz, RN  
Jacqueline Arce, Care Coordinator

### Care Coordination

Jackie Powell, Team Lead, Green Team  
Cheryl Gordon-Barr, Yellow Team  
Katrina Dames, Orange Team  
Melissa Horton, Blue Team  
Barbara Cook, Complex Care

## Summer Safety Tips for Kids

*Heather Shultz, RN*

*Complex Care*

With the warm weather here, it's a great time for outdoor fun—but safety comes first! Here are a few simple ways to help keep kids healthy and safe this summer:

- ◆ Always wear a helmet when riding bikes, scooters, or skateboards.
- ◆ Supervise children closely around water, and make sure they wear approved flotation devices if they can't swim.
- ◆ Apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before going outside and reapply regularly, especially after swimming or sweating.
- ◆ Stay hydrated! Encourage kids to drink plenty of water, especially on hot days.



**Wishing you and your family a safe and sunny summer full of fun!**



**Some of our Care Management Staff;**

Christine Loos, Megan Gagnier, Kalia Conley, Al Wright, Isabelle Ceddia, Jackson Bright, Liz Pietrantonio, Ashley Knittel, Natalee Sherwood, Melissa Schaubert, Sam Shrestha, Jasmine Beckley

*We thank you for reading  
our Newsletter and wish you  
an amazing summer!*





**CHRISTINE M. BURNS CARES CENTER**

# HELP US FILL THE BACKPACKS THIS YEAR

**Join Our School Supply Drive Today!**

**Donate Supplies to Support Local Students**

**Call Liz Pietrantonio at  
585-255-0370 or email  
[ChildrensHealthHome@urmc.rochester.edu](mailto:ChildrensHealthHome@urmc.rochester.edu)**

**Paper, pencils, pens, highlighters, binders, back-packs, folders,  
notebooks, crayons, scissors, calculators, dividers, kleenex,  
earbuds, reusable water bottles, etc.**