BRA Day: Closing the Loop on Breast Cancer

Albany Med plastic surgeons, who offer more types of reconstruction procedures than those at any other facility in the region, are working to heighten awareness of reconstructive options available to women with breast cancer.

With studies showing that the vast majority of women do not know all of the alternatives available following mastectomies, Albany Med is holding its first Breast Reconstruction Awareness Day — BRA Day — to connect physicians with the public and help spread the word that women have many options when it comes to reconstruction.

“There are so many options now, each with advantages and disadvantages. We want patients to be fully informed so they, along with their physician, can make the best choice for their health and well-being,” said Malcolm Roth, MD, who launched BRA Day as a national event last year when he was serving as the president of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons.

The local BRA Day event will take place from 4 to 7 p.m. Oct. 16 at the Hilton Garden Inn Albany Medical Center. There will be networking opportunities with former patients, and information about the reconstruction and cosmetic services available from Albany Med’s plastic surgery team of Dr. Roth, Richard Agag, MD, Ashit Patel, MD, Kristen Rezak, MD, and Oluwaseun Adetayo, MD.

Albany Med performs all available reconstructive procedures, including saline and silicone breast implants, free flap reconstruction and nipple/areola tattooing and reconstruction.

Free flaps represent the state of the art in breast reconstruction. This includes the DIEP flap reconstruction, which uses tissue from a patient’s lower abdomen, but can also include tissue from the buttocks or inner thighs. This newly reconstructed breast will have a natural shape and feel similar to a real breast.

“Drs. Agag and Rezak, fellowship-trained microsurgeons, are the only surgeons in the region offering this type of reconstruction. Several different types of free flap reconstruction procedures (including DIEP, TUG, SGAP, IGAP and PAP) are available depending on a patient’s preference and eligibility.”

“Our slogan for BRA Day is ‘Closing the Loop on Breast Cancer,’” Dr. Roth said. “We’ve done a great job of raising awareness of the disease. Now we hope to expand the scope to help ensure that all women facing cancer know the wide array of reconstructive options available to them.”

Wednesday October 16, 2013 4-7 p.m. at Hilton Garden Inn Albany Medical Center

Making Strides Against Breast Cancer / pg. 8

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Over the past several years, in preparation for relocating services in the new Patient Pavilion, Albany Med worked with an interior design firm to implement more visual “wayfinding” systems with enhanced signage, color identifiers, textiles, lighting and other means to make it easier for people to remember elevator lobbies and major directional decision points.

Mead’s day, which can include escorting patients, handing out maps or just saying “hello,” starts in the pre-dawn hours. On a recent day as his shift is ending, he spots a group by a second-floor Patient Pavilion elevator who appears unsure.

“All set with where you’re going?” Mead asks.

This time the group nods they’re OK. Mead waves them goodbye. Everyone is smiling.

‘Ambassadors’ Guiding People Through Albany Med

Patient Visitor Guide David Mead’s job is part greeter, part concierge and part escort for the thousands of people who visit Albany Med every month.

Mostly, his job is to make visitors, patients and their families feel as comfortable as possible.

“People may come in here anxious about their health or a loved one’s situation. The last thing they need to worry about is finding their way,” said Mead, a retired state Department of Health employee who works part-time.

The patient guides are just part of the support system. Digital navigation touch screens and color-coded maps also help visitors and employees locate services that may have moved to other locations. But patient care specialists say there is no substitute for the human touch.

“The guides are our ambassadors,” said Charles Clute, director of Patient Relations. “They set the tone for visitors from the time they enter the door.”

To learn more about the procedures offered by Albany Med’s breast reconstruction team visit www.amc.edu/reconstruction.
Enhanced Neuro Intensive Care Unit Opens in Patient Pavilion

Albany Medical Center opened its new expanded neuro intensive care unit, the most advanced of its kind in the region, for patient use in the new Patient Pavilion.

The 15-bed neuro ICU provides a comprehensive approach to caring for patients with severe neurologic injuries or conditions who require round-the-clock critical care. It is the only such unit in the region staffed by physicians including a neurointensivist, stroke neurologists, neurosurgeons and critical care specialists, as well as specially trained nurses. It comes equipped with the most advanced neurological monitoring equipment.

“Neurologically injured patients treated in a dedicated, specialized neuro intensive care unit such as that at Albany Medical Center have better survival rates, spend less time in the hospital, and are more often discharged to rehab or home rather than to a nursing home,” said Gary Bernardini, MD, PhD, professor of neurology and neurosurgery and director of Stroke and Neurocritical Care at Albany Med. “In fact, comparisons made between treatment of these patients in dedicated neuro ICUs versus general ICUs show significant improvements in all three of these domains.”

Technology in the new unit includes sophisticated devices to monitor intracranial pressure, brain tissue oxygen and blood flow in the brain, and five rooms are hard-wired for continuous EEG brainwave monitoring.

“The expanded and newly-equipped state-of-the-art neuro ICU will enable us to better care for patients with life-threatening neurological emergencies such as ruptured brain aneurysms, strokes, traumatic brain injury and hemorrhages,” said Alan Boulos, MD, chair of neurosurgery at Albany Med. “Albany Med has always been fortunate to have a number of physician specialists to treat these specific disorders in a timely and effective way. Now, we have improved our ability to care for these patients immediately after surgery or treatment, resulting in improved outcomes and shorter lengths of stay.”

Albany Med also has a specialized vascular ICU, as well as surgical and neonatal ICUs and the region’s only pediatric ICU. The previous neuro ICU, located in the hospital’s patient tower, was equipped to care for five patients.

Retired NYC Firefighter Right to be Alarmed

Robert Walsh has no regrets about going to the hospital that night during a Fourth of July weekend. And the Ulster County man is certainly grateful he ended up at Albany Medical Center.

“I felt like I was a special person, the respect and the care I received,” he said.

When Walsh, a retired New York City firefighter who now lives in the heart of the Catskills, felt chest pains that holiday weekend in 2012, he knew something wasn’t right.

“I’ve normally been on the other side of the coin and have been stubborn,” the now-74-year-old said. “But the feeling in my chest felt different. For the one time in my life I gave in.”

After going to a local hospital, Walsh was airlifted to Albany Medical Center, where he was diagnosed with pericarditis, a swelling of the sac that surrounds the heart. While at Albany Med he suffered from an arrhythmia that was treated with a pacemaker implanted by Henry Tan, MD.

“In a situation like that many patients try to ignore or downplay their symptoms—and that’s a mistake,” Dr. Tan said. “Thankfully for Mr. Walsh, he did listen to his body. Had he delayed coming to the hospital, who knows what would have been.”

More than a year later, Walsh is again puttering around his property in Oliveira. He still raves about Albany Med, from the comfort of having the Hilton Garden Inn Albany Medical Center across the street for his wife, Phyllis, to the attentiveness of the hospital staff.

“The quality of the medical care I got was superb,” Walsh said. “I have nothing but good things to say about my stay.”

For more information on Albany Med’s cardiac care programs, go to www.amc.edu/heart.

On the Web

The Medical Center’s website now features a page dedicated solely to video content. The page www.amc.edu/video highlights events and developments at Albany Med. Albany Med-produced videos are also featured on the Medical Center’s YouTube channel.

Albany Med on the Move

The move to the Patient Pavilion concludes this month as the Children’s Hospital Neonatal ICU moves to Floor 4 in mid-October.

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Vascular Cases to be Highlighted

Vascular cases from Albany Medical Center will appear on the big screen in Las Vegas during an international conference to share with providers the expertise and techniques used at Albany Med’s Institute for Vascular Health & Disease.

“We frequently present our cases because there is great interest in the procedures we use to improve patient care here at the Medical Center,” said Manish Mehta, MD, a professor of surgery at Albany Medical College and director of endovascular services for The Vascular Group. Dr. Mehta is a member of the steering committee of the 11th Annual Vascular InterVentional Advances (VIVA) conference, slated for Las Vegas in October.

The vascular surgeons at Albany Med are one of the largest providers of vascular health care internationally and are renowned for their expertise in surgical as well as endovascular procedures. They perform more of certain types of vascular surgeries and interventions at Albany Med than any other institution in the world.

Highlighted cases were recorded throughout this year (with patients’ permission) and range from minimally invasive endovascular to open surgical repair for preventing limb loss, stroke, aortic aneurysm rupture and death.

Also at the conference, the top international vascular fellow in a competition series will be awarded two weeks of “hands-on” vascular and endovascular training at the Albany Vascular International Academy, a training program that has been in place at Albany Med for one year bringing vascular surgeons from many countries to train with the Medical Center’s vascular surgeons.

Meanwhile, vascular experts will gather in Albany twice this fall as well, in October and November, for roundtable presentations hosted by the Center for Vascular Awareness in collaboration with The Vascular Group. Improving vascular health starts from public and health care provider education, which today is among the group’s most important initiatives, Dr. Mehta said.

“Millions of Americans suffer from vascular disease. Most don’t know they have it,” Dr. Mehta said. “We want to put patients in the driver’s seat so they can better understand and manage their own vascular health.

Training to Identify and Treat Addictions

Despite the prevalence of addiction and its significant impact on health, many health care workers are not trained in spotting, treating or anticipating addiction in their patients. Albany Medical College has been working for the past 10 years to change that.

The College will present the 10th Annual Addiction Medicine Weekend Nov. 1-2 under the guidance of Stanley D. Glick, PhD, MD, director of the Center for Neuropharmacology and Neuroscience and a world-renowned expert on researching new drugs to treat addiction.

“Over the years we’ve educated 500-700 physicians and other caregivers regarding addiction medicine, which has not been tended to as much as it should have been in the Capital Region,” Dr. Glick said. “Most didn’t know what to do if confronted with a patient suffering from an addictive disorder. We try to take the mystique out of it, explaining that this is a chronic and neglected disease.”

In addition to Dr. Glick, the conference is organized by Isabelle Maisonneuve, PhD, of Albany Medical College and led by Steven Kipnis, MD, medical director of the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS).

The program focuses on treating patients who are addicted not just to alcohol and drugs, but who also suffer from “behavioral addictions” such as gambling, Dr. Glick said.

Other topics covered this year will include HIV and the addicted patient, bariatric surgery and addiction, tobacco use, sex addiction and legal issues related to addiction.

Lecturers scheduled to present include: Abdul Brula, MD, assistant professor of psychiatry, Albany Medical College; Deborah Egel, RN, CARN, Esq., nurse attorney, NYS OASAS; Petros Levounis, MD, chair, Department of Psychiatry, Rutgers-New Jersey Medical School; Jennifer McNeely, MD, assistant professor, NYU School of Medicine; and Charles Morgan, MD, medical director, John L. Norris Addiction Treatment Center, Rochester, NY.

Assistance with Ethical Issues a Call Away

Because of Albany Medical College’s role as a leader in ethics education, patients, families and staff have an exceptional support system in place to help during difficult times.

The Ethics Consultation Service (ECS) at Albany Med is part of the College’s respected Alden March Bioethics Institute (AMBI). ECS ethicists are on call 24 hours a day, year-round. Consults can occur right at the bedside, and anyone can ask for help from the service.

“The service is made up of specially trained and qualified medical ethical consultants who provide support when an ethical dilemma cannot be overcome,” said Dan Thompson, MD, a clinical ethics consultant and professor of surgery and anesthesia in the Department of Surgery and Critical Care Medicine. “This can include answering questions, supporting decision-making, helping mediate conflicts and facilitating understanding.”

Common dilemmas can include:
- Who is the most appropriate person to make decisions for the patient?
- How should risks and benefits of a treatment or medication be weighed?
- How should quality of life be evaluated?
- How to deal with (family) disagreement about different treatment options.

ECS strives to be collaborative, Dr. Thompson said. Consultants do not function as “referees” or “police,” but rather act in an advisory capacity.

“We offer recommendations that not only respect the unique needs, values and interests of the patient, but also reflect the practical realities and achievable options in each circumstance,” said ethics consultant Jane Jankowski, LMSW, an AMBI assistant professor.

ECS consultation is free. Call 518-262-3125 and ask for the ethicist on call. For more information, go to www.amc.edu/EthicsConsult.
Julie Pilitsis, MD, PhD, associate professor of surgery in the Division of Neurosurgery at Albany Medical College, will serve as co-principal investigator on a $3 million grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to develop an MRI-guided robotic system that could offer safer, more accurate treatment options for patients with brain tumors.

Dr. Pilitsis, working with a team of engineers at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) in Worcester, Mass., will be testing an MRI-compatible robotic system that delivers a high-intensity focused ultrasound ablation therapy device through a dime-sized opening in the cranium. The device can heat and erode away cancerous tissue while leaving surrounding normal tissue unaffected, potentially offering a significant improvement over current treatments.

"Real-time imaging is important because it enables the clinician to identify the precise location of the tumor and surrounding structures that may shift during the procedure," Dr. Pilitsis said. "Because the robot and device can move while images are being taken, we will be able to safely and efficiently eliminate the cancerous tissue without affecting other areas."

The robot will be guided by live MRI images using a novel robotic manipulator developed by principal investigator Gregory Fischer, PhD, assistant professor of mechanical engineering and robotics engineering at WPI and director of WPI’s Automation and Interventional Medicine Laboratory. Reinhold Ludwig, PhD, professor of electrical and computer engineering at WPI, will develop specially designed MRI coils for the research project.

"This award is significant because it enables a multi-institutional collaboration to take place for the advancement of the treatment of brain tumors," Dr. Pilitsis said. "Our research has the potential to identify ways to use technology to provide safer and more accurate treatment and may even result in another treatment option for patients with metastatic brain cancer, and perhaps eventually, other cancers. At the end of the grant period, we hope to be ready to conduct patient trials."

Co-investigators on the project are Matthew Gounis, PhD, associate professor and co-director of the Advanced MR Imaging Center at UMass Medical School, and Everett Burdette, PhD, president and CEO of Acoustic MedSystems, the developer of the MRI-compatible ablation device and software.

A neurosurgeon specializing in deep brain stimulation and with extensive experience in stereotactic surgery, Dr. Pilitsis will serve as lead clinical advisor for the research. She began working with Dr. Fischer and his team on the development of a prototype robot when she served as director of functional neurosurgery at the UMass Memorial Medical Center, where she still serves as adjunct faculty. Dr. Pilitsis, a 1998 graduate of Albany Medical College, is the only neurosurgeon in the region with subspecialty fellowship training in functional neurosurgery.
Surgical colleagues honored cardiothoracic surgeon Stuart Miller, MD, for leading Albany Med’s LVAD (left ventricular assist device) program, which has improved the quality of life for many patients with weakened hearts by providing them with an implanted heart pump to help circulate blood.

“Dr. Miller is credited for spearheading every facet of the implementation of our LVAD program, from the education and coordination of staff to the equipment acquisition and training — and he has enjoyed it every step of the way,” Edward Bennett, MD, chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery, said in presenting the award. “It’s been quite an undertaking, and the level of commitment and clinical expertise with which he has handled the program is evident in its success.”

Dr. Miller said credit for the success of the LVAD program extends to a host of others.

“This program could not be possible without the contributions of many. I particularly need to acknowledge the contributions made by our dedicated nursing staff, and especially my medical colleague, Dr. Mark Tallman (MD) of Capital Cardiology Associates.”

Albany Med was the first hospital in Northeastern New York to implant the device which has rapidly become the most widely used device of its kind in the world. An LVAD is not an artificial heart, nor is it a heart replacement. Rather, an LVAD attaches to the heart and is designed to assist — or take over — the pumping function of the patient’s left ventricle, the main pumping chamber of the heart.

Since late 2011, 11 patients have had LVADs implanted at Albany Med, while another six are receiving ongoing care here.

Two Albany Medical College pediatric physician residents will receive a national child advocacy award for an innovative program they developed to address childhood obesity.

Sonal Malhotra, MD, and Jenny Torre, MD, established a farmers market in Albany’s South End to provide locally grown produce and information about healthy food choices to urban families. They will be honored in October with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Anne E. Dyson Child Advocacy Award, which celebrates the outstanding efforts of pediatricians-in-training working in their communities to improve the health of children.

The physicians designed the program, called CHOPPED (Childhood Obesity Prevention Program), in partnership with local community-based organizations A Village and Grand Street Community Arts as well as local farmers and area residents. The project was part of Albany Med’s Child Advocacy Resident Education (CARE) initiative. CARE is a volunteer organization led by Albany Med Pediatric Hospitalist Sara Hoestmann, MD, that encourages medical residents to get involved in the community.

“Despite community efforts, a lack of high-quality, local farmers markets is an obstacle to accessing healthy foods that can help address childhood obesity in our area,” Dr. Malhotra said. “CHOPPED helps get children better access to fruits and vegetables as well as education on a healthy lifestyle.”

In addition to locally grown produce, CHOPPED provides free information on creating a healthy diet, food preparation, exercise and youth empowerment.

“Getting recognized like this is such an honor,” Dr. Torre said. “We hope that this project will inspire other medical residents and medical students to create healthy lifestyle projects in the community.”

Located at the corner of Morton Avenue and Clinton Street in Albany, the farmers market is open every Saturday, 2-6 p.m. from July through October, weather permitting.

Vouchers to reduce the cost of the produce are available thanks to grants from community organizations. Food stamps are also accepted.
Knicks and Knacks and Giving Back

Have you visited the Albany Med Thrift Shop as a donor or a shopper? Located off the main hallway in the A building, it’s a room filled with clothing and shoes, hand bags and books, and an array of knick-knacks.

The shop, run by the Albany Med Auxiliary, is a place where employees, patients and visitors can bring in or buy items to benefit Albany Med.

“We get a lot of great stuff,” volunteer Jane Mosher said. “The variety surprises us.”

“The proceeds go to the Auxiliary and, in turn, the Medical Center,” explained Theresa Elefante, the shop’s co-chair along with Darlene Clark, and one of the 15 volunteers at the store.

The shop takes in roughly $33,000 a year, with about $2,000 in donated items going directly to patients.

Kelly Morrone, manager of volunteer services, said dedicated annual expenditures include contributions for patience assistance, Project Learn, recreational therapy and even a hospitality cart.

And those growth charts given to families of newborns? Thank the thrift shop.

“The they have also donated money to numerous one-time requests, from remodeled waiting areas and Christmas tree decorations to magazine subscriptions and reading glasses for patients,” Morrone said.

The shop opened in 1957 in the basement of the Medical Center and has moved several times before settling into its current location not far from the Pillars Entrance. It accepts clean items in good condition, with the exception of toys and stuffed animals.

Albany Med Saves

Albany Medical Center is calling upon its greatest asset to identify ways to reduce costs while continually improving quality patient care: Its employees.

The new campaign, Albany Med Saves, empowers employees to become more involved in an ongoing effort to identify areas the Medical Center can reduce costs and still improve quality.

Employee-identified savings in the past four years have already netted Albany Med $15.1 million. To cite several examples, in the past two years employee-generated ideas saved Albany Med close to a combined $2 million by securing better pricing for spine surgery implants, IV medicine administered in the Infusion Center and cardiac rhythm devices.

“Albany Med Saves is a call to action to address rising expenses across all of health care that impact Albany Med as well,” said Bernadette Pedlow, senior vice president for Hospital Business Services and hospital chief operating officer. “The money we save can be put back into the care we provide.

“We need everyone to be involved.”

Areas to be examined include: finding savings through pricing, standardization and usage; improving financial performance; bringing together clinical and supply chain staff to work as teams, and creating a culture open to change and new ideas.

“We have to address the increasing cost and unknown future of health care, while maintaining the quality of the services and care we provide every day,” said Rudy Santoli, vice president of materiel management.

“Employees of any level or location who deal with the vast and intricate workings of the Hospital, College or Center are the best ones to identify the means Albany Med can achieve common-sense savings.”
I am currently a patient on M5. Just wanted to say the nursing and all staff here are beyond awesome. I have not met one person who hasn’t been friendly, helpful, compassionate or skillful! … — via Facebook

(Carl Touhey) was a great person to AMC and the local community everywhere. Mr. Touhey will be missed! — via Facebook

@AlbanyMed No. 1,000! — via Facebook

Applied to the dream job @ AlbanyMed!! #WishMeLuck — via Twitter

Words cannot explain how wonderful this nurse is. Janis Koshgarian … was our son’s nurse and pretty much became part of our family. I am not sure we would have gotten through it all without her! We were sent an ANGEL to help us through and her name is Janis! We love you! — via Facebook

So heartwarming to see that the Albany Med Employee Picnic is alive and well! Looks like every single person who participated had a great time! Thanks so much for capturing and posting these happy photos! — via Facebook

Join the conversation: www.facebook.com/AlbanyMedicalCenter, @AlbanyMed, and youtube.com/albanymedicalcenter

A Flash of Hope

Kylie Mingrone gives mom Samantha Maxwell a kiss as the two pose during a photo session in the Albany Medical College Alumni Lounge. They sat for Flashes of Hope (www.flashesofhope.org), a national nonprofit organization that creates free portraits of children fighting cancer and raises money for pediatric cancer research.

Graphic Novelist Empowers Kids with Hero Character

Shira Frimer, author of “NISTAR,” the story of a young cancer-surviving doctor who searches for a mystical stone to help him save the life of a child with cancer, shared her story with patients at the Melodies Center for Childhood Cancer and Blood Disorders. Frimer wrote the 104-page graphic novel 13 years after losing her husband to cancer. She visited Albany Med as part of Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in September.

For Parents, Safe Infant Sleeping: Know Your ABCs

An Albany County Safe Sleeping Task Force held a recent news conference at Albany Med’s Patient Pavilion with an important message for parents of infants: “Know your ABCs: Alone on their backs in a crib.” David Clark, MD, chair of the Department of Pediatrics, appeared with Albany County Executive Daniel P. McCoy (right) and other regional and state medical and childcare experts to recognize Baby Safety Month and proclaim Safe Sleep Day in an effort to prevent infant deaths due to unsafe sleeping.

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Barbara Smith, RN, and Theresa Weinman share a passion for spreading the word about early detection of breast cancer.

Smith knows first-hand. Not only does she see dozens of breast cancer patients a month as a certified breast navigator at the Breast Care Center, but last January she was diagnosed with the disease.

Her diagnosis came out of the blue. Because she has dense breast tissue, Smith had tomosynthesis. Albany Med was the first in the region to have this technology, and Smith was on the team that advocated for this powerful three-dimensional imaging.

"Little did I realize that nine months after Albany Med put this lifesaving technology to work, it would save my life," she explained. "At my annual screening mammogram, I had 'tomo,' which showed an abnormality that didn't show up on my mammogram."

A biopsy revealed it was stage 1 invasive breast cancer. She had a lumpectomy and radiation, but because it was detected early, she didn't have to have chemotherapy or a mastectomy. "If we didn't have this technology, my mammogram next year most likely would have showed a much larger tumor that would have not had such a good outcome," she said.

Weinman, an administrative coordinator in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at Albany Medical College, lost her best friend to breast cancer, watched a close family member pull through it, supported another co-worker through chemotherapy and radiation, and has had several scares herself.

"For me, it seems there is no escaping it. Fortunately, we have an exceptional resource — the Breast Care Center on the South Clinical Campus," she said. "Once, within 10 minutes of receiving word I needed a lumpectomy, I was surrounded by an amazing team. They provided exceptional care. I was reeling, but I had information before I could even think to ask for it. They answered my questions and encouraged more."

"And when they saw how worried I was, they squeezed me in so I wouldn't have to wait eight days for the results of my biopsy."

Fortunately, those results were negative, but with the high incidence of breast cancer in her family, Weinman has an MRI and mammogram scheduled annually.

"Early detection is critical," stressed Smith, who with Weinman, is co-captaining Team Albany Med for "Making Strides Against Breast Cancer," the American Cancer Society’s annual walk — the largest in the region — to highlight the importance of early detection and raise research funds. It will be held Sunday, Oct. 20 in Washington Park in Albany.

With the commitment of Smith and Weinman, Albany Med will walk together as one big team, proudly wearing their Team Albany Med T-shirts.

“We’re working to build our largest team ever," Weinman said. "After all, Albany Med has a great story to tell. I and many others can attest to that."

To support or walk in Making Strides, visit http://main.acsevents.org/goto/AlbanymedicalCenter

Melodies of Christmas Tickets On Sale Soon

There is no surcharge added to the ticket price, which means a savings of at least $3 per ticket.

Tickets can also be purchased by employees and the public after the presale beginning in early November by calling the Proctors Theatre box office at (518) 346-6204 or by visiting www.proctors.org.

Purchasing a ticket to the Melodies of Christmas helps enable the Melodies Center for Childhood Cancer and Blood Disorders at the Children’s Hospital at Albany Med to provide the best and most compassionate pediatric cancer care to the young patients of our community.

December 12–15
It's become one of the holiday seasons “can't-miss” events. The 2013 Melodies of Christmas performances will run from Thursday, Dec. 12 to Sunday, Dec. 15 at Proctors Theatre in Schenectady. The show will feature the Empire State Youth Orchestra and Chorale as well as a variety of other musicians and performers.

The annual employee ticket presale will be held Wednesday, Oct. 23 to Friday, Oct. 25 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tickets are $25 per person, with select balcony seating for the Thursday Dec. 12 and Friday Dec. 13 performances at $15 per person.