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*Broward Health  
Expands Graduate  
Medical Education  
Program*

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# Hospital News<sup>™</sup> and HEALTHCARE REPORT

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August 2021

THE REGION'S MONTHLY NEWSPAPER FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS & PHYSICIANS

OUR 18TH YEAR SERVING THE HEALTHCARE COMMUNITY!

## Profiles In Leadership



Melida Akiti

## Melida Akiti of Memorial Healthcare System

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

As the Vice President of Ambulatory and Community Services at Memorial Healthcare System, Melida Akiti manages a network of primary care practices and urgent care centers that impact the delivery of medical care and treatments to residents in South Broward and beyond.

Akiti says she has always been community minded and is mission driven. Previously, she served as Chief Administrative Officer of the Jackson Mental Health Hospital, overseeing Ambulatory Services and Primary Health Centers and the Correction Health Services. She was drawn to the position at Memorial Healthcare System because she loved its mission.

"The position available at Memorial was able to transform the primary care in light of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) coming up—how we were able to impact individuals who were uninsured into becoming insured," she says. "That was basically the reason why I accepted the position because I saw it as transformational. There were a lot of assumptions made about how the ACA was going to be the cure-all, do-all for everyone in regard to health care insurance."

Akiti notes that Memorial is an organization that believes in the mission of

Continued on page 12

## DCMA President Installed Advocates to Impact Quality via Leadership

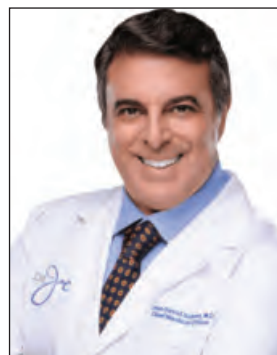
BY BARBARA R. FALLON

Some people respond to the loosening of COVID-19 restrictions by cautiously dipping a toe to test the waters and others dive in headfirst to make up for lost time. Judging from the enthusiastic and comprehensive list of goals newly installed Dade County Medical Association President Jose David Suarez, M.D., outlined at inaugural ceremonies, he falls into the latter category!

In addition to supporting progress of past years, Dr. Suarez plans to use the DCMA platform to further elevate the status of the medical profession, increase morale of colleagues, encourage physician leadership and knowledgeable advocacy with legislators, enhance membership recruitment, support outreach programs/ funding to guide and support police dealing with community mental health issues, and increase formal and informal communications to provide a clear voice for physicians in communities they serve.

According to Dr. Suarez, often the medical professional is frustrated with a perceived antagonistic environment of regulatory agencies, government interference, insurance barriers, politics and health disparities resulting in a suicide rate 2 to 3 times the general population.

Dr. Jose David Suarez



Continued on page 18

## Education

## University of Miami School of Nursing and Health Studies Unveils S.H.A.R.E.<sup>™</sup>

Branding campaign takes shape, revealing new name, visual identity, and social media channels for simulation

BY ROBIN SHEAR

When it first opened in 2017, it was known simply as the Simulation Hospital. Now, just in time for its fourth anniversary this September, the five-story, 41,000-square-foot hub for health care innovation, located at 5030 Brunson Drive, Coral Gables, FL, has a name befitting its unique stature.

The University of Miami School of Nursing and Health Studies (SONHS) is proud to announce the launch of a branding campaign for the Simulation Hospital Advancing Research and Education (S.H.A.R.E.<sup>™</sup>).

"I am so pleased to have a brand for the hospital that underscores its substantial impact on our school, students, and community," says Dean Cindy L. Munro. "We are at the forefront of this field, and the added tagline, 'Advancing Research and Education,' ties directly to our strategic plan and mission."

The marketing team for SONHS developed a brand identity to cement public recognition for S.H.A.R.E.<sup>™</sup>, a vibrant location where on-site, mixed-reality, and virtual simulation activities take place in a variety of customizable clinical, research, and academic settings.



Cindy L. Munro

Continued on page 22

## Profiles In Leadership



Albert Boulenger

## Boulenger Looking Forward to Creating Own Legacy at Baptist Health South Florida

BY VANESSA ORR

In 2022, Albert 'Bo' Boulenger will take over as CEO of Baptist Health South Florida, replacing Brian E. Keeley, who has been its CEO for the past 35 years. And while Boulenger says that Keeley has served as an outstanding mentor, he was not the first.

"My father was a hospital CEO, and he was also a medic in World War II and part of the Greatest Generation, and that was inspiring to me," explained Boulenger, who has been with Baptist Health since 1985.

"Because my father ran a number of large hospitals around the country, I got to observe the collaboration between physicians, nurses and staff in this unique ecosystem, and I knew that I wanted to be a part of such a challenging, rewarding profession," he added. "Healthcare really chose me."

Boulenger, who spent part of his youth in Tampa, received his undergraduate degree from the University of Florida and his master's degree in health care administration from Washington

Continued on page 12



## Coming next month in **South Florida Hospital News and Healthcare Report...**

- Real Estate Update
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## Publisher's Note

### Get Vaccinated!

I have one message for August ... GET VACCINATED NOW! If you're over the age of 12, have no underlying medical conditions that prevent vaccination, then it's time to stop playing Russian Roulette with your life and the lives of your families, friends and community. Florida is facing another Pandemic surge. We currently live in one of three states responsible for 40 percent of all COVID cases. And even though we don't have exact statistics available through the State, just look at the actions of our local healthcare systems. Once again, many are adjusting visitation policies, looking at limiting elective surgeries, as well as realizing the "buck needs to stop" with their own employees—and requiring mandatory vaccinations.

We need to acknowledge that we all live in a country with thousands of roads and millions of cars, so we have stop signs, traffic lights and laws. And the alternative to these laws would be inevitable car crashes at every intersection. So, while thousands of Floridians are adamantly against mandatory vaccination and believe it won't happen to them or it's worth the gamble; guess what everyone (especially the 20 – 40-year-olds), time's up. This is no longer a potentially fatal illness of just the 65 and over population. You can't negotiate your way out of COVID-19 and its Delta variant. It's your turn to make a difference ... and it just might save your life or the person you breathe on next.



Charles Felix



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## Annual Liability Coverage Review Smart Idea for Healthcare Professionals

BY VANESSA ORR

To stay healthy, it's important to get an annual physical. In the business world, it's just as important to do an annual review of liability coverage to make sure that your company or practice is managing risk should an unexpected or potentially costly event occur.

"Businesses change over time—for example, a physician practice might hire new doctors or invest in new equipment—so it's vital to make sure that the company has the right types of coverage in the correct amounts," explained Bill Gompers, CFE, healthcare providers' insurance specialist at Danna-Gracey. "While you can't completely avoid risk, the question is how much you want to take on yourself and how much you want to share with the insurance company."

"A lot of practices and companies think that they have the right coverage, but find out that they don't have what they need when they need it," he added. "It's like when a hurricane strikes; a homeowner may think that their screen enclosure is covered, but find out after it's damaged that they didn't have the proper rider on their policy."

He adds that when purchasing liability policies, buyers can be misled or not understand what the policies cover as carriers' policy forms are not uniform and have exclusions that allow them to offer lower rates.

Healthcare providers can choose from a number of liability coverages, including professional liability insurance (medical malpractice); workers' compensation insurance; regulatory liability insurance; employment practices liability insurance (EPLI); commercial general liability insurance; cyber liability insurance and employee benefits liability insurance.

"One of the most important liability coverages—that many practices don't know they need—is employment practices liability insurance," said Gompers. "You are at risk every time you discipline someone, fire them, or accept their resignation; companies can also be sued for sexual harassment and discrimination."

EPLI protects businesses against the high costs of lawsuits due to discrimination, harassment, wrongful termination and other potential charges stemming from employment practices, and can cover the costs of legal defense, settlements and other court fees.

With cybercrime on the rise, it is also important to carry cyber liability insur-



Bill Gompers

ance. According to Keeper Security, nearly two-thirds of healthcare organizations globally have experienced cyberattacks in their lifetimes, while 53 percent have been attacked within the last 12 months.

"It can cost a minimum of \$20,000 to \$30,000 to clean up a cyberattack," said Gompers. "If you suffer a big hit and have a lot of information stolen, it can cost hundreds of thou-

sands of dollars."

Even general liability insurance policies need to be reviewed as it is important to know the responsible party in case of an accident. "If someone slips and falls in the waiting area or falls off an exam table, who is responsible?" asked Gompers. "While a lot of doctors think that their landlords' policies cover this, they may not, and it can get very expensive if someone suffers a serious injury."

Gompers also advises clients to look into regulatory liability insurance and employment practices liability insurance as companies can lose money as a result of everything from claims based on allegations of billing errors, to shadow-auditing expenses, to being sued for not enrolling an employee in a benefits program.

"If the government comes in to audit you, you need to have someone representing you," he said of the insurance that covers legal expenses as well as provides reimbursements for regulatory fines and penalties. "Any of these issues can slow or stop the flow of money into a practice."

Working with agencies that are healthcare providers' insurance specialists can not only reduce risk, but ensure peace of mind and provide you and your organization with value-added services.

"Don't just work with an order-taker—work with professionals who understand your business and can give you prudent advice," said Gompers. "Things change, and it's important to know that your assets are protected."

"I have people say, 'I haven't had this coverage in 10 years and I'm saving money on premiums because there haven't been any claims,'" he added. "That's like saying that you have life insurance and you don't need it because you haven't collected on it. You need it when you need it."

To schedule your company's annual review, contact Bill Gompers at [bill@dannagracey.com](mailto:bill@dannagracey.com), (888) 777-7173 or visit [www.dannagracey.com](http://www.dannagracey.com).

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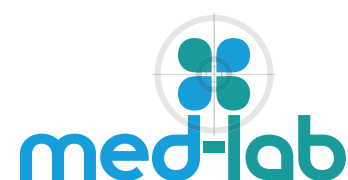


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## Ports in the Storm: Hospitals' Essential Role During Hurricane Season

A revised hurricane forecast released in July predicts a very active 2021 Atlantic hurricane season. Researchers predict 20 named storms, including nine hurricanes and four major hurricanes. One of these, Hurricane Elsa, already made its presence known on Florida's coast. This year is forecast to be the sixth in a row of an above-average number of storms.

For Florida's hospitals, planning for these storms is paramount, and it occurs year-round, not just during the five months of hurricane season. Hospitals' plans are intended to avoid patient evacuations as much as is safely possible as well as hospital closure so that the community has a reliable source for care throughout the storm and its aftermath.

Fortunately, hurricanes, unlike other types of disasters, are "expected" or "known" events. They are forecast and, therefore, can be planned for. Every hospital has an emergency plan that governs roles and responsibilities before, during, and after a storm. These plans provide detailed guidance on staffing, security, power redundancies, supplies and medications, equipment, facility maintenance, evacuation and patient transfer contingencies, and coordination with local emergency response, community groups, and possible transfer facilities further inland. Needed supplies range from the routine, like saline, bandages, and medical gases, to the unusual, like antivenom to deal with bites from snakes whose habitats are disrupted by the storm. Importantly, too, emergency plans are practiced and drilled so that when disaster strikes, response can happen quickly and fluidly.

These emergency response plans are designed to be flexible and adaptive to each community's needs and each locality's circumstances and are also honed year after year based on real-world experiences managing storms and their impacts.

Emergency response plans are one variable in hospitals' ability to keep their doors open to continue safely caring for patients during a hurricane. Another variable is physical infrastructure. To avoid closure, hospitals' buildings have to be able to withstand hurricane-force



BY MARY MAYHEW

winds and flooding from heavy rains and coastal surges. Whether constructing a new hospital or retrofitting an older one, investments in infrastructure hardening, flood mitigation, and other building renovations run in the millions, if not billions of dollars.

Despite the heavy costs, hospitals of all sizes from coast to coast are making these infrastructure

investments to protect their facilities and, most importantly, their ability to continue serving their communities without interruption.

In South Florida, for example, an assessment in 2000 of a hospital's resilience to potential storm damage from a hurricane of Category 2 or higher revealed vulnerabilities that could have resulted in the hospital being forced to close or evacuate in the event of a major hurricane. The hospital retrofitted its facilities to enable it to withstand a Category 4 hurricane and winds of up to 200 miles per hour. With the renovation, today, the hospital is wrapped in a hurricane-resistant shell – pre-molded panels of glass fiber-reinforced concrete – and has impact-resistant windows and a reinforced roof.

In Marathon, in the Florida Keys, after Hurricane Irma, a new hospital was built to be able to withstand a Category 5 hurricane and have emergency power lasting up to four days. Beginning in 2005, another hospital upgraded its facility over four years to strengthen the roof, reduce vulnerability to wind and flooding, and protect medical equipment and generators in addition to installing hurricane protective window screening.

From securing emergency generators and security personnel and stockpiling medications and supplies to training staff, running preparedness drills, and transforming the physical infrastructure, the costs for hospitals of hurricane preparedness are numerous and significant. But the costs of failing to prepare are far greater and would leave communities without a trusted source of care, without a port in the storm, when it is needed the most.

*Mary Mayhew is President and CEO of the Florida Hospital Association.*

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# Leading Experts Urge Health Care Workers to Accept COVID-19 Vaccinations ASAP

FAU Schmidt College of Medicine Commentary Published in 'The American Journal of Medicine'

Vaccines to prevent common and serious infectious diseases have had a greater impact on improving human health than any other medical advance of the 20th century.

Alarming, in the United States today, vaccination rates are higher in the general population than among health care workers. In fact, according to a WebMD and Medscape Medical News analysis of data collected by the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services from 2,500 hospitals across the country, as of the end of May, only 1 in 4 hospital workers nationwide who have direct contact with patients had received even a single dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. According to the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, 59 percent of staff and 80 percent of residents in nursing homes are vaccinated.

In a commentary published in The American Journal of Medicine, Charles H. Hennekens, M.D., Dr.PH, a world renowned preventive medicine and public health academician from Florida Atlantic University's Schmidt College of Medicine, and his collaborator, address the clinical and public health challenges as well as ethical implications for health care workers to achieve high levels of vaccinations to protect themselves, their coworkers and the general public from COVID-19. The urgency derives from the fact that cases are already increasing in all 50 U.S. states and the majority are due to the Delta variant, which is far more transmissible and likely to be a harbinger of newer variants resistant to the vaccines.

The authors say that currently in the U.S., COVID-19 is largely an epidemic of the unvaccinated. Thus, health care workers who reject the vaccine greatly increase their risk of becoming infected. They may then expose their patients, families and fellow citi-



**Dr. Charles H. Hennekens**  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX DOLCE,  
FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

zens to COVID-19. Some hospitals and clinics are now requiring COVID-19 vaccination as a mandatory condition of employment. Ironically, virtually all health care workers would seek effective and safe therapies for any communicable or chronic disease. Most routinely accept major surgery and sometimes toxic chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy for cancer.

"On a daily basis, we try to prevent and treat illness based on a sufficient totality of evidence that allows rational clinical decision making for individual patients and policy making for the health of the general public," said Hennekens, senior author, first Sir Richard Doll Professor and senior academic advisor, FAU's Schmidt College of Medicine. "At present, in the U.S., health care workers and the general public should be acutely aware that these vaccines provide the best opportunity to combat COVID-19."

Rejection of the COVID-19 vaccine by health care workers poses an 'ethical quagmire,' because levels of protection far exceed those of the influenza or pneumococcal vaccines, which have been widely accepted by the vast majority of adults, including health care providers."

The authors also emphasize that perhaps the greatest reassurance to health care workers should be that less than 5 percent of those receiving the COVID-19 vaccine become infected, of which, perhaps 94 percent will not transmit the virus to others. In addition, the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine are far less than from the vaccine for influenza. Specifically, serious side effects from the COVID-19 vaccines occur in the range of one per million doses.

In the commentary, the authors also highlight the significant differences between COVID-19 and influenza. Mortality rate from COVID-19 is about 30 times higher; and a positive COVID-19 patient is likely to transmit to about six people compared with one or two for influenza. The efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines are 95 percent, significantly higher than for conventional influenza vaccine. COVID-19 vaccines offer almost complete protection against hospitalization, admission to intensive care units and death.

The authors also emphasize that in 2021, collegial,

collaborative and coordinated efforts of academia, industry, federal, state and local governments, as well as regulatory authorities in the U.S. led to the almost miraculous development of effective and safe vaccines that have been widely distributed in record times. Most vaccines take up to a decade or longer to develop and prove their efficacy and safety whereas multiple effective and safe COVID-19 vaccines have been developed and widely distributed throughout the U.S. in less than one year.

"The war on COVID-19 is being fought most successfully, valiantly, and selflessly by health care workers in hospitals who are doing the most good for the most patients, while placing themselves and their loved ones at increased risks from exposure from their patients," said Hennekens. "As competent and compassionate health care professionals, we must redouble our efforts to promote evidence-based clinical and public health practices that should include vaccination of all U.S. health care workers."

Dennis G. Maki, M.D., professor of medicine, director of the COVID-19 Intensive Care Unit and an internationally renowned infectious disease clinician and epidemiologist from the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, is first author. Maki and Hennekens served together for two years as lieutenant commanders in the U.S. Public Health Service as epidemic intelligence service officers with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). They served under Alexander D. Langmuir, M.D., who created the Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) and Epidemiology Program at the CDC, and Donald A. Henderson, M.D., chief of the Virus Disease Surveillance Program at the CDC in the 1960s, both of whom made significant contributions to the eradication of polio and smallpox. The authors note that today, many responsible and knowledgeable authorities in the U.S. have opined that widespread vaccinations were instrumental in the eradication of smallpox and polio.

For having saved more than 1.1 million lives through his discoveries, in 2012, Science Heroes ranked Hennekens No. 81 in the history of the world, ahead of Jonas Salk (No. 83) who developed the polio vaccine.

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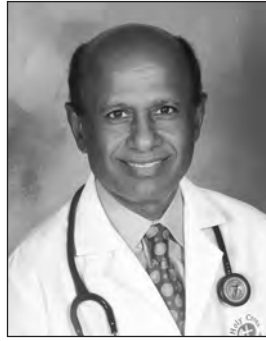
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## Holy Cross Health Physician Joins the Development Team

Dr. Karan Munuswamy has joined the Holy Cross Health Development Team in a part-time capacity as director of philanthropy, in which he will play an important role in assisting with fundraising strategies, as well as interacting with a unique portfolio of community philanthropists who align with Holy Cross Health's mission to be the most trusted health partner for people and families in our community.

Dr. Munuswamy is a board-certified cardiologist, director of the nuclear cardiology department, member of Holy Cross Medical Group and chairman of the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee. He has also been involved with Holy Cross related fundraising activities for the past three decades and served as president of the American Diabetes Association of South Florida. In addition to his involvement with the American Diabetes Association, Dr. Munuswamy served as president of American Heart Association of Broward from 1995 to 2000.



**Dr. Karan Munuswamy**

## Jupiter Medical Center Appoints Renowned Heart Surgeon

Jupiter Medical Center has appointed Dr. William Kokotos, Cardiovascular Surgeon to the Robson Heart and Vascular Institute at Jupiter Medical Center. Board-certified, fellowship-trained, and highly experienced, Dr. Kokotos brings with him renowned expertise in a broad range of both minimally invasive procedures and open-heart surgeries.

Prior to his appointment at Jupiter Medical Center, Dr. Kokotos served as Chief of Cardiac Surgery at NYU Langone Hospital-Long Island (NYULH-LI) where he initiated and directed the cardiac program that performed the first percutaneous mitral valve repair on Long Island. During his tenure at NYULH-LI he was the Chairman of Academic Affairs for the NYU Long Island School of Medicine Faculty Council.



**Dr. William Kokotos**

## Medical Oncologist Robert Klafter, MD, MBA, Joins Cleveland Clinic Martin Health

Cleveland Clinic Martin Health welcomes board-certified medical oncologist Robert Klafter, M.D. As medical director for oncology at the Robert and Carol Weissman Cancer Center, Dr. Klafter is eager to enhance the care that patients can access.

Dr. Klafter completed medical school at New York University, where he also completed the residency program in the Department of Internal Medicine. Dr. Klafter completed the Hematology/Oncology Fellowship program at Emory University. He also completed the Masters in Business Administration program at Emory.

Prior to joining Martin Health, Dr. Klafter has been an attending physician in full-time patient practice for 20 years. He has also served on the faculty at Mount Sinai School of Medicine/Mount Sinai Hospital and Lenox Hill Hospital in New York, as well as Emory University/St. Joseph's Hospital in Atlanta.



**Dr. Robert Klafter**

## Expert Surgeons Join Tenet Florida Physician Services

Mariano Faresi, M.D., FACS, FASCR, a board-certified and fellowship-trained colorectal and general surgeon highly experienced in minimally invasive, robotic and laparoscopic surgery, and wound care, has joined Tenet Florida Physician Services (TFPS) in Boynton Beach.

Prior to joining TFPS, Dr. Faresi worked as a colorectal and general surgeon in the Boynton Beach community as well as at local area hospitals. Currently, Dr. Faresi is a clinical assistant professor of surgery for the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton as well as the University of Miami School of Medicine.

Ariel Rodriguez Pimentel, M.D., FACS, FASMB, a board-certified and fellowship-trained general surgeon with over 15-years of experience in bariatric and general surgery in Palm Beach County has also joined Tenet Florida Physician Services.

Currently, Dr. Rodriguez is a clinical affiliate associate professor of surgery at the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine at Florida Atlantic University (FAU) in Boca Raton. Prior to joining TFPS, Dr. Rodriguez worked at Palm Beach Surgical, a general surgery practice in Boynton Beach. Dr. Rodriguez's experience also includes as Director, Bariatric Surgery Department and as Chair, Surgical Review Committee at Clinch Valley Medical Center located in Richland, VA.



**Dr. Mariano Faresi**



**Dr. Ariel Rodriguez Pimentel**

## Holy Cross Health Physician Receives 2021 Excellence Award

John P. Cunha, D.O., FACOEP, Vice Chief of the Emergency Department of Holy Cross Health, was presented with the 2021 Physician Excellence Award at this year's First There First Care Conference.

The Physician Excellence Award is presented to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to Emergency Medical Services in Florida. Dr. Cunha was instrumental in helping local EMS get access to COVID-19 testing, treatment and vaccinations.

Board-certified in Emergency Medicine, Dr. Cunha earned his B.S. in Biology from Rutgers University and a D.O. from the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences in Kansas City, MO. He completed residency training in emergency medicine at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center in Newark, NJ.



**Dr. John P. Cunha**

## Joshua Lenchus, DO, Named Interim Chief Medical Officer, Broward Health

Joshua Lenchus, D.O., has been named interim chief medical officer of Broward Health. He stepped into the role following the recent retirement of former Executive Vice President, Chief Medical Officer Andrew Ta, M.D. At this time, Dr. Lenchus will also continue to act as Chief Medical Officer of Broward Health Medical Center.

With more than 15 years of physician leadership experience, Dr. Lenchus joined Broward Health in September 2018 as chief medical officer of Broward Health Medical Center. Prior to joining Broward Health, Dr. Lenchus served in several physician leadership positions, including chief of staff and internal medicine/hospitalist at Jackson Memorial Hospital. He has also served at Miami Veterans Affairs Medical Center, University of Miami Health System, and Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Dr. Lenchus earned his Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy from the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida, and his Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine from Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale.



**Dr. Joshua Lenchus**

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# How COVID-19 Is Increasing Consolidation in Healthcare and Propelling Digital Transformation

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, many U.S. healthcare providers are emerging in a weakened state financially. As pandemic-related federal grants and subsidies sunset, what strategies must providers take to ensure they're financially secure going forward? Some options include M&A, partnerships and even restructuring for those hit hardest. However, M&A and partnerships not only offer a chance to be financially healthy, but they also present healthcare providers with an opportunity to accelerate and scale digital transformation plans, including telehealth capabilities.

## COVID-19, Challenges and Opportunities Within the U.S. Healthcare System

COVID-19 presented a new risk that organizations hadn't considered before. While the pandemic is now under control, future variants or new zoonotic diseases could present a risk that providers are unprepared for. Some organizations may evaluate their risk and conclude they need to consolidate to be better prepared for future challenges. According to BDO's 2021 Healthcare CFO survey, 28% of healthcare CFOs are considering a merger in 2021, 24% are considering a joint venture, 20% are considering selling to another organization and 17% are considering acquiring another organization.



BY CHAD BESTE AND VIN PHAN

The pandemic also forced healthcare providers to adopt telehealth overnight as in many cases, patients could no longer come in for a doctor's visit or therapy session. Payers like Medicare and insurance companies also significantly loosened the rules for telemedicine during the pandemic. And while some of these payments will remain, it's likely new regulations around patient data, privacy and guidelines around how and when to use telehealth will be put in place. According to BDO's 2021 Healthcare Digital Transformation Survey, 75% of healthcare organizations reported they were investing in telemedicine to improve the patient experience in 2020—that's up from just 42% in 2019. Many of these organizations are looking to find the right vendor to improve their capabilities, but some may be interested in acquiring or partnering with a telehealth start up.

## How Consolidation Could Help Drive Digital Transformation

The pandemic forced many healthcare organizations to see the need for telehealth, and many are now looking to enhance their current capabilities. The timing for this self-identified "need" couldn't be better as there are a substantial number of private equity related groups that have raised massive amounts that now need to be invested. Additionally, the increased "supply" of money is actually greater than the "demand" for funds which is leading toward escalating valuations, which in turn draws additional interest thereby creating an ideal environment for organizations to help drive their digital strategies in 2021 and beyond.

Beyond telemedicine, consolidation can also help healthcare organizations develop their data analytics maturity and AI capabilities. Healthcare organizations are lagging when it comes to data analytics, as currently, only 24% of organizations use advanced analytics. While some healthcare organizations are still uncertain about how data analytics can drive success, in the coming years, we're likely to see more interest in consolidation and partnerships to advance data analytics, across both the clinical and financial side of organizations.

Finally, AI has garnered significant interest from the healthcare industry in recent years. While current AI opportunities are more centered in revenue cycle optimization, the long-term benefit will

be how AI transforms clinical care and patient outcomes. As the technology continues to demonstrate its ability to transform care, growing interest and a necessity to adopt will propel consolidation in order to deploy AI at scale.

## Now Is the Time to Partner or Pursue M&A

With telemedicine, AI and data analytics poised to transform healthcare in the coming years, now is the time for healthcare organizations to look for the right partner, acquisition, or buyer to help them advance and scale their digital transformation. With vast amounts of cash available at PE firms, buyers are eager. And as the pandemic subsides organizations will need to reduce risk, so they're prepared for future events, while also advancing and scaling telehealth, as patients, payers and regulators look to use this care model to reduce costs and improve patient outcomes.

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## A message from our President

## So, You Thought You Didn't Need to Be Vaccinated Against COVID-19!

How selfish, how foolish. As of this writing, COVID-19 positivity rates have almost doubled over the last couple of weeks. Single day positivity in one of our counties was at 11 percent! Ninety plus percent of the current COVID-19 hospital admission are unvaccinated. Why?

As it was for measles, mumps, and polio, vaccinations have proven to be extremely effective in minimizing the pain, suffering, and death associated with these diseases. So, why is COVID-19 any different? Let me save you time, there is no good reason!

In a recent statement by the American Hospital Association, they lay out very clearly what our message should be to people that have failed to get vaccinated. They are:

- COVID-19 vaccinations are safe.
- COVID-19 vaccinations are effective at reducing both the risk of becoming infected and spreading the infection to others.
- COVID-19 has a significant risk of transmission both before the onset of symptoms and in the absence of symptoms. These risks are substantially higher among unvaccinated individuals.
- Among unvaccinated individuals, COVID-19 infections pose a substantial risk of severe illness and death and may lead to long-term adverse impacts to health. These risks are higher among those individuals with certain underlying health conditions, like many patients in hospitals or who are seen in hospital-based ambulatory settings.

Some sobering information. Little more than half of healthcare workers work-

ing in hospitals are vaccinated. Less than half of the staff working at skilled nursing facilities are vaccinated. So, in the face of these new COVID-19 variants, how are we to stop the spread of the infections? The answer is that we need to get more people vaccinated. You need to be a better neighbor.

In the last month in Broward County, we have gone from an average number of cases of 139 (7-day average) to the most recent being 547! Almost a fourfold increase. Statewide, for the period 7/09/21 – 7/15/21, 45,604 cases with a positivity rate of 11.5%. Wake up! The excuses we have heard up to now are bogus, the vaccine is safe and, as a community, we need to drive towards higher vaccination levels. Even in the counties having higher vaccine compliance, we are seeing surges in the number of COVID-19 infections of, mostly, the unvaccinated. Do you want things to get back to normal, get vaccinated.

This is not a hoax; you could possibly die without a vaccination. Even worse, you might be the cause of someone else dying, young and old, because they weren't as lucky as you were. For once, think not only about yourself, but others!



Jaime Caldwell

# Senior Drivers Needed for Memory and Driving Study

## Research to Advance Real World Knowledge for Driving Safety

BY BARBARA R. FALLON

Researchers at Florida Atlantic University (FAU) are currently recruiting 750 drivers over 65 years old to enroll in a 3-year confidential study of memory and driving behaviors. Participants will have an initial baseline cognitive function screening and driving behavior profile established and then normal driving patterns will be tracked by inconspicuous in-vehicle sensors and evaluated every three months for three years (13 data points) to correlate thinking, memory, and judgement with driving behavior.

According to Project Coordinator, Laurie Martinez, PhD, MSN, MBA, RN, a certificate of confidentiality certifies that only the research team has access to the results and that personal data cannot be released to law enforcement, insurance companies, department of motor vehicles or family members unless authorized by the individual participants.

There is no cost to senior participants who must have a valid driver's license, lease or own a car, and speak English or Spanish. It will require regular meetings with researchers (over three years) to collect the data and participant input. Seniors will receive up to \$350 in gift cards from Publix, Walmart and Amazon for their time and opinion of in-vehicle sensor satisfaction. They can opt to receive annual feedback on their cognitive screening or leave the study at any time.

This cutting-edge research, funded by a \$5.3 million National Institute on Aging of

the National Institutes of Health grant, will support experts from FAU's Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing, collaborating with the College of Engineering and Computer Science and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science to merge healthcare and technology in a study of senior memory and driving behaviors. The study is designed to formulate a low cost early warning system of mild cognitive changes and their impact on driving by monitoring attention, orientation and judgement during normal driving.

The In-vehicle Sensors to Detect Cognitive Change in Older Drivers project is a 5-year longitudinal study that will sync data collected through inconspicuous cameras and GPS modems that sense and record motion and orientation detection, vision, driver eye movements, and driving scene awareness. Researchers will track and record driving behaviors such as travel patterns to account for miles driven during the day and night as well as number of trips; abnormal driving such as getting lost, losing focus, and near-collision events; reaction time when stopping at a stop sign or traffic light; and braking patterns; as well as ignoring traffic signals. Data will take into account weather and other factors that may influence driving



Dr. Laurie Martinez

patterns. Recorded changes in driver behavior will be compared with results from a panel of cognitive tests including global cognition, executive function, memory, visuospatial, visual attention, and language selected for both sensitivity to early subtle changes in cognition in order to set a baseline for driver risk according to age, sex and model of car.

"This groundbreaking study is designed to detect subtle changes that may indicate changes in cognition" Dr. Martinez said.

Lead investigator, Ruth Tappen, RN, EdD, FAAN, and co-lead David Newman, PhD, are heading the research effort with an interdisciplinary team of experts collaborating from the fields of engineering, computer science, neurology, psychology, cognitive testing, on-road driver testing, memory and wellness.

Dr. Tappen is an expert gerontologist with extensive experience in dementia research and a professor and Eminent Scholar in FAU's Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing; while Dr. Newman is an associate professor and a statistician in FAU's Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing.

Research indicates that 33% of drivers have some level of cognitive decline and 50% of those continue to drive after a diagnosis of dementia.

Concern for traffic safety and opportunity to detect early cognitive change in the health of older drivers, who represent a significant population, is the genesis of this groundbreaking research, according to Dr. Tappen. Algorithms will be developed

by the team to translate and sync driving behavior with indices of cognitive change that will contribute to real world applications. The end goal is to develop an early warning alert for older drivers with evidence-based data collection.

Dr. Newman noted that current screening and evaluation services are only able to test a small number of individuals with cognitive concerns, missing many who need to know if they require treatment. Now, researchers also will evaluate the end users' response to the novel driving sensors installed and propose improvements to increase acceptability by older drivers.

"Fully powered, long-term tests of an array of sensors to determine the ability to detect cognitive change, examine what changes are detected and which sensor data is most sensitive to these changes has the potential to advance current science and improve quality of public health and safety," he said.

Dean of FAU's College of Nursing Safiya George, PhD, agrees, "This research has the potential to shift the paradigm in cognitive evaluation of older adults to facilitate earlier detection of cognitive changes that have real-world application and impact public health and driving safety."

Regular sensor data downloads, cognitive screenings and participant input will be conducted and analyzed at FAU Boca Raton and Davie campuses over a 3-year period. The study is open to the community residents and can accommodate regular winter visitor schedules.

To join or ask questions, call Dr. Laurie Martinez at (845) 705-8982, email [driving-project@health.fau.edu](mailto:driving-project@health.fau.edu) or visit <https://nursing.fau.edu/research/grants/>.

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## When It Comes to Patient Care, Reconnect with Your Employees

For some, it is very difficult to imagine a time before COVID-19. Something that can make it easier is to think of specific places or circumstances. For example, think about when we did not all have to wear masks on a plane, being at a packed sporting event or concert, or meeting where socially distancing yourself from others was not top of mind. Sort of like John Lennon's song Imagine, it's easy if you try. What was your employee engagement like prior to the pandemic? What events, activities, meetings, or celebrations were a regular part of the routine to ensure your team felt included and appreciated? Once you can envision what it was like in January 2020, compare it to what is going on now. For obvious and important reasons, there was no way top employers could continue certain practices while at the same time keeping their people safe. It is also important to realize that many people who work for your organization now, did not a year and a half ago. Now that the pandemic is slowing and more and more people get vaccinated, what is your leadership team doing to reconnect with employees? Most companies are struggling to find and keep talent and there continues to be less and less loyalty to employers. What is even more concerning is that some are slow to react. If you were to ask, "what is the plan to reconnect with our team?" Would you get that deer in the headlights look in response? Ultimately employers of choice prior to the pandemic may not be the same ones in the months to come. It is a chance for all of us to take things to the next level when it comes to engaging with our teams. Take this opportunity to reconnect as we slowly get back to normal. Your employees and the patients they care for will greatly appreciate it! Be safe everyone.



BY JAY JUFFRE

Jay Juffre is Executive Vice President, ImageFIRST. For more information on ImageFIRST, call 1-800-932-7472 or visit [www.imagefirst.com](http://www.imagefirst.com).

## Connecting the Dots

As we emerge from a post-pandemic life, we have to learn from the past to make the most of our future, and there is no better way to embrace and promote the future than using video and the power of storytelling and messaging.

You can have everything you ever dreamed of, but if you're not healthy, then none of it matters. The advances in healthcare have been extraordinary. Procedures that would have kept someone in the hospital for days are now outpatient procedures. Big Pharma, while usually perceived as the enemy, continue to develop life-saving vaccines and medicines. The vaccine message is undoubtedly a forward-facing message and what most companies think of when they think of a video, but a video message is so much more than a commercial.

The importance of video messaging and storytelling is on full display with the urgent need to inform the public on the importance of getting vaccinated. If using the power of video is the choice to reach the public with an essential and life-saving message, you should also be able to imagine what the power of video can do for your hospital, healthcare group, or company.

- It's a resource for Human Resources to train and educate.
- It's a way to communicate effectively with internal departments.
- It's a way to document and memorialize a period.
- It's a way to capture life-changing moments.
- It's a way to show you are part of the community.
- It's a way to advertise and market.

By remembering our past, we can learn from our mistakes and use what we have learned for a better and healthier future. Video messaging and storytelling allows us to propagate the importance of healthcare and the importance of the healthcare industry.

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For more information, contact Chad Tingle at (305) 794-7201 or [chad@crownstreetfilms.com](mailto:chad@crownstreetfilms.com).



BY CHAD TINGLE

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## Let's Connect: ACHE of South Florida Spotlight



## ACHE of South Florida Member Spotlight:

### Stephen C. Quintyne, FACHE



Stephen C. Quintyne

As a pharmaceutical sales representative, Stephen C. Quintyne, FACHE, saw firsthand the difference that behavioral health professionals could make in the lives of patients. And while he worked in other areas of healthcare, including at a med-surg hospital, he felt drawn to try to help this underserved market.

"Though I originally stumbled into the behavioral health field when I was working in pharmaceutical sales visiting psychiatric facilities, prisons and long-term state hospitals, as I learned more about this niche I was attracted to what I saw as an area that had been lacking in resources for a long time," he explained. "I wanted to advocate for patients to get them the help that they needed."

"There is kind of an underdog feel to working in the behavioral health field because it has been so underserved, but now that more people are talking about the importance of behavioral health and it is getting more news coverage, I hope to see more funding and resources put toward these patients," he added.

After earning his undergraduate degree at the University of Florida and his MBA at the University of Miami, Quintyne worked in a variety of positions for Universal Health Services Inc. (UHS), including serving as the director of business development, COO and CEO at a number of their facilities, including The Vines Hospital in Ocala. It wasn't until he left UHS to take a job outside of behavioral health that he realized how much he missed it.

"When the opportunity came up to rejoin UHS as the CEO of Coral Shores Behavioral Health in December of last year, I couldn't pass it up," he explained, adding that while there are many challenges in behavioral health, there are opportunities as well.

"One of the biggest challenges is finding people who are passionate about our patient population; this field isn't for everyone," he explained. "It's gratifying when you can find people who love this job and can give them a good place to work where they have the resources they need."

He added that there's a huge opportunity for specialty programming in the behavioral health field, such as the children's intensive outpatient programs that will soon be offered at Coral Shores. He also hopes to see an increase in outpatient programming, which would benefit patients by providing opportunities for them to follow up with providers after they leave the hospital.

As a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE), Quintyne said that he is constantly looking at the 'big picture' in healthcare to assist him meeting the needs of this underserved population.

"I really enjoy the opportunities that ACHE provides in education, career development and networking, whether I'm meeting other behavioral health professionals or those in different areas of healthcare," he explained. "Managing a specialty hospital, it pulls me out of my zone to see what's going on in healthcare in general, and gives me a better grasp of the overall industry."

While the fellowship path was demanding, Quintyne said that it was important to his mission of making a difference in behavioral health.

"It shows my commitment to my profession, my career, to ACHE and to continuing education moving forward," he said.

## Eugene M. & Christine E. Lynn Cancer Institute Expands Services to Bethesda Hospital East in Boynton Beach

Eugene M. & Christine E. Lynn Cancer Institute at Boca Raton Regional Hospital has expanded its life-saving cancer diagnosis and treatment services in Palm Beach County to a new location at Bethesda Health City, part of Bethesda Hospital East. The facility is located at 10301 Hagen Ranch Road in Boynton Beach.

"We look forward to this partnership that will help us bring state-of-the-art comprehensive oncology care closer to our patients and community," says Nelson Lazo, CEO of Bethesda Hospital East and Bethesda Hospital West.

"When we work together, we can accomplish more," says Louise Morrell, M.D., medical director of Lynn Cancer Institute. "With every cancer diagnosis, our goal is to provide patients and their families with personalized care driven by the latest molecular testing and state-of-the-art technology, while maintaining an unsurpassed patient experience."

In addition to its main location at Boca Regional, Lynn Cancer Institute already operates two satellite facilities in Delray Beach — one on Military Trail and the other on Linton Boulevard. With increasing cancer specialization and the need for the latest technology, the expansion to Bethesda Hospital will greatly benefit patients.



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# Profiles IN LEADERSHIP

## WEST BOCA MEDICAL CENTER

### **Kim Cole** CFO

Kim Cole is the Chief Financial Officer for West Boca Medical Center, and has over 20 years of experience working in the healthcare industry as a licensed CPA. As CFO, Cole's responsibilities include financial planning, performance and financial management of the hospital. Cole worked for eight years at sister hospital Delray Medical Center where she worked as Director of Accounting before being appointed to the position of Controller. While at Delray Medical Center, Cole was responsible for assisting the CFO with the yearly budget, and coordinated as well as supervised the accounting department. Cole is a graduate of Florida State University. She double majored, earning her bachelor's in both accounting and finance.



## DELRAY MEDICAL CENTER

### **Maria Morales-Menendez** COO

Maria Morales-Menendez is the acting Chief Operating Officer for Delray Medical Center. In this role, Morales-Menendez manages the daily operations and oversees the development and implementation of long-range plans, goals and objectives for Delray Medical Center. Prior to her appointment as acting Chief Operating Officer, Morales-Menendez served as the Associate Administrator for the hospital. Her responsibilities included overseeing projects, business plans, and organizing events within the hospital and the Palm Beach Health Network. Morales-Menendez is a member of several professional groups, including the American College of Healthcare Executives and the Adam Smith Society. Morales-Menendez graduated from the University of Kentucky in Lexington, KY with a degree in biosystems engineering. She then went on to earn her Master's in Business Administration with a healthcare specialization from Baylor University in Waco, TX.



## PALM BEACH GARDENS MEDICAL CENTER

### **Kim Pacewicz** Administrative Director of Patient Care Services

Kim Pacewicz is the Administrative Director of Patient Care Services for Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center. In her role, Pacewicz oversees the critical care department, dialysis, PICC team and wound care. Pacewicz has been with Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center for seven years, and has over 20 years of experience in the healthcare industry. Prior to her time at Palm Beach Gardens, Pacewicz worked at a hospital in Stuart, Florida where she managed and developed a thoracic surgery practice along with a multidisciplinary health lung-screening program. Pacewicz had a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing from Malloy College in Rockville Centre, NY, and holds a Master's Degree from Seton Hall University in South Orange, NJ.



## ST. MARY'S MEDICAL CENTER

### **Dr. Patricia Sanderson** Physician Advisor

Dr. Patricia Sanderson is the physician advisor for St. Mary's Medical Center & Palm Beach Children's Hospital. In her role, she works with the clinical staff and acts as a liaison for the hospital administration to ensure regulatory compliance, and advises and helps the physicians on staff with their medical needs. Dr. Sanderson is board certified in internal medicine and has been practicing for over 20 years of in the medical field. Dr. Sanderson earned her undergraduate degree from Stetson University in DeLand, FL. She went on to graduate with her Master's degree from Drexel University in Philadelphia, PA. She attended medical school at the University of South Florida College of Medicine in Tampa, FL. Dr. Sanderson did her internship at the University of South Florida Health before going to St. Vincent Hospital in Worcester, MA for a residency in internal medicine.



## GOOD SAMARITAN MEDICAL CENTER

### **Naomi Seymour** Assistant Chief Nursing Officer

Naomi Seymour is the Assistant Chief Nursing Officer for Good Samaritan Medical Center. Seymour's responsibilities include assisting the CNO in executive-level management of resources, strategic planning, and development of policies and procedures that align with the mission and vision of the hospital. Seymour has been working in the nursing profession for over 20 years and has worked as a director in several areas of nursing including, critical care, oncology, pediatrics, and neonatal services. Prior to her time at Good Samaritan Medical Center, Seymour worked at Johnston-Willis Hospital in Richmond, Virginia as the Assistant Chief Nursing Officer. While there, Seymour oversaw special projects and initiatives in various nursing departments. She also worked to develop programs and improve the patients experience as well as enhance patient satisfaction. Seymour earned a bachelor's degree in Sociology from SUNY College at Oswego, in Oswego, NY, and then graduated from St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing in Syracuse, NY. She then received her Master's in Management from Keuka College in Keuka Park, NY. Seymour went on to graduate with a Masters in Nursing from the University of Phoenix. Seymour also graduated from an executive development program from Harvard Business Publishing.



## NORTH SHORE MEDICAL CENTER

### **Madison Workman** COO

Madison Workman is the Chief Operating Officer at North Shore Medical Center. In this role, Workman is responsible for the daily operations and implementation of strategic initiatives for the 337-bed acute care facility. He has led hospital wide initiatives to increase employee engagement, decrease costs and numerous equipment and infrastructure upgrades. He is also the Group Chief Operating Officer for the Tenet Miami-Dade Market consisting of five acute care facilities. In this role he leads the group to standardize best practices, drive operational efficiencies and reduce costs across the market. Workman served as the Chief Operating Officer at sister facility, Coral Gables Hospital where he led and completed various construction and operational projects such as a 12,600 square foot off-campus emergency department, new MRI unit, CT replacement, DaVinci robot acquisitions and over 60 patient room renovations to name a few. During his tenure, Coral Gables Hospital won the Tenet Circle of Excellence Award, a top recognition for service and quality from the hospital's parent company, and the hospital placed top 10 in the company for patient satisfaction.



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# Profiles IN LEADERSHIP

## Cover Story: Boulenger Looking Forward to Creating Own Legacy at Baptist Health South Florida

Continued from page 1

University in St. Louis.

"I went straight from Washington University to an administrative residency at South Miami Hospital, and have since held a succession of leadership roles, including CEO of Homestead Hospital and CEO of Baptist Hospital, as well as COO of Baptist Health," said Boulenger. "These positions provided me with experience in a number of settings from working in rural community hospitals to large tertiary hospitals to corporate positions."

While Keeley will continue advancing the health system's initiatives until his retirement, Boulenger has already taken on the day-to-day activities of the office.

"It's not uncommon to have this type of transition period, especially with a long-term, iconic leader like Brian," said Boulenger. "We've already worked together for 25 years in an extremely collaborative way; he has been a great mentor over the years."

As the new CEO, Boulenger plans to continue to advance the strategic initiatives of the health system.

"At the core, that means helping people in the community live the healthiest lives possible," he said. "To do that, we need to support our caregivers in innovative ways, which includes expanding into telemedicine and creating more value-based care opportunities by expanding our primary care services and our outpa-

tient footprint in the four counties that we serve.

"We have a very detailed strategic plan that we will continue to follow," added Boulenger, noting that as a senior executive, he had a hand in crafting the plan. "We are not going to miss a beat."

Baptist Health recently opened the new \$43.7 million Fishermen's Community Hospital in Marathon, and will soon open another hospital in Doral. The health system plans to open more access sites such as urgent care centers and ambulatory centers in the future.

"We're also looking to expand our institutes and hire more physicians, and we are recruiting the best and brightest from across the country to work at Baptist Health," said Boulenger. "Our goal is to make it so patients don't have to leave Miami for specialized care."

Boulenger looks forward to facing whatever challenges the future brings.

"Healthcare is always challenging; that's what makes it such a stimulating, rewarding industry in which to work," he said. "The cost of healthcare is always an issue, and we're doing our best to lower costs by providing value-based opportunities, leveraging technology and research, and improving access."

Like many other industries, healthcare is struggling to find an adequate number of skilled caregivers. "All healthcare organizations are dealing with projected shortages, which is why our focus is on supporting Baptist Health's 24,000

employees and 4,000 allied physicians—they are dedicated to our not-for-profit mission and are our number one strength."

"We have a tremendous team of compassionate, committed individuals who come together every day to care for each other and our community," he added.

Boulenger said that the aging population—or silver tsunami—is another concern as it will not only affect staffing but will cause a significant financial impact to hospitals' bottom lines.

"As more people face chronic illnesses and age into the Medicare Advantage ranks, it will challenge funding for hospitals; we rely on a certain measure of commercial insurance to keep our margin of excellence," he said.

"We also need to decide where and how much to spend on digital transformation," he added. "As we saw with the pandemic, people want different ways to connect with us for scheduling, to get test results and to access timely information. We have to modernize and improve these interactions."

As Boulenger transitions into the role of CEO, he said he is humbled and honored to be asked to serve the health system and the community in an expanded and more meaningful way.

"No one can replace Brian Keeley, and any leader would be foolish to try," he said. "My plan is to take the incredible culture he built and continue to work from it—and enhance it."

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## Cover Story: Melida Akiti of Memorial Healthcare System

Continued from page 1

taking care of the community.

"We're community minded, meaning that Memorial invests in the South Broward district, not only financially, but by getting involved as well," she says. "The staff are all volunteers in different organizations. We know the pulse of the district and we know their areas of need and inject ourselves in those areas of needs."

Akiti lived in Panama before migrating to the United States. In Panama, she served as a clerical administrative staff at the Panama Canal Department – a U.S. Army unit for the defense of the Panama Canal Zone. She earned her Master of Social Work from Barry University and her Master's Degree in Psychology at Saint Mary University. She did her clinical psychology rotations at Matías Hernández hospital Psiquiátrico de Panama.

"My short term goal is to be able to develop self-equity among all individuals, regardless of one's ability to pay and regardless of their ethnic composition or sexual orientation," she explains. "Self-equity means that people will be able to live longer because they have access to health insurance and, more than just insurance, quality health care. My long term goal is to be able to eventually come

to a place where we will not be talking anymore about health equity or even inequity in regard to obtaining health care."

The most important lesson that Akiti has learned in her career to date has been consistent since she first started working in healthcare.

"The most important lesson has been to listen to everyone," she says. "Everyone has a thought, feelings, and needs to be heard."

Akiti has always held a passion for helping vulnerable communities, and part of that passion expands to her work in identifying and breaking down the barriers of social determinants of health that often impede access to healthcare and other services. She's a board member for ChildNet, the nonprofit that protects abused, abandoned and neglected children in Broward and Palm Beach Counties, and Board Emeritus for Hispanic Unity of Florida, an organization that empowers immigrants and others to become self-sufficient, productive and civically engaged. In addition, she was appointed to the Broward County Homeless Continuum of Care Coalition.

Earlier this year, Akiti was named as

the new board chair of the Health Foundation of South Florida, the region's largest philanthropic organization focused on achieving health equity in historically disadvantaged communities. Akiti has served on the Health Foundation board since 2014.

"The foundation's goal is to ensure health equity among all individuals in Miami-Dade," she says. "We offer grants of over six to eight million dollars throughout the year to all health care related, not-for-profit, organizations in order to advance the health care of individuals. My goal as a board chair is to be able to dive into the community in the three surrounding counties and be able to work with their influencers. Many times, we tend to bring things to underserved communities instead of working with them for their advancement. What we plan to do this year is something called impact investment in which we plan to bring billions of dollars into these counties and work with their influencers to improve the health of the communities."

For more information, visit [www.mhs.net](http://www.mhs.net).





**Baby Ariana**, who was born with a heart defect



**Matthew**, who had shoulder surgery

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## Profiles IN LEADERSHIP

### MORSELIFE HEALTH SYSTEM

#### **Keith A. Myers** President and CEO

Keith Myers, President and CEO of MorseLife Health System, is an inspiring leader who encourages innovation and fresh thinking to navigate all health care environments. Based in West Palm Beach, MorseLife touches the lives of 3,600 seniors each day on its campus and in the community. With enthusiasm for the role of new technology in senior care, Myers eased the impact of isolation on seniors in MorseLife's care during months of pandemic-induced separation from family and friends by focusing on enhanced connectivity. Leading-edge technology at MorseLife now includes tele-health and three-dimensional virtual reality (VR), including a two-year study to measure the positive effects of VR. Touch-screen technology provides customized entertainment and activities. Residents get assistance arranging ZOOM and Facetime calls on their iPads with family and friends. With Myers' leadership, MorseLife was designated the only senior residence in Florida permitted to offer cannabinoids as an alternative to pharmaceuticals.



#### **Thomas Swope, MSW** Director of Operations

Thomas Swope, MSW, director of operations for MorseLife Hospice and Palliative Care, joined MorseLife Health Care in 2018 to oversee the launch of hospice and palliative care services. He directs the program of interdisciplinary teams consisting of physicians, advance practice nurses, pharmacists, registered nurses, social workers, home health aides and spiritual counselors who provide care to members of the MorseLife community on campus and throughout Palm Beach County. During his tenure, he has expanded services to include cannabinoid therapies as well as art, music and massage therapies to symptom and pain management, nutrition and exercise advice, physical/occupational/speech therapy and emotional, psychological and spiritual support. His expertise in the industry includes serving as district director of hospice operations in the Northeast and Midwest for Brookdale and as clinical program director for Life Care Hospice in Wooster, OH. Swope holds a master's degree focused on social work from The University of Akron.



### HOLY CROSS HOSPITAL

#### **José J. López, MD, MBA, FACEP** Chief Medical Officer

José J. López, M.D., MBA, FACEP, serves as chief medical officer for Holy Cross Health, where he leads all medical staff and healthcare professionals, including the Holy Cross Medical Group. He also oversees administrative and operational responsibilities for Holy Cross Health while building patient-centered, collaborative cultures that achieve results. Most recently, Dr. López served as Chief Executive Officer of Healthpoint Hospital in Abu Dhabi, where he positioned the hospital as a dominant provider in the local market serving nearly 1,700 patients daily. Previously he established and was Chief of the award-winning Emergency Medicine Institute at Cleveland Clinic in Abu Dhabi.

Fluent in English and Spanish, Dr. López is board-certified by the American College of Emergency Medicine and a member for the American College of Healthcare Executives and the American College of Emergency Physicians. Dr. López earned his M.D., completed his residency and was chief resident in emergency medicine at the University of Massachusetts. He received an MBA in Medical Services Management from Johns Hopkins University and holds a certificate in managing healthcare delivery from Harvard Business School. Dr. López graduated with a Bachelor of Science from Tufts University.





# Profiles IN LEADERSHIP

## BROWARD HEALTH CORAL SPRINGS

### Jared Smith CEO

Jared M. Smith serves as Chief Executive Officer of Broward Health Coral Springs. For the past 25 years Smith's career has been focused in healthcare, specializing in hospital operations, business development and finance. His focus and passion at Broward Health Coral Springs has been developing programs while enhancing quality, patient care and service. As a leader, Smith seeks to strengthen teams to deliver world-class programs and services.

Smith is proud of his team, particularly this past year as they stood at the forefront of the COVID-19 health crisis. "Being there for our patients, their families and our community during the most vulnerable of times is what Broward Health is about," said Smith. "I am proud of our team for delivering compassionate, high quality care to all we serve."

This is an exciting time for Broward Health Coral Springs as Smith and the team lead the way in transforming the hospital and delivering award-winning healthcare to the community. This year, the hospital was named "Best Hospital" for the third year in a row by readers of Our City Magazine in addition to being voted "Best ER" and "Best Women's Hospital." Readers from South Florida Family Life Magazine voted Broward Health Coral Springs as the "Best Maternity Hospital" and the City of Coral Springs presented the hospital with the "Commissioner's Award" in recognition of the hospital's commitment to the city's vitality and service.

"These achievements have had tremendous impact on our community, and on behalf of myself and our hospital team, we are humbled by these recognition as they represent our community's confidence in us," said Smith. "Over the past year, our hospital team has shown resilience when faced with very difficult times, and we are now stronger in the face of adversity."



## BROWARD HEALTH IMPERIAL POINT

### Alfredo Guevara CFO

Alfredo Guevara is the chief financial officer (CFO) at Broward Health Imperial Point, a 204-bed hospital that specializes in cardiovascular services, orthopedics, bariatric surgery, and emergency care. As the CFO of the Fort Lauderdale hospital, Guevara oversees and provides insight for its financial operations.

Guevara joined the financial world after a career in the United States Army, where he served as an armored crewman driving battle tanks. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the army's military intelligence corps and was deployed to Iraq. He was awarded the U.S. Army's Bronze Star for meritorious service in a combat in addition to other service medals.

Prior to joining Broward Health, Guevara was employed at Miami Children's Hospital, now called Nicklaus Children's Hospital, where he served as director of finance and strategic planning. He also worked at Jackson Health before joining Broward Health's Broward Health Physician Group.

Guevara takes pride in using finances to enhance patient satisfaction.

Guevara has a bachelor's degree in finance from Florida International University, where he also minored in accounting and military leadership. In his free time, he enjoys outdoor activities such as sailing with Team Paradise. The South Florida organization provides sailing education and opportunities to U.S. veterans and those in underserved communities.



## BROWARD HEALTH NORTH

### Alice Taylor CEO

As a former nurse who worked her way up the administrative ranks at various healthcare systems across the country, Alice Taylor is chief executive officer of Broward Health North, where she directs the overall administration of the 409-bed hospital in Deerfield Beach. The large medical center provides a full continuum of care and houses highly specialized services, such as a comprehensive stroke center and a level II trauma center.

Taylor began her career as a staff nurse at Medical College of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, after which she transitioned to the next phase of her career as manager of the emergency department at Sacred Heart Hospital in Norristown, PA. Since then, Taylor has continued in leadership positions.

She served as the chief operating officer of Broward Health Medical Center and Salah Foundation Children's Hospital, as well as the CEO at Schneider Regional Medical Center (SRMC) in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. Following her tenure in St. Thomas, Taylor returned to Broward Health to serve as CEO of Broward Health Imperial Point for five year before moving on to Broward Health North.

Taylor holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Holy Family College in Philadelphia; she also has a Master of Science in Nursing and an MBA from Widener University in Pennsylvania. Taylor is a proud mother to her daughter, Julie, who is an attorney in Philadelphia and her son, Tim, who is a general surgeon/trauma surgeon at the United States Naval Medical Center in Portsmouth and Norfolk General Hospital, VA.



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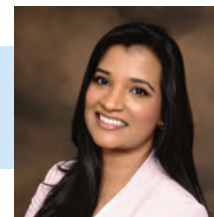
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By Appointment Only



# A New Approach to Stroke Prevention

Collaboration among physicians with differing expertise in a multi-disciplinary approach to care, and ensuring the optimal treatment for specific conditions, is one of the most gratifying aspects of medicine. That was certainly the case when a new procedure being done within Memorial Healthcare System brought together vascular and neurointerventional surgical teams to reduce a patient's risk of stroke.



BY SEAN O'DONNELL, MD, AND BRIJESH MEHTA, MD

## Probable Cause

Strokes are both cardiovascular and neurological incidents, occurring when the blood supply from the heart to the brain is interrupted or reduced. This deprives the brain of oxygen and nutrients and causes cells to die. Stroke is the 5th leading cause of death in the U.S. and more than 15 million people worldwide are affected by strokes each year, with many passing away or becoming permanently disabled.

While there are several potential causes for a stroke, it's estimated that nearly a third are brought on by carotid artery disease, a buildup of plaque in one or both of the arteries in the neck that can affect the flow of blood to the brain. When portions of plaque from a diseased carotid artery travels to a small artery in the brain, blood flow is interrupted and a stroke occurs.

## Latest Technology

"TCAR," short for TransCarotid Artery Revascularization, is an option for patients with severe plaque buildup that are beyond the point where medication or lifestyle changes will help. In these situations, where the risk of stroke is significant, the traditional approach would be carotid endarterectomy (CEA) surgery, an open surgical procedure to unblock arteries.

Some patients, however, may not be candidates for this surgery, either because of age, anatomic issues, heart disease, or other comorbidities. Additionally, as with any invasive procedure, the patient's recovery period is longer and more arduous than those whose repairs are done with less invasive methods.

TCAR, a procedure pioneered by Silk

Road Medical, which Memorial recently became the first in Broward County to perform, also involves direct access to the carotid artery, but through a much smaller incision at the base of the neck, just above the clavicle.

During the procedure, a tube inserted into the artery is connected to a system that temporarily reverses blood flow, directing it away from the brain and keeping dangerous plaque debris from flowing in that direction.

While the brain still receives blood through other arteries, surgeons filter the blood from the carotid artery and implant a stent to open the narrowed artery and prevent future strokes. Blood is returned from a tube connected to the carotid artery, passes through a filter, and returns from the other end of the tube into a vein in the groin, with the normal direction of flow resumed following the procedure.

When compared to CEA, there is less stress on the heart and the risk of the patient having a stroke or heart attack during the process is significantly decreased.

## First Patient

Following a review of clinical information and imaging studies by vascular and neurointerventional teams, we performed our first TCAR procedure on Reynold, an 81-year-old man with advanced coronary disease. He had an

almost completely blocked carotid artery and was somewhat fortunate to have not already had a stroke by the time he came to the Memorial Cardiac & Vascular Institute. Because of his age and a recent bout with COVID-19, he was not a realistic candidate for CEA.

Following the procedure, the patient spent just one night at the hospital for observation and was walking immediately after. He reported feeling "like a new man" and is now taking nothing stronger than aspirin as a blood thinner and a cholesterol-lowering medication to help prevent future issues.

While CEA is recognized as a safe, effective surgery, it's still a fairly major operation that takes time and usually requires general anesthesia. We've found TCAR to be an important, new option in the fight against strokes that is particularly suited for patients like Reynold that are at higher risk of complications from the traditional treatment of carotid artery disease.

*Dr. Sean O'Donnell is a vascular surgeon and the medical director of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery at Memorial Cardiac & Vascular Institute. Dr. Brijesh Mehta is a neurointerventional surgeon and medical director of the Comprehensive Stroke Program and Neurointerventional Surgery at Memorial Neuroscience Institute. For more information about Memorial Healthcare System, visit [www.mhs.net](http://www.mhs.net).*

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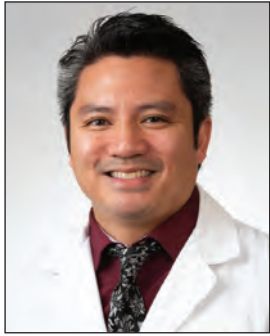
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# Signs of Cardiac Distress and Heat Stroke in Student Athletes

Every few weeks in the news there's another terrifying incident of a student athlete losing consciousness on the field, leaving parents and physicians wondering what underlying health condition they have. These incidents can lead to permanent injury and even death, but many of them are preventable. As athletes start to take to the field again this coming school year, parents can play an active role in injury prevention.



BY LEVI NOVERO, MD

life saving devices ahead of time.

In addition, parents can investigate their own family history of heart conditions to know their student athlete's risk for developing one on the field. Consider whether anyone in the family tree has had an unexpected death before age 50, or a history of other heart problems, such as a heart attack at a younger age as well. Talk to multiple generations, including grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other children to identify if there is a family history. If so, bring up these cases with your pediatrician or heart specialist to figure out the safest way for your student athlete to proceed through their sports career. Non-athletes may also have difficult-to-spot symptoms if they are not regularly asserting themselves.

## Symptoms and signs that serve as an alert

Sometimes an athlete's medical incident on the field was the result of an untreated heart condition. In certain cases, these conditions have signs and symptoms coaches and parents can watch for (and tragically, sometimes not). In particular, coaches should alert the parents to any of the following symptoms, and parents should promptly report these symptoms to the pediatrician:

- Chest pain
- New-onset fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Lack of stamina
- Heart palpitations/racing heart
- Passing out or syncope
- Feeling dizzy
- High blood pressure
- Heart murmur

Don't wait to see how any of these symptoms progress, but instead make an appointment with the pediatrician and simply say, "I'm concerned about Johnny's heart, because when he plays, he is short of breath." Don't be shy to ask for a cardiac referral.

## Preventing tragedies that had no signs or symptoms

The toughest cases are those where there were missed or no warning signs. For example, heart conditions can manifest without warning, and the first major incident is the first time parents or the athlete knew there was a problem. This type of incident is what led to the deployment and widespread training of school personnel in defibrillators. Know your school and sports programs' policy and access to these

life saving devices ahead of time.

## And don't forget about the need to hydrate

In July, a Florida law took effect that requires public and private schools to have defibrillators, but also cold immersion tubs or other means of quickly lowering the body temperature for any student athlete going through heat stress. Verify that your program has personnel that knows how to recognize the signs and symptoms of heat stress, but also be proactive in ensuring your child is staying well-hydrated and cool enough in the hot summer months.

Some common signs of heat stroke, which can be serious, include:

- Headache or dizziness
- Excessive sweating and pale skin
- Fast breathing or pulse
- Extreme thirst
- Confusion
- High body temperature

Take immediate action to hydrate, cool, and calm your child and follow up with your pediatrician promptly.

Through each of these actions, parents can ensure the best possible outcome medically for your child to get back on the field safely.

*Dr. Levi Novero is a Pediatric Cardiologist at KIDZ Medical Services in Naples, Florida.*

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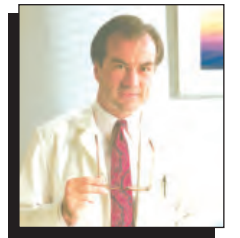


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# Cover Story: DCMA President Installed

Continued from page 1

“Through educational forums and opportunities to participate, I hope to involve our membership - from medical students and residents to faculty and practicing physicians - in an advocacy role in shaping our futures. I also hope we can infuse the philosophy that it is OK to seek help. Most physicians are naturally drawn to helping others and we need to recognize when to ask for help for ourselves when stress impacts either our professional or personal lives,” he said, “as evidenced in this pandemic year, or during severe weather events or unexpected disasters which impact our health system.”

Dr. Suarez also plans to sponsor more organized social interactions - events which can create and reinforce a culture of inclusivity and support for each other to create a healthy workplace for doctors and patients.

“Many doctors work in their ‘silo specialties’ and become isolated. By sharing information in professional and family-friendly activities we gain a more comprehensive view of our role in the health care environment and how we can positively impact each other and our future,” he explained.

Additionally, he noted that the content enriched quarterly DCMA peer reviewed publication, Miami Medical Journal is a valuable communications arm to share research and case studies as well as high-

light the individual achievements of members and the organizational impact DCMA provides the Miami Dade community. For example, during the pandemic, DCMA was involved in procuring quantities of PPE not only for physicians but also for their families and community members; promoting information regarding vaccine safety and availability; and working with local government to provide vaccinations. “The DCMA was the only area medical association who recognized that safety of our doctors’ families was also at risk and provided masks as a preventative measure,” he said

During the pandemic turbulence, DCMA officials were invited as trusted, knowledgeable experts to engage in conversations with community organizations and businesses, journalists, and government leaders to spread compelling information on fighting the pandemic answering questions and ensuring the public that vaccinations were a route to coming through the COVID-19 crisis.

Jose David Suarez, M.D., is a Diplomate for the American Board of Family Medicine, currently serving as Chief Medical Officer and Designated Institutional Official of the Family Medicine Residency Program at Keralty Hospital Miami, where he was integrally involved in creation of a mini-MBA program with Atlantis University. Dr. Suarez has focused on medical education over the

past 20 years, beginning with Beth Israel Medical Center. He previously served as faculty at Nova School of Medicine, Florida International University, and the University of Miami. He is a Delegate for the Florida Medical Association. Dr. Suarez graduated from Universidad Central del Este and trained at Christiana Care in Delaware. In Spring 2021 he was awarded the DCMA Quality Designation recognizing academic achievement, leadership, and community service to help patients gain understanding of medical quality in the Miami Dade area.

He worked at the University of Miami Health System at the first academic family medicine department in the U.S. with Dr. Lynn Carmichael (often referred to as the Father of Family Medicine). He enjoyed the opportunity of connecting with patients at many levels while caring for them. He credits his foundation in Family Practice Medicine for instilling enthusiastic and empathetic sensibilities embracing the value of social media, community outreach and his broad scope of goals to enhance the health care experience for physicians and their patients.

During the past 25 years, Suarez gained work experience in the Northeast, Southern California and Florida and believes the Dade County Medical Association has been a leader in inclusivity.

“I am proud that we have recognized the input of male and female medical pro-

fessionals with Haitian-American, Cuban-American, African American and European ancestry and ethnicity in our ranks. The expertise and diversity among our members better prepare us to practice in this mecca of academic medicine which cares for a melting pot of diverse cultures, races, religions and to deal with a range of socio-economic levels which contribute to health disparities, accessibility, and affordability,” he explained.

Dr Suarez pointed out that all DCMA officers are volunteering their time; however, physicians can help educate and influence opinions within hospital communities to enhance understanding of issues and funding for solutions. The medical community cannot exist in a vacuum and benefits from collaboration with hospital entities to encourage support of venues, policies and resources to promote quality health care delivery, professional development and advancement.

“Excellent medical care must be orchestrated. It won’t occur by chance and physicians are the best advocates for guiding healthcare reform. I am committed to support DCMA in innovative ways to help deliver quality health care and the healing ambiance in a physician/patient relationship,” he concluded.

For more information, visit [www.miamimimed.com](http://www.miamimimed.com), call (305) 324-8717 or email [dcma@miamimimed.com](mailto:dcma@miamimimed.com).

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Source: Journal of Clinical Periodontology

Ivan E. Vega, D.D.S.

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## Traumatology – Impacting People and Education

Exposure to traumatic events is not rare and has been consistently found in epidemiological studies. The World Mental Health Surveys of adults were carried out among nearly 70,000 participants from 24 countries ranging in economic status from low to high (Eur J Psychotraumatol (2017) 8(5): This data showed that at some time in their life 70.4% of the respondents had experienced at least one type of a traumatic event.

The literature informs us that adults and particularly children who sustain a traumatic physical injury or a hospitalization can expect to experience a range of mental health problems related to the hospitalization or the injury. Subsequently, due to the trauma they may experience changes in physical health and functioning occur (Injury, Nov.2013, Vol.44, Is,11, pgs.1383-1390.)

Forty-one research papers were reviewed on the relationship between mental health and traumatic physical injury. The studies, subsequently showed that, “post- traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety were frequent sequelae associated with traumatic physical injury.” (Injury,2013). It appears from the review, that these mental health symptoms were inconsistently, and poorly identified and treated, and screening for this symptomology is not routine



BY DR. THOMAS CHRISTIANSEN  
AND DR. SHERRIE RAZ

practice during the hospital admission process (<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/14470349/2014/23/1>).

Therefore, it is not surprising that due to, physical trauma, hospital trauma, childhood trauma, the COVID pandemic, etc., and the mental health sequelae that come with the array of traumatic events happening in our world today, that Trauma and Resilience trained Mental Health Counselors, and Social Workers, will be at premium. These front-line workers will be of the utmost importance for Physicians and their patients in the hospital setting.

South University is responding to the aforementioned mental health research on trauma and recent tragic events. In an

effort to educate and expose students to added details about the impact of traumatic events on our population, South University's Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Counseling program (CACREP-accredited) has integrated many aspects of traumatology into their curriculum. The purpose is to prepare emerging counselors with the tools to assist in providing service in response to a variety of traumatic events occurring across the globe. Whether it be tragic events like the Surfside Condominium

Collapse, or natural disasters such as hurricanes or earthquakes, our interns and alumni will be positioned to provide Psychological First Aid, and triage trauma cases for the benefit of victims and their families.

South University Professors, Dr. Thomas Christiansen and Dr. Sherrie Raz, in partnership with Jane Miller, of The Alliance for Kids, have devised a unique teaching program for Mental Health Counselors. South University's goal is for those who graduate to possess the designation of Field Traumatologist. South University, West Palm Beach, is proud to be part of this unique training initiative which potentially will offer a

competitive advantage to graduates and ultimately a major benefit to communities served.

In keeping with our program values of providing service, ethical practice, and evidenced based care, we are committed to fostering the well being of our world community.

For more information, visit <https://www.southuniversity.edu/degree-programs/counseling-and-psychology/clinical-mental-health-counseling-ma>. Dr. Thomas Christiansen is Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program Director. Dr. Sherrie Raz is Clinical Mental Health Counseling Adjunct Faculty Member and contributing author.

Programs, credential levels, technology, and scheduling options vary by school and are subject to change. Not all programs are available to residents of all U.S. states. South University, West Palm Beach, University Centre, 9801 Belvedere Rd., Royal Palm Beach, FL 33411. © 2021 South University. All rights reserved. The Clinical Mental Health Program located at South University, West Palm Beach, is fully accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

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## Serving You as You Have Served Us

The honorable men and women of the United States Armed Forces and their families have answered our country's call to serve with dedication, courage and sacrifice.

An estimated 22 million active duty service members and veterans are currently living in the United States. With the addition of their dependents and family members, that total is nearly 70 million. As a society, we have incurred a moral obligation to care for these individuals that have sacrificed so much with reverence, compassion, and true understanding. We know that this population has unique health concerns and are in need of competent, accessible and culturally sensitive primary and specialty care services.

In order to properly address the holistic needs for this population, we at Holy Cross Health are proud to give back to those who have given so much for us through our Military and Veterans Health Program (MilVet). Providers, clinicians and staff have undergone training to understand and correctly respond to the health concerns and challenges specific to this military community.

The goal of this program is to provide military service members, veterans and their families convenient access to high-quality, culturally sensitive, people-centered health care services that meet their specific needs.

It's vital that providers and staff are trained and educated in military and veterans health. The training and education program is designed to help providers understand and respond to the health concerns and challenges specific to the military community. In training, we review:

- understanding military culture, including the nuances of various military service branches;
- key illnesses, injuries and occupational exposures associated with military service and military deployments; as well as mental health disorders like PTSD, addiction, and sleep disturbances



BY ELYCE BISHOP,  
MSN, RN

- the effect of military service and deployments on family members; and
- how to provide competent and compassionate care for current and former female and LGBTQ service members

Active work for the Military and Veteran Program at Holy Cross Health has been underway since July 2019. The MilVet Program launched publicly in March of 2020, and as the

COVID-19 pandemic reached Florida, the focus of our work at Holy Cross changed drastically. We are proud to have the in-person cultural competency training underway again and have trained over 1,000 clinical and non-clinical colleagues.

We must take care of the 80-85% of veterans that do not get their care at the VA. Veterans want to be understood and communicated with effectively. It's more than just 'thank you for your service,' it is also delivering to them patient-centered care that keeps their sacrifice at top of mind. There are gaps in clinical care needs and as a community we need to step up to fill those gaps. That's what programs like MilVet accomplish.

Making sure the healthcare team is aware of the presence of a service member, veteran and/or family members during the patient registration process, the program has created and is supplying patient bracelets, patient room magnets, special badge clips and military branch flags/posters.

We owe this focused care to our veterans and their families who have selflessly sacrificed for our country. Holy Cross Health endeavors to be active and former service members trusted health partner for life.

*Elyce Bishop, MSN, RN is a proud Navy spouse, FirstChoice Float Pool Nurse Manager and MilVet Program Champion and Trainer at Holy Cross Health. She can be reached at (954) 776-3215 or [elyce.bishop@holy-cross.com](mailto:elyce.bishop@holy-cross.com).*

## Miami Dade College, Medical Campus Brings Affordable Education to the Healthcare Community

Nestled in the heart of the hospital district, Miami Dade College Medical Campus offers programs specializing in healthcare careers. The addition of the new state-of-the-art Center for Learning, Innovation and Simulation building provides students the opportunity to practice their skills with the evidence-based principles and clinical skills required in clinical environments in the real world. The building houses labor and delivery rooms, an operating room suite, 10 examination rooms, a simulated ambulance, and a home health apartment.



BY MARIE BERNARDIN

As one of the largest and most affordable colleges in the country, MDC ranks first in Florida in economic mobility, making it the easy choice for students to create lasting change in their lives. With its focus on ensuring advancement of our diverse community, the Medical Campus takes its "Students First" motto to heart. The Student Services division assists students from the application process straight through to graduation. As an MDC Shark, students have access to various support services such as tutoring, learning labs, scholarships, and career services.

Medical campus' award-winning faculty, record breaking programs, and dedicated staff provides an exceptional learning environment that is meant to challenge students and empower them to achieve their dreams. Whether choosing Nursing, Respiratory Care, Surgical Technology, Dental Hygiene, or one of the other 25 programs that MDC Medical Campus has to offer, it has the healthcare program for you.

*To learn about the programs offered at MDC Medical Campus, visit [mdc.edu/medical](http://mdc.edu/medical) or call (305) 237-4000. Marie Bernardin is Director, Student Services.*

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## Cover Story: University of Miami School of Nursing and Health Studies Unveils S.H.A.R.E.™

Continued from page 1

"S.H.A.R.E.™ is unique in that it immediately immerses users in a hospital setting, from the ambulance bay to the surgical suites to the home care apartment," adds Munro. "This holistic learning environment proved invaluable over the past year and a half, as other schools worldwide struggled to meet their students' clinical needs due to COVID-related hospital restrictions."

In the earliest days of the COVID-19 pandemic, S.H.A.R.E.™ directors and staff quickly adapted existing emergency protocols to the fast-changing pandemic safety guidelines, harnessing S.H.A.R.E.'s vast capacity as a hospital-style facility to keep academic, clinical, and research opportunities flowing safely and seamlessly throughout the unprecedented public health crisis.

"S.H.A.R.E.™ is advancing research and education by empowering learners, scientists, and teachers to master skills, design and test technologies, and transform health care across the hemisphere," says Munro. "It was important for us to distinguish the name beyond 'Simulation Hospital' because the bright minds we have bringing innovation to life here make this more than just a building."



S.H.A.R.E.™ is an action. It's what we do. It's what we are about.

"The acronym S.H.A.R.E.™ is appropriate on many levels," continues Munro. "We are conveying knowledge and resources, teaching interprofessional communication, and encouraging students to recognize commonalities in their patients and colleagues."

In the new visual identity for S.H.A.R.E.™, the graphic treatment of the letter "A" can be viewed as two roads coming together as one limitless path toward discovery. Indeed, says Dean Munro, "S.H.A.R.E.™ is a place where diverse knowledge and experiences converge to advance the future of health care. This amazing facility is the ideal environment for inspiring interdisciplinary collaboration. And now we have a brand that supports our mission."

You can follow @umiamishare on Facebook and LinkedIn. For more information, visit [share.sonhs.miami.edu](http://share.sonhs.miami.edu) or call (305) 284-2709.

## Cutting Edge Programs for the Health Professional: More to Celebrate

The University of Miami Health Care Executive MBA program is now ranked the number one Executive MBA in Health Care in the United States. As one of the very first business school-based health management programs in the country, the program proudly counts over 1,000 highly successful regional, national and global CEO's, vice presidents, physicians, nurse executives, research directors, attorneys, entrepreneurs, and other professionals amongst its alumni. The program is one of only a handful of programs in the U.S. that has achieved dual accreditation; accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and The Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME). Further, the Miami Herbert Business School program is a member of the highly prestigious Business School Alliance for Health Management (BAHM), a select group of global business school-based programs that have met certain strict quality criteria.

The University of Miami is now proud to announce that its Master's degree in Health Administration, MHA, has also achieved dual accreditation by AACSB and CAHME and joins the ranks of only a handful of universities nationally that have achieved dual accreditation. This program is focused on recent graduates and early career professionals from a variety of disciplines who are looking to enhance their knowledge and skill set in order to grow in the healthcare field.

Our research focused faculty, graduates from the very top Ph.D. programs in the field, are frequent contributors to the local, national, and global research journals and media, present their research all over the world and bring their cutting-edge research findings into the classroom. Guided by an Advisory Board made up of 25 regional, national and global health care leaders from the broad spectrum of the health care industry, our programs and our students are assured education and training that is truly cutting edge.

If additional information is desired on either of these two programs or other offerings of the Miami Herbert Business School, contact Kim Migoya, Director of Graduate Business Admissions and Recruitment, at [kmigoya@miami.edu](mailto:kmigoya@miami.edu) or (305) 284-2510.



BY STEVEN G. ULLMANN, PHD

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## Broward Health Expands Graduate Medical Education Program

Broward Health Medical Center, the county's first statutory teaching hospital, has been leading the health system's Graduate Medical Education program for nearly 25 years. As of July 1, Broward Health expanded its residency programs across all four of its hospitals and launched new training programs – general surgery, internal medicine, and emergency medicine at Broward Health North and psychiatry at Broward Health Imperial Point. Residents will continue to rotate in various specialties at Broward Health Medical Center and Broward Health Coral Springs.

"Broward Health has long recognized the predicted shortage of primary care and specializing physicians. We have taken proactive steps to help ensure that all those we serve have access to the highest quality physicians, many of whom are groomed through our expanding Graduate Medical Education program," said Shane Strum, president and CEO of Broward Health. "The incoming residents are key to the future of healthcare, and we are committed to providing world-class training to this accomplished group of physicians."

According to a study by the Association of American Medical Colleges, the United States could see a shortage of up to 139,000 physicians by 2033. Broward Health is addressing this significant workforce issue by steadily increasing the number of residency slots year over year. The health system is a conduit



for new physicians to train and ultimately practice in the region, mitigating shortages while having a positive economic impact for Broward County.

"The expansion of the Broward Health Graduate Medical Education program signifies the diversification in how our system serves our community as an academic center of excellence in training," said Patricia Rowe-King, M.D., graduate medical education faculty, pediatrics, Broward Health. "We are preparing our physicians to treat patients with tomorrow's medicine and training the next generation of caregivers in a diverse patient population, which is paramount in engaging future leaders of health care at an early stage."

This year, Broward Health welcomed an incoming class of 191 new medical residents who encompass 13 programs, including Internal Medicine, Emergency Medicine, Surgery, Dermatology, Cardiovascular Disease, Pediatrics, Family Medicine, Orthopaedics Surgery, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Pharmacy Hospitalists, Pharmacy Informatics, Transitional year Residency and Psychiatry.



# Around the Region... Around the Region... Around the Region...

## Boca Raton Regional Hospital Names Haroula Protopapadakis Norden, FACHE, as Chief Operating Officer

Haroula Protopapadakis Norden has been appointed Chief Operating Officer of Boca Raton Regional Hospital, part of Baptist Health South Florida.

Protopapadakis Norden is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives and served as the 2020 President of the South Florida chapter's board of directors. She comes to Boca Regional Hospital from Memorial Regional Hospital in Hollywood, where she worked for more than 15 years and most recently served as Associate Administrator.

Protopapadakis Norden earned her Master of Business Administration degree with a certificate in hospital administration from Nova Southeastern University in Davie. She also earned her Bachelor of Science at NSU.



**Haroula Protopapadakis Norden**

## Holy Cross Health Names President of Holy Cross Medical Group

James "Jim" Moffett has been named president of the Holy Cross Medical Group. Moffett also will serve on the Holy Cross Health Senior Leadership Team.

Most recently Moffett served as president and CEO of AdventHealth Medical Group's Central Florida Division, where he was previously chief operating officer. During his time there, Moffett launched a team-care model resulting in improved documentation, access, quality, patient, physician and staff satisfaction, as well as reached top quartile primary care performance in diabetes, hypertension and preventive care.

Moffett earned a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering from Geneva College in Pennsylvania and an MBA from the University of Scranton.



**James Moffett**

## Health Care District of Palm Beach County Names Chief Financial Officer, General Counsel and Chief Compliance and Privacy Officer

The Health Care District of Palm Beach County announces the promotion of Candice Abbott to Vice President and Chief Financial Officer and welcomes Bernabe A. Icaza as Vice President and General Counsel, as well as Heather Bokor as Vice President and Chief Compliance and Privacy Officer.

Abbott joined the safety net health care system earlier this year as the Vice President, Chief Clinical Integration Officer. Her prior leadership experience includes serving as the Regional Executive Director for Cleveland Clinic Florida Integrated Health Network and Assistant Vice President of Finance for Martin Health System.

Icaza specializes in health law with over 20 years of experience. Before joining the Health Care District, he was in private practice where he represented health systems, hospitals, academic medical centers and physician group practices in mergers, acquisitions, divestitures, joint ventures and complex business transactions. Prior to that, Icaza worked for UF Health Shands, Tenet Healthcare Corporation and Broward Health.

Bokor brings over 15 years of experience specializing in hospitals and health systems. Since 2019, she served as the interim Vice President of Compliance and Privacy and Chief Compliance and Privacy Officer for the University of Florida Health System. Bokor previously served as the Senior Director of Compliance Services and Director of Compliance for UF Health Hospitals. The South Florida native also served on the leadership teams of Tenet Healthcare's Good Samaritan Medical Center and West Boca Medical Center as the hospitals' Compliance and Privacy Officer.



**Candice Abbott**



**Bernabe A. Icaza**



**Heather Bokor**

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# WHAT'S NEW... WHAT'S NEW... WHAT'S NEW...

## Broward Health North's Rehabilitation Institute Marks 30 Years of Compassionate Care



(l-r) Cheri Silveria, Director of Rehab Services; Dr. Ariel Inocentes, Rehab Institute's Medical Director; Dr. Jeffrey Samuels, former Medical Director of Rehab Services; Susan Newton, hospital COO; and Dr. Keith Foster, hospital Chief Medical Officer

Broward Health North's Rehabilitation Institute, which first opened its doors in 1991, celebrated its 30th year of providing high-quality, comprehensive rehabilitative services to the community with an anniversary celebration. To commemorate the occasion, the hospital unveiled the rehab program's new name "Rehabilitation Institute" and wall signage on the unit.

Broward Health North Chief Medical Officer Keith Foster, M.D., kicked off the event by recognizing several of the longest-tenured team members, including Jeffrey Samuels, M.D., who was hired as the rehab program's first medical director, a position he held for over 20 years.

"We are successful in what we do because we have a special culture here at our hospital," said Dr. Samuels. "Everyone that works here is here because they are dedicated and strive to do everything they can to help our patients regain their physical skills."

Dr. Foster shared an inspirational message with the caregivers during the ceremony.

"Your commitment to put our patients first has been integral to the many, many positive outcomes that have come out of our Rehabilitation Department," said Dr. Foster. "Let's continue to innovate, elevate and transform lives."

Former trauma and rehabilitation patient Andres Perez-Molina was also in attendance along with his mother and girlfriend. He expressed his gratitude for the care he received last year after a spinal injury that left him paralyzed from the neck down, saying, "Thank you for being family to me; now I am family to you."

Perez-Molina has regained his motor skills and is now back to his active lifestyle.

## Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital Receives Highest Surgical Verification from the American College of Surgeons

What makes surgery at a pediatric hospital top-notch? According to the American College of Surgeons, it is a commitment to quality care, appropriately and highly trained staff, participation in cutting-edge research, and leadership from surgeons who review the services' surgical outcomes throughout the year. That commitment extends to meeting every child's individual surgical needs with a care environment that offers optimal pediatric resources. Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital personifies this commitment and was recently designated Level I Children's Surgery Verification from the American College of Surgeons (ACS) Children's Surgery Verification (CSV) Program. That is ACS's highest designation provided to a surgical center for its excellence in delivering care and continuous improvement to enhancing the structure, process and patient outcomes. As part of this designation, the hospital also participates in a national surgery registry where best practices are shared with other programs.

"Achieving Level I speaks to the caliber of the surgical team at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital and attests to our capability for meeting the most complex surgical needs of our pediatric community," said Jill Whitehouse, M.D., Vice-Chief, Pediatric General Surgery, Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital. "It also demonstrates our team's passion for excellence and our dedication to safety and quality that extends to every patient we touch."

Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital is one of only two in the state with Level I verification, and joins an elite list of 33 hospitals nationwide with this honor. The CSV program is based on other nationally recognized American College of Surgeons quality improvement programs that have measurably improved surgical quality and have prevented complications, reduced costs and saved lives. CSV standards ensure that children facing surgery receive care under a multidisciplinary program with quality improvement and safety processes, data collection, and appropriate resources provided to them as patients at the hospital.



Dr. Jill Whitehouse

## The Salah Foundation Awards \$500,000 Grant to Holy Cross Health

The Salah Foundation has generously granted \$500,000 for the renovation and expansion of Holy Cross Health's congestive heart failure (CHF) clinic. Capacity will be expanded to include the addition of patient exam rooms and support space for a patient/family consult area.

The goal of Holy Cross Health's Center for Cardiac Therapeutics is to build a CHF team around a mission of improving the care of CHF patients across the spectrum of their illness.

"We recognize congestive heart failure is a heterogeneous syndrome that requires ongoing care," said Dr. Joshua M. Larned, chief of medicine at Holy Cross and medical director of CHF services. "Compassion underlies our daily practice, and we are committed to improving the quality of life of our patients. With the generosity of The Salah Foundation, we will be able to enhance our patients' care and experience."



Dr. Joshua M. Larned

## St. Mary's Medical Center Is the First Hospital in Florida to Treat Stroke Patients with Novel TIGERTRIEVER™ Stroke Device

St. Mary's Medical Center is the first hospital in Florida to remove a blood clot in the brain using Rapid Medical's new TIGERTRIEVER device—the only clot removal tool that is adjustable inside the brain. TIGERTRIEVER enables neurointerventionalists to better remove blood clots and restore blood flow to the brain following a stroke. Dr. Ali Malek, medical director of the comprehensive stroke center at the hospital, performed the procedure.

"This new technology gives our team an even better opportunity to capture clots that form in the brain so we can treat someone having a stroke as quickly as possible," said Dr. Ali Malek. "Using the TIGERTRIEVER is a breakthrough in our community, and we look forward to providing the level of care needed for patients who come to our comprehensive stroke center."

TIGERTRIEVER is the first and only adjustable clot retriever, providing physicians with greater control and adaptability to varying patient anatomy and circumstances. While viewing the device under x-ray guidance, physicians can adjust it to match the vessel size and better capture the clot.



Dr. Ali Malek

## Holy Cross Health Opens AgeWell Center

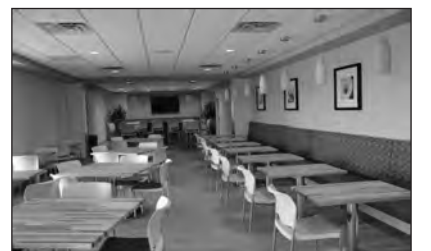
Holy Cross Health is helping the aging population in South Florida live their healthiest and most active lives with the opening of the new Holy Cross AgeWell Center based at the Holy Cross HealthPlex in Fort Lauderdale.

"Our comprehensive, collaborative center is focused on healthcare, well-being and social interaction, all of which are extremely important to everyone's mental health, regardless of your age," said Holy Cross Health President and CEO Mark Doyle. "Our new model of care for the AgeWell Center serves those who are Medicare eligible and will provide services needed to age successfully."

The AgeWell Center medical director provides clinical oversight, with a focus on preventive health, well health visits and chronic and new condition management. The Population Health Nurse is your go-to healthcare provider helping you reach your goals. A social worker provides a listening ear and is a community resource expert.

The patient concierge builds relationships with all members of the Holy Cross Health AgeWell Center, helping them and their families navigate through their visit and assistance with coordinating necessary appointments and transportation to and from the center.

"We are focused on providing the ultimate experience for each older adult, family member and visitor during their time at our facility," said AgeWell Center Physician Leader Dr. Jennifer Capezzuti. "The Milken Institute ranks the top cities for 'successful aging' with criteria that covers everything from general livability to healthcare to education to community engagement. In 2019, South Florida, covering Miami, Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach, ranked 74th in the list of the 100 Best Cities for Successful Aging. We need to do better. Our AgeWell Center is a tremendous step forward for the older population in our community."





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# HEALTHCARE CANNABISNEWS FLORIDA

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Visit us online at [www.cannabisnewsflorida.com](http://www.cannabisnewsflorida.com)



## Back Cover Story: CANNABIS SPOTLIGHT: Erik Range

Continued from page 32

the communities disproportionately impacted by prohibition.

### What field are you in within the cannabis space?

I wear a number of hats in this space, I began with my first company ART420 which is poised for a relaunch at the end of 2021 or early 2022. For select clients, I also provide consulting services through my boutique consulting firm RGW & Associates LLC. However, I am most known for my work as the Board Chairman for the largest minority non-profit in the space, Minorities 4 Medical Marijuana. And more recently, I became the founder and CEO of Legacy Farms Group LLC (DBA Hemp&fork) which is the first black-owned hemp food manufacturer and hemp heart brand in the country.

### How can people in Florida benefit from the company you represent?

Well, individuals interested in improving their life through a healthier diet can benefit from our hemp hearts which are a super food containing all the essential amino acids, omega 3 and omega 6, plant protein and so many other vital nutrients. Consumption of plant-based foods, which our hemp hearts are, has been on a steady incline for the last decade and showing no signs of slowing. So we believe Florida distributors and retail businesses can benefit economically by adding our products to their inventory and making them available to their customers.

### How did you get started within the cannabis industry?

I got my start back in 2015 after a vacation trip to Steamboat Springs, CO. On that trip I was exposed to what a legal adult use cannabis industry could look like. Once I returned home to Florida, I quickly began to study our laws and make connections to key individuals in the state and less than a month later my first cannabis company, ART420 LLC, was registered with the State of Florida.

### Are you personally a MJ card holder?

Until recently, I did not have a medical condition under Florida law that would warrant me becoming a patient. However, within the last month I have been speaking with my doctor about getting my card to assist in my treatment plan. So I think the next time I'm asked that question the answer will be, yes.

### Do you see Florida moving forward with recreational Marijuana/cannabis and how will that affect your business?

I do see it moving forward eventually. However, I don't anticipate any impact on my business because we deal with an entirely different part of the plant that can't get you high, only get you healthy. So essentially, Adult Use or Medical won't affect us. In fact, our products compliment consumption under either program because they introduce a more whole plant ideology into the equation.

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## Florida Medical Marijuana Physicians Group

**ZOOM Meetings** ▶ **Wednesday, August 11 & Wednesday, August 25**  
6:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

**A bimonthly Zoom meeting exclusively for Certified Medical Marijuana Physicians and MMTC Medical Directors in the State of Florida**

Purpose: to discuss current medical, legal and business issues facing the Medical Marijuana industry.

Registration in advance is required. **Registration is FREE**

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information to join the Zoom meeting.

For registration information, contact charles@cannabisnewsflorida.com



## Back Cover Story: Cresco Labs Gearing Up to Scale One Plant Dispensaries, Improve Operational Flow

*Continued from page 32*

takes about 20 to 30 minutes on average for shoppers to complete purchases. For those with a habitual purchasing cycle, we'd like to get that down to five or 10 minutes.

"Of course, those who are new to the experience and who want to spend more time getting counseled about the products will continue to receive the same level of commitment as before," he added.

This is Cresco Labs' first foray into the Florida market, making it the 10th state where it does business. They chose to acquire Bluma Wellness in an all-stock \$213 million transaction because of its high quality product and its commitment to its customers.

"Acquiring Bluma Wellness made perfect sense because of the quality of its One Plant product," said Rivera. "As many growers know, it's difficult to grow quality product in Florida; conditions are tough with the heat, storms and humidity. But the team at One Plant has developed a fantastic way to grow quality medical cannabis, and that was very intriguing."

"When we're able to recognize an emerging brand in the marketplace where shoppers go to find quality product, it's a big win for us," Rivera added, noting that the company also had impressive infrastructure at its farm in Indiantown and its eight dispensaries. "This enables us to come into the market and help scale the business in order to offer a great product to more people in the state."

Rivera adds that just as important as the product are the people who run and staff the company.

"We always evaluate the people who lead these operations and the staff who work there to ensure that we can have a successful partnership," he said. "Ultimately, local operators know how to run their businesses, how state compliance components work, and what shoppers need. We provide resources to scale the business and the know-how to do so, but they provide the 'secret sauce' with their people on the ground that ensures quality and the ability to succeed on both a local and scaled level."

Over the next seven to nine months, Cresco Labs plans to finish rebranding all of the One Plant dispensaries to the Sunnyside name, and to roll out Cresco Labs' brands into the stores.

"It will be a hybrid model; we will continue to sell the One Plant product, which is a fantastic, high-quality smokable flower, but we also plan to introduce new innovations like edibles, disposable pens and medicinal products through 2021-22," said Rivera. "This will give us an opportunity to deliver a fuller portfolio at different price points."

Cresco Labs' brands include Cresco, FloraCal Farms and



Mindy's Chef Led Artisanal Edibles.

The company also plans to increase from eight to 16 dispensaries across the state, hire staffing to serve these additional customers, and upgrade and build out Indiantown facilities.

"We will be upgrading Indiantown to become a world-renowned cannabis facility, just like we've done for our partners in Illinois and Pennsylvania," said Rivera.

"The hard work has just begun and it's going to be an exciting time over the next five or so months," he added. "We're super pumped to be here."

To learn more, visit Cresco Labs at [www.crescolabs.com](http://www.crescolabs.com).

## Trulieve Expands Patient Access to Medical Cannabis with New Winter Haven Location

Trulieve Cannabis Corp. announced the opening of a new Florida dispensary, the Company's 96th nationwide. The new 3,200 sq. ft. dispensary, located in Winter Haven, supports Trulieve's goal of ensuring medical cannabis patients across Florida have safe, reliable access to the medications they rely on. The dispensary expands access throughout Central Florida, joining nearby locations in Lakeland and Sebring.

In stores and online, patients will find Florida's largest selection of THC and CBD products in a variety of delivery methods, including edibles, smokable flower, concentrates, tinctures, topical creams, vaporizers, and more. Trulieve also offers home delivery statewide for patients and convenient in-store pickup at each of its 87 dispensaries in Florida.

To assist patients with ordering, Trulieve's entire catalog of products is available for online orders, with in-store pickup or statewide home delivery options available depending on patient preference. Additionally, Trulieve offers complimentary 30-minute virtual consultations with a Trulieve consultant to help navigate questions on products, devices, or review their doctor's recommendation. Appointments can be made on Trulieve's website and are open to all patients, whether starting their journey with medical cannabis or those with experience looking for alternative treatment options.

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## Ayr Wellness Opens New Florida Dispensary in Hollywood

Ayr Wellness Inc., a leading vertically integrated cannabis multi-state operator, announced the opening of Liberty Health Sciences Hollywood, the Company's 38th dispensary in Florida.

The dispensary is located at 2119-A Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood, FL. The 3,300 sq. ft. location sits on the main thoroughfare between I-95 and the Hollywood central business district. LHS Hollywood will become the first dispensary to open in the city of Hollywood, located on Florida's east coast between Fort Lauderdale and Miami with a population of over 150,000. The vibrant beach community is home to the Hollywood Beach Boardwalk, a diverse selection of restaurants and shops, and the ArtsPark at Young Circle. Until recently, the Hollywood City Council had prohibited MMJ dispensaries within its borders. The dispensary features a selection of flower products, in addition to the Company's newly launched Origen concentrates and Big Pete's Cookies.

Jonathan Sandelman, CEO of Ayr, said, "We continue to execute on our Florida plan, opening dispensaries in prime locations like the under-served community of Hollywood. We are enhancing our cultivation efforts to make us the largest cultivator of high-quality cannabis in the state and our updated product offerings, including a diversified strain selection and launch of Origen Extracts and Big Pete's Cookies, are positively improving the customer experience. We are excited to be the first dispensary to serve the patients of Hollywood and provide to them more convenient access to safe, high-quality medicine."

## Trulieve Announces Production License Approval in Georgia, Expands Southeast Hub

Trulieve Cannabis Corp. announced that the Georgia Access to Medical Cannabis Commission announced its intent to award Trulieve a Class 1 production license. This license will further solidify Trulieve's presence in the Southeastern United States and introduce its premium products in Georgia's nascent medical cannabis market.

"We are thrilled by the Georgia Access to Medical Cannabis Commission announcement of its intent to award Trulieve one of two Class 1 production licenses in the State of Georgia. This will expand our Southeast operations hub to our neighboring state, and we are excited to bring the benefits of Trulieve cannabis products to Georgia patients," said Kim Rivers, CEO of Trulieve. "As the largest cannabis company in Florida, built on providing the broadest patient access to medical marijuana in the state, we feel well-positioned to approach the Georgia market with the same commitment to quality products, patient access, and positive customer experience. We strive to invest in underserved communities, source local materials and labor wherever possible, and be a good neighbor and partner everywhere we operate, and this is what we intend to bring to the town of Adel and to Cook County. We thank all of the people and organizations that contributed to our success in this highly competitive process and will work to rapidly establish Georgia operations to ensure this life-changing alternative is quickly accessible for those who need it most."

Trulieve is one of two Class 1 provisional licensees in Georgia and will initially establish an indoor cultivation and manufacturing facility in Adel to produce low-THC oil products. Trulieve is committed to investing in the communities in which it operates and will further this commitment by working with well-regarded local businesses during construction and throughout operation. The resulting operation and its ancillary business partners are projected to generate hundreds of jobs for Cook County, Georgia and the surrounding area within a matter of years. Trulieve will also further medical cannabis research and education through a previously announced partnership with Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta.

## FLORIDA MMJ PHYSICIANS ALERT – EFFECTIVE 7-13-21

64B8-9.018 Mandatory Standardized Informed Consent for Medical Marijuana; Required Documentation for Comparable Medical Conditions; Required Documentation for Smokable Medical Marijuana.

(1) Pursuant to Section 381.986, F.S., the Board has approved form DH-MQA-5026 (rev. 03/21), entitled "Medical Marijuana Consent Form," which is hereby incorporated by reference and available from <http://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-13219>, or the Board's website at <http://www.flboardofmedicine.gov/forms/medical-marijuana-consent-form.pdf>, as the mandatory standardized informed consent form that a qualified physician must use each time the qualified physician issues a certification for medical marijuana to a patient he or she has diagnosed with at least one qualifying medical condition.

(2) Pursuant to Section 381.986, F.S., qualified physicians who issue physician certifications for patients with medical conditions of the same kind or class as or comparable to: cancer; epilepsy; glaucoma; positive status for human immunodeficiency virus; acquired immune deficiency syndrome; post-traumatic stress disorder; amyotrophic lateral sclerosis; Crohn's disease; Parkinson's disease; or multiple sclerosis, are required to submit form DOH-MQA-5027 (rev. 2/18), entitled "Documentation Required Under Section 381.986(4)(b), F.S.," which is hereby incorporated by reference and available from <http://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-09315>, or the Board's website at <http://www.flboardofmedicine.gov/forms/statutorily-required-documentation.pdf>. Said form must be submitted within 14 days after issuing the physician certification.

(3) Pursuant to Section 381.986(4)(c), F.S., qualified physicians who determine that smoking marijuana is an appropriate route of administration for a qualified patient, other than a patient diagnosed with a terminal condition, are required to submit form DH-MQA-5035 (11/20), entitled "Documentation Required Under Section 381.986(4)(c), F.S., Supporting the Determination that the Smoking of Medical Marijuana is an Appropriate Route of Administration," which is hereby incorporated by reference and available from <http://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-12774>, or the Board's website at <https://flboardofmedicine.gov/forms/statutorily-required-documentation-mm.pdf>.

Rulemaking Authority 381.986 FS. Law Implemented 381.986 FS. History—New 4-30-18, Amended 8-4-19, 4-18-21, 7-13-21.

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## Back Cover Story: Kairos: Offering Specialized Insurance for Cannabis Companies

*Continued from page 32*

to finished product. There are different levels of coverage available that can be adjusted to meet your needs.

It's also important to use a cannabis-specific carrier for product liability. Product liability insurance is available for both THC products as well as CBD and hemp products. This provides coverage for those consumers who have experienced unintended side effects and wish to take this up with the company. This insurance covers edible marijuana products, marijuana dispensing, tinctures, and more.

The mission of the company is to provide comprehensive insurance coverage and superior service to members of the cannabis community. As an independent agency with access to many carriers, Kairos Insurance Group's Cannabis Division can design a plan that fits any company's needs. Their goal is simple, she notes—to provide the best available coverage at the lowest cost so that companies can reinvest the savings in their business.

Westerbur is no stranger to the world of cannabis. A South Florida native, she got her start in the cannabis industry in Colorado when recreational cannabis was legalized. She quickly identified a need within the industry for experienced insurance professionals.

"At that time, medical carriers would not accept cannabis companies," she says. "We had to fight to get clients covered and get creative to take care of them. Now, it's a little bit easier with medical cannabis companies, but we still have an issue with disability insurance."

Westerbur, who moved back to South Florida nearly 18 months ago, was raised in the insurance agency, working at her mother's agency in Boca Raton, Florida, as a teenager before starting her own agency. Today, she is licensed for cannabis insurance in eight states.

Westerbur's lengthy experience with insurance for the cannabis industry gives her an advantage over the competition. As a result, she can often go above and beyond to secure policies for clients in a space where it is difficult to obtain the necessary insurance to operate.

"As an independent broker, I'm licensed with all the major carriers, so that means I'm not held captive. I can shop for the best rates and find the best solution for clients," she says. "We also understand the challenges that cannabis business owners face and specialize in solving those problems."

Her agency also has experience working with medical dispensaries, hemp farms, CBD stores, and vertically integrated cannabis businesses. In addition, they have experience providing payroll solutions to cannabis businesses with or without banking services.

"Our agents have years of experience working in the cannabis space and will make sure you have the best protection available for your business," she says.

*For more information, visit [cannainsurancepro.com](http://cannainsurancepro.com) or call (719) 331-1832.*

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## Back Cover Story: **CANNABIS PHYSICIAN SPOTLIGHT:** Bart Hershfield, MD

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cannabis medicine knowledge, or to educate patients who they certify about doses, frequency or means of administration. Having medical cannabis legal in Florida is a good start, but we can do better.

With the privilege of having medical cannabis in Florida comes responsibility for the certified patients, the dispensaries, and particularly for the qualified physicians. How is a patient to know that recreational doses are not appropriate for medical purposes if they haven't been educated? Dispensaries can help educate patients, and some have very knowledgeable staff. But as with physicians, dispensary employees are only required to have a knowledge of the legal requirements associated with Florida's medical marijuana law. There is no statutory requirement for clinical knowledge, which is why one young budtender instructed one of our patients not to inhale from a vape pen, because it could make her cough! As in every other field of medicine, isn't it ultimately the responsibility of the MMJ physician to ensure that patients are receiving appropriate and optimal treatment?

And can that be accomplished during a 10-minute initial certification visit, or during an assembly line certification event in a hotel banquet room? All of us know this is happening, because patients tell us their horror story experiences when they transfer to us for recertification. Putting profit before good patient care has never been acceptable in medicine, and it shouldn't be in cannabis medicine, either.

Working with like-minded medical cannabis physicians, I hope that cannabis medicine will evolve into the medical specialty that is needed to educate physicians, to partner with dispensaries and the Department of Health, and to advocate legislatively for patients, so that together we can help medical cannabis patients obtain the best results, at the least cost, and with the least side effects.

### **How did you get started within the cannabis industry?**

When I first heard about "medical marijuana" 25 years ago, I was skeptical, assuming it was just an excuse for people to smoke legally. And when I was told that it actually could reduce pain and anxiety, I assumed it was only because people smoked themselves stupid.

Years later, after multiple failed back surgeries and a decade of opioids which had escalated to 440 milligrams morphine equivalents per day, a family member asked about trying MMJ. She didn't have the benefit of a cannabis medicine specialist to guide her, but over time figured out a regimen which not only allowed her to decrease her opioids by 91%, but also resulted in regaining her energy. She felt like she got her life back. Another family member with military PTSD couldn't tolerate the side effects of the antidepressants and Xanax prescribed by the VA, turned to alcohol to self-medicate, and when that didn't work tried recreational doses of MJ. After being educated on medical doses, he has been using a small fraction of the cannabis he used before, with better results, and with a feeling of having regained control of his life.

Once I learned about the existence of the endocannabinoid system and understood the science of cannabis medicine, I became a true believer and advocate. At a time in my career throughout which I was an employed emergency medicine and urgent care physician, when I should have been thinking about retirement, we opened a medical cannabis practice so that we could "Pay it Forward"—help others as we have been helped. It is also professionally rewarding to be able to help people with a treatment that is so much safer and better tolerated than the prescription medications that are traditionally used.



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## Cannabis Spotlight



Erik Range

### Erik Range

Chairman of the Board  
Minorities For Medical Marijuana,  
Inc.

### What benefits do you see for patients throughout Florida within this space?

I think Florida patients benefit from access to a medical marijuana program. Although that program is still limited and flawed it provides greater access than some states currently have. And as the program matures, access has increased to include things like smokable flower and edibles. So while the program continues to be threatened I remain optimistic that we will continue to stave off those threats and increase access to more of the plant for more of the people. I believe we do that by creating more competition which ultimately impacts affordability and drives quality which is of most benefit to patients.

### What motivates you to be a part of the cannabis industry?

When I began in this industry, I saw the opportunity in two distinct lights. I saw it as the civil rights movement of our time, in which we have an opportunity to address the devastation and harm caused by the 'War on Drugs' in communities of color and communities of poverty (the latter not to be conflated with the former). I also see this industry as the 'Dot Com Boom' of our generation with the ability to offer social and economic mobility for individuals like myself, while at the same time repairing

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## Cresco Labs Gearing Up to Scale One Plant Dispensaries, Improve Operational Flow

BY VANESSA ORR

Customers visiting One Plant Florida cannabis dispensaries will soon notice a change in those locations as part of Cresco Labs' strategic plan to improve operations and the customer experience since acquiring Bluma Wellness Inc., the parent company of One Plant Florida.

In addition to rebranding the stores with Cresco Labs' Sunnyside brand, changes will include an expanded product portfolio, a more streamlined and user-friendly website, and the opportunity for those who are already familiar with products to have a faster shopping experience. What customers will not see is a change in the personalized, caring service they've come to expect.

"I like to say that it will stay the same, but be different in all the right ways," said Cris Rivera, Florida region president. "We want to keep the customer service component the same because it is already really strong. What we want to improve is the operational customer experience from beginning to end."

As one of the largest vertically integrated, multistate cannabis operators in the U.S., Chicago-based Cresco Labs has the tools to streamline One Plant's operations, similar to what they've already accomplished in more than 25 different operations in 10 states.

"Part of our strategic push is to make the e-commerce system one of the best in the industry," said Rivera. "We'll also be working through the operational flow; right now, it

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Cris Rivera

## Cannabis Physician Spotlight

Bart Hershfield, MD  
MEDICAL CANNABIS PHYSICIANS  
OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

### What benefits do you see for patients throughout Florida within this space?

Cannabis has minimal side effects compared to many prescription medications. Cannabis is also much safer—not only because it doesn't cause the potentially deadly respiratory depression caused by opioids and benzodiazepines, but it doesn't damage the stomach or kidneys like NSAIDs do. Most importantly, patients can control their dose and means of administration to obtain maximum symptom reduction at the lowest dose and cost, and with the least side effects.

### What motivates you to be a part of the cannabis industry?

Cannabis medicine is currently where Emergency Medicine was in the 1960's. There was a need, but it wasn't a recognized specialty yet, and often the least qualified and least experienced physicians who were moonlighting in "emergency rooms" were taking care of the most seriously ill and injured patients.

In Florida, a physician can have virtually no knowledge of cannabis medicine yet can become approved as a qualified physician to certify patients to use medical

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Dr. Bart Hershfield



Summer Westerbur

## Kairos: Offering Specialized Insurance for Cannabis Companies

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

Although legalization of cannabis has spread across the country, a major void remains in the industry: insurance for cannabis companies. If you have a cannabis dispensary, grow facility, or processing facility you're going to need insurance, whether it's health insurance for your employees or product liability insurance.

Summer Westerbur, founder of Kairos Insurance Group, expanded her company by establishing a Cannabis Division to address the unique challenges facing the cannabis industry's efforts to provide quality insurance options to its workers while operating in a changing legal and regulatory environment. Her company offers products tailored to the cannabis market, with comprehensive coverage and services designed for those industries' unique needs and risks—all at extremely competitive premiums.

"We specialize in employee benefits packages, which include health insurance, payroll, disability, life, vision, dental," she explains. "We also provide product liability, general liability, professional liability, and building insurance, and we can also cover companies for crop insurance for cannabis growth."

Crop insurance is important because it can protect your investment, from seed

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