



See pages 29-36

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Medical IT: Quality Health Care Concierge Expands to Help Ease COVID Testing

page 23

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Oncology



Dr. Stephen D. Nimer

Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center: Celebrating 30 Years of Research, Clinical Care and Community Engagement

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

Leading-edge research, excellent clinical care and robust community engagement are driving the success of Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Miami Health System.

"Our multidisciplinary cancer team is dedicated to bringing the latest diagnostic, treatment and support programs to our highly diverse community," says Dr. Stephen D. Nimer, director of Sylvester, South Florida's only National Cancer Institute (NCI) designated cancer center, which celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2022. "Sylvester's high-impact initiatives include cancer prevention and outreach, education and training, and support for patients, families and survivors."

As an academic cancer center, Sylvester's researchers work closely with clinicians to discover, develop, and deliver therapies targeted at specific cancers in order to achieve better outcomes, Dr.

Continued on page 20

Medical IT

iCare: An Advanced EHR Delivered in the Cloud

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

iCare was developed with a very simple premise—that today's healthcare organizations should focus on patient care, not software. iCare uses the latest technology and a proven clinical engine to provide users with the flexibility and ease of use they demand while providing a secure and affordable solution that is built for the future of healthcare.

"As an advanced electronic health record system, or EHR, iCare simplifies the experience for the user," says Michael W. Kesti, Chairman of the Government Relations Group, LLC, and an expert in the EHR Market.

Kesti has 40 years experience in healthcare and has been a senior advisor to EHR companies, including developing and implementing plans, conducting competitive analyses, and reviewing and overseeing the implementation of numerous EHR systems in hospitals and physician practices across the USA.

"iCare allows any user to maneuver around through the different aspects of the system without leaving one screen, without issues of coordination, and potentially losing data," he adds.

iCare provides a complete solution for clinical, billing and administrative functionality at a fraction of the cost of legacy software. The Enterprise Cloud Electronic Health Record (EHR) from iCare is a fresh alternative to legacy software. iCare software makes EHR implementation fast, intuitive and affordable and the result will be better patient care.

Continued on page 22



Michael W. Kesti

Medical IT



Jorge Rodriguez

Remote Patient Monitoring Transforming Healthcare Delivery

BY BARBARA R. FALLON

Q. Is there a doctor in the house?
A. Quite possibly, especially if physicians and community health care centers take telehealth to the next level through WITHmyDOC.

WITHmyDOC is a digital health company which virtually connects patients to their care teams, providing real-time data to control symptom and disease progression. Founded in 2018, WITHmyDOC uses a web-based intelligence platform for remote patient monitoring (RPM) which is transforming healthcare delivery.

Through the platform, partnering health systems, physician practices and healthcare organizations can provide remote patient monitoring that facilitates proactive intervention for chronic care management and telehealth visits.

According to Jorge Rodriguez, VP Sales and Marketing, who joined the company in pre-COVID 2020, the pandemic has played a role in accelerating improved acceptance of the value of remote patient monitoring.

While software engineers, digital experts and developers knew that capability and opportunity existed pre-COVID for connecting providers and patients outside of physician offices and health clinics; the practice of telehealth

Continued on page 24

Education

South University Expands with Two New Programs

BY LOIS THOMSON

South University had been seeking to expand the programming at its West Palm Beach campus for the past few years, and after much consideration, two new offerings are currently in place. The initial curriculum chosen was a Physician Assistant studies program, and the second was an Anesthesiologist Assistant (AA) program.

Robin Schugar, DHSc, PA-C, is program director for the Physician Assistant (PA) program, and she said, "The university is very particular about conducting extensive research in the areas where they decide to expand the programs; they see what the needs are to be sure the program can be successful and contribute in a positive way in the health care field." Dr. Thomas Nguyen, Dean of Academic Affairs and Retention, agreed that both the PA and AA programs were in high demand and would benefit the health care sector.

Dr. Schugar said *U.S. News & World Report* ranks physician assistant as the number one job for 2021, adding that because of the physician shortage, physician assistants are one of the top job opportunities to help spread coverage for the lack of physicians

Continued on page 27



Dr. Thomas Nguyen



Robin Schugar

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Publisher's Note

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Physician Integration - Whether It Be Clinical or Otherwise: Perhaps It Is Time to Focus on the Physicians



BY RICHARD KLOSS, TOM CURTIS AND PAUL DEMURO, PHD

One may wonder why some stress that for customers to come first, one must make their employees a priority; i.e., if you want happy customers, you need satisfied employees. All too often, physicians become employees of hospitals, companies backed by private equity sponsors or health plans, or part of large medical groups and/or Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs), and they are not truly integrated into the practice, and are not happy. Some even tell their physicians that everything will be the same in the new model.

Many organizations strive for true clinical integration, an active and ongoing program to evaluate and modify the practices of physicians in networks to facilitate a high degree of interdependence and cooperation of its physician members with the goals of improving care, reducing costs, and improving access to care. Conversely, others focus mainly on ensuring their physicians are engaged productive members of their organizations.

Healthcare is complicated. The time clinicians spend on non-patient care activities has significantly increased. Unfortunately, organizational growth often comes with less transparency, less time for physician input, and discussion of what works for the clinicians and what does not. All too often, the prevailing system smothers physicians because they are antithetical to building a cohesive medical group. These systems often include not only their compensation, but their workflow, and ways to treat their patients. Incentive payment systems may even be put in place without input of the physicians, and the appropriate recalibration over time to account for a physician's specific patient population.

WRVU requirements to keep physician compensation levels often take priority over the factors that drive clinical integration. WRVUs measure productivity, not the status of clinical integration. Key performance indicator (KPI) data collection and measuring systems monitoring clinical integration effectiveness should vary according to a health systems' unique characteristics. In general, the KPIs should measure the extent there is:

- Coordinated care across the continuum of healthcare services required including supporting education and social services.
- Patient and/or family involvement in care planning for all patients.
- Primary care availability demonstrated by the mix of inpatient to ambulatory visit volume.
- Team effectiveness and cross referral within the healthcare system.

- Common use of proven individualization of care pathways for patients with comorbidities.

- Performance measurement tools that measure clinical outcomes and those outcomes are tracked and shared across stakeholders.

Most healthcare systems have shared patient electronic charts across the care continuum. Physicians have the patient information at hand and historical data is there for subsequent analysis. What is often missing is management ensuring organizational goals and aims are agreed upon by the providers and care teams and dedicated resources are in alignment with desired outcomes.

When physicians become employees of large organizations, their quality of care and behavior become the subject of system-wide policies and the opportunity to resolve quality or behavioral issues informally is often lost. Rather than receiving collegial intervention, the employee of a hospital, health plan or large medical group may be subjected to a formal disciplinary process in which the decision-makers are system level administrators with no knowledge of the physician as an individual. Harsh outcomes may result from such reviews and the physician's employment may be jeopardized by events that were formerly resolved by a conversation.

We need to revive the recognition that an encounter involves a patient and a physician and for the former to be satisfied, it is important to be responsive to the needs and desires of the treating physician. We need to ensure that physicians understand the data and data analytics. Systems should be designed for the particular patient population served and the treating physician.

Clinicians must have the tools to improve care in a cost-effective manner, and incentives designed accordingly. It is not sufficient to merely have a fair market value consultant declare that the compensation of the physicians is at the 50th or 75th percentile. Physicians need to be involved in these processes, including when health plan contracts are negotiated.

Designer solutions need to be employed, and starting tomorrow is too late.

Richard Klass, President, 2CY, Inc., can be reached at rklass@2cy4u.com. Tom Curtis is a Partner at Nossaman LLP and Chair of the firm's Healthcare Practice Group. He can be reached at tcurtis@nossaman.com. Paul DeMuro, Ph.D., is Of Counsel with Nossaman LLP. He can be reached at pdemuro@nossaman.com.

The Holidays Can Be Difficult for Those Suffering from Addiction

The holidays can be stressful for all of us, but they can be particularly difficult for those suffering from addiction or mental health issues. The good news is that with the generosity of our community, House of Hope continues to give those men and women the tools to overcome addiction and pursue a life of quality. We reunite them with their families and restore their lives.

The stories are heartbreaking. Last February, after Anna tried to commit suicide, she went to jail, lost her job and her daughter was taken away. Life had been spiraling out of control after years of addiction, and she had hit rock bottom. Addiction, like most other diseases, progresses with time, and Anna hadn't realized how consuming and dark her situation had become. She was offered a choice to either go back to jail or try House of Hope. Her choice to come to House of Hope has made all the difference. With the help of consistent therapy, counselors and the community, Anna worked hard and was determined to change her perspective on life. Now she's building a new life with her daughter, has earned her GED and is on the way to culinary school.

Through our programs, we serve hundreds of people in Broward County, providing more than 25,000 hours of life altering therapy. Our work continues through the holidays, the ongoing pandemic, periods of quarantine and a myriad of other world events. We would not be successful with financial support from our donors. Our clients receive structure, therapy, case management and support, which are the keys to return to sobriety and restore lives.

You may know a loved one, friend or colleague like Anna. To help them or even you navigate the holidays, keep in mind the following:

Avoid big changes, despite the times: During the holidays make the effort to maintain a consistent routine, diet and exer-



BY SUE GLASSCOCK, MS, CFRE, CRRA

cise while avoiding alcohol and other substances will help keep your mental and physical wellness intact.

Identify and cut the triggers: Identifying the triggers that lead to unhealthy habits is the first step. Cut them or plan to reduce them, including intake of alcohol and other substances, overeating and anything that might trigger stress. Avoid discussions that elicit emotional responses such as politics or religion. Surrounding yourself with people or doing activities that make you comfortable and happy is a good way to maintain good mental health and balance in your life.

Take care of you: The continued uncertainty of the pandemic, paired with economic and civil crises here and globally, still has the power to increase stress levels. Take care of your physical, mental and emotional well-being. Avoid negativity, surround yourself with positive people, relax and stay upbeat. Make yourself a priority.

Life is busy, always coming and going, particularly around the holidays. We are all looking for our place of peace. We find solace but some of us can't. Remember them. They are your brother, sister, mother, father, relative, neighbor or co-worker. Help us help them get their lives on the right track and return to their families economically stable and sober.

At House of Hope, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization in Fort Lauderdale, we have so many stories of success, hope and resilience, like Anna's. For more than 50 years, we have been giving the men and women in our programs the best chance to become healthy and to lead productive lives in our community. We thank you for your support.

Sue Glasscock is CEO of House of Hope, a leading non-profit provider of substance abuse and mental health programming in Broward County. She can be reached at (954) 524-8989 or sglasscock@houseofhope.org.

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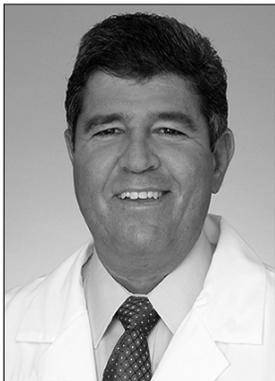
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Q&A with Albert Taño, M.D., Practicing Neonatologist and Co-Founder, KIDZ Medical Services

KIDZ Medical is a physician-owned multispecialty group that provides neonatal, pediatric and obstetrical healthcare throughout South Florida. Founded in 1988 by Albert Taño, M.D. and his partner, Jorge E. Perez, M.D., today the KIDZ team of dedicated pediatric subspecialists, advanced practice providers, nursing and hearing professionals works in hospitals and private offices in six Florida counties.

While birthrates are going down in much of the United States, South Florida is bucking that trend, with only a slight drop in the birthrate. South Florida's needs likewise are different than elsewhere, creating a more dynamic environment.



Dr. Albert Taño

Q. What attracted you to neonatology?

A. Pediatric and neonatal healthcare is challenging due to the variables among patients, including vast differences in body size and function, significant emotional and social needs, and possible sensitivity to medications. While the challenges are significant, the results are very rewarding. I realized I wanted to stay in the field while doing rotations in medical school.

Q. How does the practice of neonatology in South Florida compare with leading medical communities?

A. Neonatology in South Florida is on the forefront of medical practice. We as a physician-led group are progressive, and our hospital leaders are not afraid of change. Quite the contrary – our hospitals partner with us to address opportunities and challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Like us, the hospitals are proud of the achievements in neonatal medicine that have been achieved in the last 30 years.

A significant contribution is from our nursing professionals, who have such a good clinical eye. Nurses are a special breed, and our nursing care in South Florida is superb. We couldn't have achieved the current standard of practice without working closely with our nurses.

Q. Some states have adopted Level 4 neonatology units. Where is South Florida on that issue?

A. Level 4 units have existed for more than a decade in other regions. ACHA made it a priority to set guidelines for certifying neonatal units and establishing the Level 4 units in our state. Seventeen physician specialists from across Florida came together to discuss the state of neonatal medicine and determine the criteria for Level 4 units. I'm proud to have served on that committee. We achieved a consensus which protects the Level 2 units in the more rural parts of the state, while establishing guidelines for

the Level 3 and 4 units in larger metropolitan areas.

When they're expecting, parents are often worried about a hospital's ability to rise to unexpected needs. Parents can have a tremendous level of comfort that our systems are working well. For instance, every delivery in Miami-Dade has a neonatologist or neonatal nurse practitioner on-site who can resuscitate your infant. The first minutes of life are crucial, and Jorge and I are proud to have been instrumental in raising that bar.

Another area in which we have had a great deal of impact is in post-natal practices such as kangaroo care, which means extended skin-to-skin contact after the birth. It was initially implemented for premature babies but now, it's standard practice for all deliveries. The neonatology profession has served our community well. We are proud of the thousands of babies that we've brought into the world.

Q. Since you and Dr. Perez founded KIDZ in 1988, you've had significant and steady growth. It's been more than 33 years. To what do you attribute your ability to attract many of the most established and well-respected subspecialists in South Florida to your team?

A. Numerous factors have contributed to our growth. First of all, a focus on quality and accountability starts at the top. Jorge and I check our ego at the door, and we look for professionals like us who have an open mind and want to make a difference. We are also strict about following protocols and we vet our associates carefully. We've learned to listen to and trust our gut.

Q. Tell us about this statement: "A normal delivery is a postpartum diagnosis."

A. When a woman gives birth, you want everything to fall in place. Until the baby is delivered and it's over, you can't know the details about the delivery, whether it's typical, atypical, or heart-stopping. It's an important reminder of the fragility of life and the importance of maintaining protocols that are at the forefront of the practice of medicine.

Q. What else do you want parents to know about KIDZ Medical?

A. We provide high quality and cost-effective medical care using evidence-based tools, proficient level of training and education, clinical research, and state-of-the-art medical technology. We've described KIDZ as an academic group in a private setting. More importantly, we want to leave a legacy in South Florida.

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When It Comes to Patient Care, Titles Can Change Perceptions

Recently, while looking for a used car for my dad, I found myself sitting in the office of the 'Certified Pre-Owned Inventory Manager'. Call me a little skeptical, but he seemed a lot like a used car salesman to me. I've never been big on titles or job descriptions. Let's face it, most of the time it is not possible to encapsulate everything that someone is responsible for in a three or four-word title or two-page Word document, but there are some exceptions. Sometimes a person's title or recognized responsibilities can have a dramatic impact not only on them, but on the people they interact with every day. Carefully chosen words can help someone take more pride in what they do and therefore result in better customer or patient satisfaction.



BY JAY JUFFRE

For example, compare the haggard title of 'Receptionist' with the more enlightened 'Director of first impressions.' How might someone in this position do a better job of greeting visitors? Instead of an 'Admissions Clerk', how about a 'Patient Advocate'? Could interactions patients or their families have with these individuals feel less transactional? Once, I saw 'Ear to ear smile' as one of the requirements listed on a job description. Think that might send an inspiring message? Point is simple, what you call your team members can have a remarkable effect of how they feel, act and interact. Patient care will always be about being great at what you do, but patient experience is all about how you do it. Perceptions go a long way in shaping our reality. The right title and list of job responsibilities can easily help us evolve the culture of our organizations. As we enter 2022, feel free to mix things up by tweaking stale titles and outdated job responsibilities. The team may surprise you with their response and your patients will certainly feel the difference.

Jay Juffre is Executive Vice President, ImageFIRST. For more information on ImageFIRST, call 1-800-932-7472 or visit www.imagefirst.com.



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2022 Medicare CCM Payment Increases and What Is Next Gen CCM?

The 2022 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Final Rule announced substantial payment increases for Medicare Chronic Care Management (CCM), even though most other services will receive about 4% less than in 2021. The increases incentivize greater participation in CCM with reimbursement for the minimal billable CCM services, at least 20 minutes of telephone contact (CPT 99490), jumping on average from \$42.17 to \$62.16, a 51% increase! At this new reimbursement, a practice enrolling 300 eligible Medicare patients has the potential to gross over \$225,000 in yearly CCM revenue. Creating such a profitable new revenue stream helps offset the negative financial effects of disruption and payment reductions that are contributing to physician loss of satisfaction and burnout.

Historically, the ACA in 2010 mandated care coordination and disease management services be delivered to Medicare and Medicaid patients having 2 or more chronic medical conditions. In response, CMS launched Medicare CCM in January 2015 as a telephonic program for enhancing health and care for this targeted, vulnerable patient population which utilizes the vast majority (>90%) of Medicare funds. This critical primary care component of health care transformation has been shown to lower total costs of care and improve patient outcomes; it is one of the top CMS innovations meeting the Quadruple Aim framework that guides continuous improvement in health care delivery.

Why this payment incentive?

From the start, Medicare has fully intended for as many eligible beneficiaries as possible to be enrolled in CCM in order to meaningfully improve the health of the high-utilizer population, and as a result, help sustain Medicare. However, there has been surprisingly slow adoption, low patient enrollment, and an unexpected refractoriness to participating in CCM, even though this primary care-focused program improves care management, creates a financial opportunity, and prepares participants for value-based payments! A



BY SCOTT RICE, MD, PHD, MBA, MS,
AND RICHARD GROSSO

survey in 2015 revealed much of the challenge to advancing CCM is due to a lack of physician awareness of the program's benefits and a general perception that Medicare reimbursements for these services are too low.

Why a Next Gen CCM program?

By performing an ROI/gap analysis, most medical practices find they lack the resources and capabilities required to implement a profitable, high value CCM program. However, a solution for these practices is to outsource CCM services. Unfortunately, some earlier CCM companies viewed the program as merely a financial offering, failing to recognize the importance of CCM to health care transformation. To reconcile this disparity, Your Doctor In Touch (YDIT) developed a novel, innovative Next Generation (Next Gen) CCM program adherent to Medicare's vision for CCM.

How does YDIT's Next Gen CCM advance the program?

Next Gen CCM strategies that advance Medicare CCM include:

1) **Alignment and care coordination:** These processes involving all providers and the patient are essential to the successful delivery of Next Gen CCM and they are initiated ASAP following patient enrollment.

2) **Precision and personalization:** Patient-centricity and meeting patients where they're at by asking patients "What matters?" rather than "What's the matter?" and leveraging shared decision-making to engage patients in their care.

3) **Whole-person health:** Management and coordination of all aspects of care and

bridging identified gaps in care ensures holistic medicine.

4) **Patient safety and risk management:** Vigilant care managers routinely review determinants of health to assess each patient's health risks and regularly evaluate at-home safety and risk of harm, from medications to falls.

5) **Early detection and reporting of patient deterioration:** To improve patient outcomes and reduce Medicare waste, ongoing surveillance for patient deterioration is performed, and once detected, an alert is immediately sent to the supervising physician with the intention of circumventing an avoidable ED visit or hospitalization.

6) **Enhance patient experience of care:** Increasing patient satisfaction resulting from the above strategies will improve CAHPS scores.

7) **High-value care:** Electronical clinical quality measures (eCQM) to be submitted for Medicare incentive payments are monitored and managed. The completion of reportable measures is regularly assessed, coordinated, and documented in the EHR for each physician by CCM staff. This value-added feature keeps physicians updated on which measures remain to be performed and is available to all medical practices and health care systems participating in the Medicare Quality Payment Program. For independent practices that are not part of a larger organization, Next Gen CCM will compile and file reports and attain Medicare rate enhancements for them as they would receive, for example, as an ACO member. Thus, Next-Gen CCM increases physician income through dual Medicare payments --- direct reimbursement for CCM services plus a positive performance payment adjustment.

In summary, the additional benefits of Next Gen CCM advance the Quadruple Aim, making CCM worth re-assessing as a service that enhances patient satisfaction, conserves Medicare dollars, helps primary care practices increase revenue, and most importantly, improves the lives of the patients who entrust their care to us every day.

For more information, contact Richard Grosso at (561) 861-5141 or Richard.g@ynit.us.

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PūrWell Offers Pain Relief Without NSAIDs

PūrWell launches PūrRelēf, a first-of-its-kind organic gummy that provides a safe and effective alternative to NSAIDs (Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs.) Millions of people rely on NSAIDs to control symptoms of chronic pain and inflammation, however, NSAIDs come with some risk. Studies have shown they may cause toxicity to one's liver, kidneys, and upper GI-tract. PūrRelēf combines powerful flavonoids from Skull Cap and Green Tea to provide extraordinary anti-inflammatory support, while added benefits of Boswellia and Turmeric supercharge the anti-inflammatory action. CBG and Delta-8 isolate round out the overall analgesic effects. Unlike NSAIDs that may cause undesirable side effects, PūrRelēf is a combination of GRAS (Generally Regarded As Safe) ingredients, that have shown no toxicity over periods of long-term use. It is a COX-1, COX-2 and 5-LOX inhibitor. PūrRelēf's convenient form makes it easy to consume, and the Appleberry flavor is derived from organic fruit extract.



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BCMA President's Message

I am really proud to be a part of the Broward County Medical Association, where I have found a group of like-minded, passionate, caring and dedicated physicians who have inspired me, encouraged me and motivated me to do more for the medical community. Don't get me wrong, I love what I do every day at my office and at the surgery center. I also love teaching medical students, residents, patients and staff. I feel privileged to have such a meaningful career that allows me to make a difference in people's lives one on one. However, as of late, I have felt that was not enough. There are so many factors threatening the physician-patient relationship that I am compelled to make every effort to preserve that central piece of the practice of medicine.

I am convinced that the best way to do this is to all act together as a team. And by ALL I mean you and me. You is a collective, including physicians, nurses, support staff, hospital administrators, pharmacists, pharmaceutical companies, government legislators, medical device companies, academic institutions, professors, lawyers, the media and most importantly, the patients. This is not an exhaustive list of the multitude of players in this game we call healthcare in America. If you do not find yourself in any of the groups I mentioned, it's because I failed to mention everyone involved. Consider yourself included. If WE don't learn to work together and understand our respective points of view, no one wins the game.

My personal mission is to cultivate unity: unity among our medical societies, unity among physician specialties, unity among all levels of healthcare practitioners

and unity in the medical community as a whole.

The Mission of the Broward County Medical Association is "to promote the integrity of patient care and public health and to enhance the professional interests of physicians in Broward County." Our Association unites allopathic and osteopathic physicians, of all specialties in order to secure access to health care of the highest quality for the residents of Broward County, to maintain the integrity of medical practice and care delivery for the citizens of Broward and to advocate for the interests of the patients of Broward County, and for the interests of practicing physicians in caring for their patients.

In 2020, our immediate past president, Dr. Shahnaz Fatteh, creatively overcame the unexpected challenges of leading us during a pandemic. She quickly adapted by setting aside her prior plans and instead established virtual meetings, kept everyone informed about the latest developments in the spread and treatment of COVID-19, addressed the media and organized efforts to support local healthcare heroes. Then, on a night like this in late 2020, she offered her home for a small socially distanced installation of our current president and one of my first friends at the BCMA, Dr. Abby Berens.

Vaccines against COVID-19 were only being offered to hospital workers at the time. Physicians in the community and their staff without hospital affiliation, had no access to the vaccines. We then created a joint effort with the Department of Health in Broward County to offer vaccines to community physicians and their staff, so they could also be protected while

treating patients. More recently, we organized a press release under the leadership of Dr. Berens, where a large group of our physicians in white coats gathered to educate our community on the importance of vaccinations against COVID-19. He was featured on NBC 6 and I was featured in Spanish television on Telemundo. Following this, Dr. Berens continued to educate the public through various additional television interviews concerning prevention and treatment of COVID-19.

Abby warmly welcomed me during the first event I attended with the BCMA. Later, we attended the Physician Leadership Academy together along with Dr. Fatteh and then went on to serve on the BCMA Board of Directors. Since then, he has set an example for me as both a patient and physician advocate. I thank him for paving the way for me in 2021.

I would like to take a moment to share with you what led to my involvement in the BCMA. It started one evening in 2012 when I was looking for a place to have dinner on my first night in a small town in Northern Florida called Green Cove Springs. I had driven up there for part-time work after leaving the University of Miami and before establishing my current practice in Hollywood.

As I waited for my table at a Pizza Hut, I was befriended by an older couple, who then asked me to join them for dinner. That couple was Russell and Sharon Jackson. Russ had dedicated his life to



BY VANIA E. FERNANDEZ, MD

public health. He was a former Executive with the Florida Medical Association. Beyond that, he was an excellent historian, with a particular interest in the history of medicine in Florida.

From then on, I became very close with Russ and Sharon and we had many dinners together each time I went up to Green Cove Springs. I learned a great deal about the medical history of Florida from Russ. Russ and Sharon had no children and

began to view me as their daughter. I only worked there for two months, but I continued to drive up and visit with them even after I established my practice in Broward.

Unfortunately, Sharon was diagnosed with Pancreatic Cancer and passed away a few months later. Russ and I stayed in touch and he introduced me to Cynthia Peterson, CEO of the BCMA, when I began to work in Broward County. He encouraged me to become involved in my county association and stressed the importance of participating in organized medicine. Sadly, Russ passed away this year. In appreciation of Russ, I wanted to offer you a copy of one of his articles.

The work is entitled "A Friend to All Humanity" and it was written about Dr. James Jackson, the namesake for the institution where I completed my training in Miami, Florida: Jackson Memorial Hospital.

I am honored to be installed as the 95th President of the Broward County Medical Association. I look forward to 2022 with excitement and I am ready to take on the challenges that face my colleagues and our patients in Broward County.

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EXPERT ADVICE

Social Inflation Influencing Lawsuits, Verdict Amounts

BY VANESSA ORR

As the legal saying goes, there are three sides to every story: the plaintiff's side, the defense's side, and the truth, which is somewhere in the middle. And while courts and juries used to be able to come to a conclusion based on the facts, in these days of social inflation, perception is often just as important as reality.

"Social inflation is causing much higher jury awards and increased insurance losses—not only in medical malpractice cases, but in all areas of litigation," explained Tom Murphy, producer, National Health Care Practice Danna-Gracey, a Division of Risk Strategies.

Social inflation is a term used to describe the rising costs of insurance claims resulting from things like increasing litigation, broader definitions of liability, more plaintiff-friendly legal decisions, and massive jury awards, sometimes known as nuclear verdicts.

For example, a study by Verdict Search showed that between 2019-2020, there was a more than 300 percent increase in the frequency of verdicts of \$20 million or more from a previous study that covered verdicts between 2001-2010.

"A \$2 million verdict 15 to 20 years ago would be \$30 or \$40 million now," said Murphy.

Murphy says that part of the reason for these verdicts is an almost generation-long decay of public trust in corporations, spurred by social media and the changing demographics of the younger generations.

"When you see a corporation do something that is not in the public interest, or getting bad PR even if they did not necessarily do something wrong, Gen Z and the younger generations start texting and talking about it, and it catches on like wild-fire," he said.

He adds that 'a culture of fault,' in which people automatically blame others when something bad happens to them, also contributes to increased litigation and higher jury verdicts.

"It's an interesting dynamic; in the past year or so with COVID, people were more willing to support hospitals because they were trying to help people and save lives," said Murphy. "And while that has helped a little, we're still seeing individuals looking to blame someone and looking for money. This culture of fault is very dangerous to medical practices and to all businesses.

"Not only does the average person have a skewed perception of the economic disparity between corporations and regular individuals, but they also have a different perception of the value of an injury, resulting in higher claims values and judgments," he added.

For example, in 2019 in the U.S., there



Tom Murphy

were 73 court approved class-action settlements totaling \$2.1 billion. In 2020, there were 77 court approved class-action settlements that totaled \$4.2 billion.

"In one year, the settlements doubled—that's a staggering statistic," said Murphy, adding that the average settlement in 2020 per class action suit was \$54.5 million, a 15 percent increase year over year for the past 10 years.

Other factors that contribute to social inflation are the sophistication of the plaintiff bar, in which tactics include the use of jury consultants and psychologists specializing in group dynamics with the goal of influencing the size of jury awards, and private equity firms becoming involved in litigation funding.

"Millennials and Gen Z age groups have a different world view than older groups, and they are now serving on juries," said Murphy. "They prefer to be part of a consensus, which impacts the outcome of verdicts. At the beginning of a case, the plaintiff bar looks for the jury foreman or leaders and tries to influence them by using psychological tactics to try to get the rest of jury to agree to verdicts that have values that far exceed what a normal jury would find.

"Private equity firms give law firms the funding needed to take on cases that in the past they may have been hesitant to pursue," he added. "They are spending billions to get involved in litigation with the goal of taking a percentage of the award if the firm wins the case."

Murphy adds that while social inflation trends are hard to predict, he doesn't see it going away any time soon. "Everything goes in cycles in terms of lawsuits and litigation, but this is different," he said. "Information is now out there in the flash of an eye, and no one is vetting it; and it's having a huge impact on court cases and awards."

For more information, call Tom Murphy or Matt Gracey at (800) 966-2120 or visit www.dannagracey.com.

Omicron: What We Know About the Newest COVID Variant

Omicron is the newest COVID-19 variant dominating the headlines. While this new strain of the virus is raising questions, we continue to learn more information about Omicron every day. As the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other public healthcare partners continue to monitor Omicron, here's what we know about the variant so far:



BY JOSHUA LENCHUS, DO, RPH, FACP, SFHM

Why Is This Happening?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is constantly changing, which produces new variants of the virus. While some variants persist, others disappear. Public health experts, such as the CDC and the World Health Organization, are monitoring Omicron and other variants to assess transmissibility, severity of infection and symptoms, as well as the effectiveness of vaccines, diagnostic testing and treatments.

What We Know

This newest variant was first identified in South Africa and has subsequently spread to the U.S. Based on the limited number of cases, it appears this variant spreads more quickly than its predecessors, but the severity of symptoms may be milder.

Again, public health experts are still

assessing Omicron, so it's too early to make definitive statements about this variant and so it's important that the public follow safety measures. As we learned with the Delta variant, vaccines are expected to be effective in reducing the risk of severe illness, hospitalization and death.

While some treatments may not be as effective against Omicron, mono-

clonal antibody treatments may help the immune system recognize and respond more effectively to the virus.

What You Can Do

As we continue to fight this global pandemic, getting vaccinated and receiving the recommended booster shot is your most powerful defense against COVID-19.

Wearing a mask indoors is also effective in reducing the spread of the virus, especially if you're unvaccinated. Continue washing your hands and practicing physical distancing when necessary.

If you're experiencing any cold or flu-like symptoms, please stay home, distance yourself from others and consult your physicians if symptoms persist. Seek emergency medical care if needed.

Dr. Joshua Lenchus is Broward Health's interim chief medical officer.

What Video Can Do For You

Healthcare is its own particular category and doesn't necessarily conform to standard marketing practices. Marketing budgets aren't first on the depth chart when allocating a hospital or healthcare system's annual budget.

However, ever since we entered the new normal of life in a COVID environment, the importance of marketing cannot and should not be overlooked. The importance of telling a story in today's video-obsessed culture is no longer the exception but the rule.

Hospitals are their only little city comprised of many different departments all committed to achieving the goal of providing excellent healthcare. Each department has its challenges and needs. Marketing must maintain a brand and image and get patients; after all, a hospital is also a business. Human Resources needs to retain staff. The insurance department must handle a tremendous amount of red tape.

Perhaps most importantly and often overlooked is the training, communication, and continuing education required for public safety. It can be challenging to ensure everyone gets the same message because of the stag-



BY CHAD TINGLE

gering hospital work schedules.

Video content can solve all those problems. It's a simple solution to a complicated situation. Through the power of video, you can disseminate any message with sight, sound, motion, and emotion. Need to discuss a new hospital policy? Produce a video and post it on your private network with a

link. Need to keep morale up? Create a video showing all the good work your hospital is doing. Need to hire more staff? Create a video on the benefits of working in healthcare.

The possibilities are endless, and the process is not as complicated as you think when working with the right production company. Crown Street Films has the experience necessary to help hospitals and healthcare systems alike stand out with creative, informative, and professionally produced content.

Please give us a call, and we'll show you how helpful, practical, and compelling video can be for you.

For more information, contact Chad Tingle at (305) 794-7201 or chad@crowstreetfilms.com.



E-mail Your Editorial Submissions to editorial@southfloridahospitalnews.com

Three Ways for Hospitals to Measure Health Equity

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the deadly disparities lurking in the U.S. healthcare system, which resulted in worse health outcomes for marginalized and vulnerable people. Now, hospitals and health systems throughout the U.S. are prioritizing health equity for their patient populations.



BY STEVEN SHILL

In order to advance health equity, however, you first have to be able to measure it.

And as BDO's 2021 Health Equity Survey discovered, there's no industry standard for measuring health equity. But that doesn't mean your health equity efforts are in vain. What's important is that you choose a measurement method and stick to it.

Here are three ways you can measure health equity in your patient populations:

1. Quality of care. According to BDO's survey, 62% of respondents use quality of care (QOC) KPIs — including health outcomes, hospital admissions and readmissions, mortality rates and access to care — to measure health equity. You can use these metrics to identify who in your community struggles the most to receive equitable care, then refocus your health equity efforts to understand and address the underlying causes.

2. Community engagement. Community engagement can take the form of community surveys and health assessments, patient satisfaction and responses to community outreach. According to our survey, 34% of respondents track community engagement, which you can use to determine who you are struggling to engage with in your community and update your outreach and messaging accordingly.

3. Demographics. Although demographics are often overlooked — just

22% of our survey respondents said they measure demographics to track health equity progress — they're key to designing an approach to health equity that resonates with your patient population. Once you understand the demographics that your organization primarily serves, you can invest time into training your staff to better understand and connect with those populations.

There's no right or wrong way to measure health equity. The important thing is that you select your KPIs based on your organization's existing resources, patient population and approach to dispensing care. It's also crucial that you remain consistent. Once you've chosen a KPI to measure, you have to stick with it. Otherwise, you'll lose the ability to track your progress over time.

Looking for more insights to improve your health equity program in 2022? Visit <https://www.bdo.com/insights/industries/healthcare/bdo-2021-health-equity-survey> to read our Health Equity survey report to benchmark your progress against your peers and get the guidance you need to take the next step forward.

Steven Shill, Partner and National Leader - The BDO Center for Healthcare Excellence & Innovation, can be reached at sshill@bdo.com or (714) 668-7370.

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646-520-2870 / apirozzi@bdo.com

Let's Connect: ACHE of South Florida Spotlight

ACHE of South Florida
An Independent Chapter of



Happy New Year from the American College of Healthcare Executives - South Florida Chapter!

The American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) is an international professional society of more than 48,000 healthcare executives who lead hospitals, healthcare systems and other healthcare organizations.

ACHE is known for its prestigious credentialing and educational programs and its annual Congress on Healthcare Leadership, which draws more than 4,000 participants each year. ACHE is also known for its industry journals, magazine, as well as ground-breaking research and career development and public policy programs.

The South Florida Healthcare Executive Forum (SFHEF) was founded in 1972 as a non-affiliate of the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) and became the local chapter of ACHE for South Florida in 2008. In 2020, SFHEF changed its name to the American College of Healthcare Executives of South Florida, or ACHE of South Florida (ACHE-SFL) and serves the following counties: Broward, Glades, Hendry, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Palm Beach.

In alignment with the organization's mission, vision, values, and commitment to educate, engage and inspire its members, the principles that will be reflected this year include Innovation, Connection, Collaboration, Inclusion and Wellbeing.

The 2022 annual board installation event is scheduled for February 10, 2022. An occasion to swear in the new chapter leaders, will feature an impactful leader - Aurelio M. Fernandez, III, FACHE, as the keynote speaker. He will also be honored with the chapter's prestigious award for his indelible impact on the healthcare community.

The chapter congratulates and welcomes the 2022 ACHE of South Florida Board of Directors:

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Jenna Katz Melucci, FACHE- President-elect
Kenneth Wong, FACHE - Immediate past president
Ralph Rios, FACHE - Treasurer
Kristen Palanza -Treasurer-elect
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Niurka Diaz - Membership Chair-elect
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Carlos H Ayllon, FACHE – Education Chair-elect
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Ayo Akinkunmi, FACHE - Networking Chair-elect
Marla Sanfilippo, FACHE - Student Services Chair
Arianna Silcott Lo – Student Services Chair-elect
Mari Pantoja-Smith – Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging (DEIB) and Community Outreach Chair
Haroula Protopapadakis-Norden, FACHE - Member-at-Large
Adrian Parker, FACHE - Member-at-Large
Madison Workman, FACHE - Member-at-Large

For more information on ACHE, visit www.ACHEofSouthFlorida.org



E-mail Your Editorial Submissions to
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New Year = Possibilities



As we ring in the New Year, the DCMA has new opportunities for our physician members.



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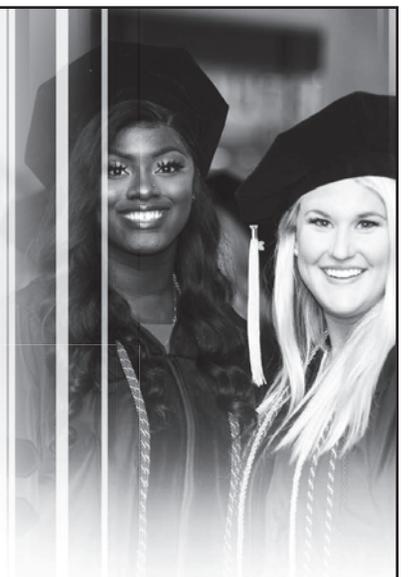
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How an ACO's Hidden Insides Work

As a healthcare practice, many have joined or are looking into joining an ACO (Accountable Care Organization). Here are some insider tips regarding ACO transparency to its members:

Five Things to Know – Understanding the inner workings of an ACO:

1. **Legal Entity** – An ACO is a legal entity just like any other; it can be structured as a corporation, a partnership, an LLC, under applicable state or federal laws. At first, it may appear to be very similar to any other corporation, but it is really not; many other rules apply.

2. **Mission** – An ACO's mission must be in furtherance of providing quality healthcare, increasing patient access to healthcare, and with an eye toward sharing in the savings generated by the plan or the program.

3. **Governing Body** – An ACO has to have a separate and unique governing body, such as a board of directors or managers. The ACO participants must be given the opportunity for “meaningful participation” in the ACO's governance. If it is to be deemed a physician-owned ACO, at least 75% of the ACO must be owned or controlled by the physicians.

4. **Controlling the ACO** – The ACO's have voting powers just like any other corporation, but they are also required to maintain a “conflict of interest policy” that applies to the members of the governing body. They are required to be transparent, to disclose conflicts, and to disclose the methodology of how profits or Medicare savings are divided among its participants.

5. **Healthcare Alignment** – The ACO is required to maintain a senior level member who is a physician and a medical director of the organization. This position is not required to be full time, but it is responsible for clinical oversight and for overseeing and establishing the quality assurance and improvement programs of the ACO.

If you would like to find out more about what the rights, responsibilities and obligations of an ACO and its participants are, visit www.MirzaHealthLaw.com or call/text Ben Mirza at (954)445-5503 or email BAM@MirzaHealthLaw.com.



BY BEN ASSAD MIRZA, ESQ., LLM, MPHA

Physician-Led Healthcare Reform

Physicians have a unique vantage point on the shortcomings of the health care delivery system. They witness firsthand the impact of ever-increasing insurance premiums and out-of-pocket costs for their patients. Costs which strain family resources or make insurance coverage unobtainable. They bear the brunt of the administrative cost and frustrations of trying to secure medically necessary services for their patients through utilization controls enacted by insurance companies. For physicians in private practice, like most businesses, they experience the pain of the annual Group Health Insurance renewal cycle when they receive annual premium increases with little transparency over their utilization of services. And yet, there is constant downward pressure on reimbursement rates for physician services from governmental and commercial payers.

While the DCMA continues to fight for our members, reform of the system through legislative and regulatory pressure has admittedly been difficult. Success in those venues is never certain given the influence of other stakeholders.

This reality has led the DCMA to pursue programs that we can control and tools to help physicians reform care delivery where they can. Just over a year ago, the DCMA announced a strategic partnership with FBMC and Physicians Health Benefits to create a self-funded health insurance platform for our physician members. The short-term goals of the program were to provide transparency, accountability and premium control for our physician practices that provide health insurance to their employees.

The long-term goal is to encourage more of our members, as well as other organizations and businesses in the community, to consider similar platforms that provide claims transparency, lower administrative costs, the ability to keep your excess premium, and bring down out-of-pocket costs for employees that utilize services strategically.

Since its launch, there have been many lessons learned and the program has morphed considerably. But the success we are having in reaching those goals with our current participants is extremely encouraging.

It seems like there might be a way after all for physicians to take back a little bit of control in the health care system. Reach out to the DCMA if you are interested in learning more.

Fraser Cobbe, Executive Director, Dade County Medical Association, can be reached at fcobbe@miamimed.com.



BY FRASER COBBE



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A message from our President

Dreaming

We are in the throes of change in healthcare. I found an article written many years ago that was future facing and spoke to some changes that we were supposed to be seeing in healthcare. Things like a vaccine against the common cold (2009), human cloning (2009), genetic therapy (2014), most diseases treated at home (2020) and, by 2030, cancer, and heart disease will be wiped out.

I am not sure about most of these predictions, but some almost came true! That got me to thinking, “what are futurists saying is the updated vision of the future of healthcare?” Let's take a few minutes and see.

The University of California San Francisco sees in the year 2050 game-changing predictions that include universal healthcare for all Americans, a pill to treat obesity, oral male contraceptives, lab-grown organs, AIDS eradication, and interoperability solved (yes, in 2050). Unfortunately, pandemics wiping out millions and superbugs proliferating are also in their future.

While I hope I am still here in 2050 and enjoying all the benefits of this new medical reality, let's look a little closer to home, say, 2030. I am much more comfortable with these predictions as I can see a clear path to them coming true.

Wearable technology measuring bodily functions becomes more generally available and more affordable. Look at the number of people who already wear wrist-watches (1 in 3) that monitor several body functions. The current number of additions to your smart phones that allow you to do more advanced at-home monitoring. In the near future, these devices will also routinely monitor body temperature and blood oxygen levels.

Genetic testing and genomic profiling will be widely used to identify inherited mutations and the genomic profiling will be looking for things that you picked up along the way that have nothing to do with your heredity.

Telehealth, I will say no more. The COVID-19 pandemic has identified the need for us to continue to refine how healthcare can be delivered virtually.

All these devices are collecting information and we are going to learn how to use it to our community advantage. How to improve treatment methods, how to alert the general community about health risks, these benefits are all coming.

Finally, the ultimate benefit of all this technology and data analysis is an improvement in health outcome. With better data and analysis, treatments modalities will be more individually prescribed with the additional benefit of making healthcare more cost effective (best treatment modalities the first time).

I saw another article that was “on the edge” but is likely going to be in our George Jetson future (Google it). It said, “A microscopic robot is implanted inside your daughter at birth. Whenever an illness begins, before she feels a symptom, it sends alerts to you and her doctor. Immediately the doctor prescribes genome-based drug therapies concocted for her biology and sends the medication to you by drone. Your health is also monitored by sensory equipment connected to remote specialists. Before you can feel a cancer symptom or travel to a distant hospital for a CT scan or MRI, nanobots collect tissue samples, replace damaged cells with healthy cells and absorb any toxins in your blood. Even your elderly father with Parkinson's no longer needs to be taken to his neurologist's office; internal nanobots discharge dopamine in a specific location in his brain.” Say it is so!



Jaime Caldwell

The Ins and Outs of Original Medicare vs. Medicare Advantage

Medicare eligibles have two coverage options - Original Medicare whose coverages are called Part A, B, C and D or Medicare Advantage Plans (Medicare Part C). Individual needs drive the best option choice that must be evaluated annually.

Newly Eligible Enrollees

The most common Medicare eligibility factor is the 65th birthday. For newly eligible individuals, decision angst is reduced.

1. New enrollees have seven months to enroll. The Medicare Advantage plan option may be selected three months before the birthday month through three months after the birthday month.

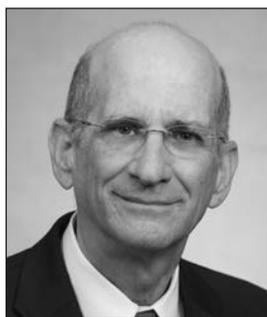
2. If a Medicare Advantage plan is selected, the individual can during any time in the next 12 months revert to original Medicare coverage without waiting a full year for the next annual enrollment period.

Existing Medicare Enrollees

Existing Medicare enrollees can review their health plan benefits at least every year.

Changing Medicare benefit coverage requires a decision between October 15th and December 7th - The Medicare Annual Enrollment Period or the Annual Election Period (AEP).¹ During the AEP, a Medicare eligible enrolled in Medicare Part A and B can:

- Switch from Medicare Advantage back to original Medicare coverage.
- If enrolled in original Medicare, the enrollee can add a Medicare supplement plan. These plans only apply in conjunction with those enrolled in Original Medicare and are provided by private insurers.
- Disenroll from original Medicare and enroll in a Medicare Advantage plan.
- Switch from one Medicare Advantage plan to another.
- Enroll in a Part D prescription drug plan or change from one Part D prescription drug plan to another.
- If enrolled in Original Medicare and supplemental benefits, switch or cancel Medicare dental and vision plans. Supplemental benefit plans are provided by private insurers and there is a premium involved.



BY RICHARD KLASS AND JOHN ARFANIS

Individuals Enrolled in and Keeping an Advantage Plan

For individuals enrolled in and keeping an Advantage Plan, the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period (OEP) runs annually between January 1 and March 31.² A Medicare eligible can only enroll in a Medicare Advantage plan if they enroll in Medicare Part A and B. For most eligibles the 2022 monthly premium for Part B is \$170.60. Usually there is no monthly Part A premium covering the hospital and facility coverage if an enrollee or spouse paid Medicare taxes for a certain amount of time.

People select Medicare Advantage due to lower overall cost of coverage and the simplicity of having a health, prescription, hearing, vision and dental benefit under one plan. One payor covers most healthcare expenditures for inpatient and outpatient care, and pharmaceuticals. Advantage Plans also typically cap the insured's maximum-out-of-pocket cost.

It's important to verify the plan network includes:

- Preferred doctors and hospitals and Centers of Excellence that treat illness.
- Preferred provider's referral options.
- Access to the right providers in the right setting at the right time. Beware most managed care organizations may offer narrow provider network options and/or impose restrictions to access to reduce cost.

The most popular Advantage Plans belong to Humana (35%) and United Health Group (22%)³; they dominate the South Florida market. Advantage Plan versus original Medicare penetration varies markedly by county: Miami-Dade County (74%) is highly penetrated (74%) followed by Broward (62%), and Palm Beach County (44%).

Original Medicare

The benefit of original Medicare is freedom of provider choice anywhere in the U.S. Many South Floridians are 'snowbirds' and or reside in multiple geographies so original Medicare with a Medicare Supplement can make sense for this cohort.

Nationally 93% of primary care doctors accept Medicare, but only 70% accept new patients.⁴ Consequently it is very important to confirm the physician who resolves most of an individual's health issues accepts Medicare.

For people desiring comprehensive health insurance coverage and minimal financial risk, Original Medicare necessitates multiple policies; some are government sponsored and some are private entity offerings. Consider:

- Original Medicare Part A covers hospital stays, limited skilled nursing facility/rehabilitation (SNF) care, hospice care and limited home care services. Most people with Medicare Part A also purchase Part B which covers diagnostic and preventive services such as wellness checkups, vaccinations and colonoscopies.
- Medicare pays for only a portion of inpatient and outpatient services. Insureds need a supplemental policy that covers the "gaps" under Medicare Parts A & B. Medigap policies are standardized, and named by letters, Plans A-N. The challenge is picking the right plan benefits based on individual needs.
- Medicare doesn't cover prescription drug costs. Individuals must investigate Part D plans in select geographies that have varying prices for pharmaceuticals in their formularies. This contrasts to Medicare Advantage plans that offer Part D under the same single premium that includes Part A and Part B services.

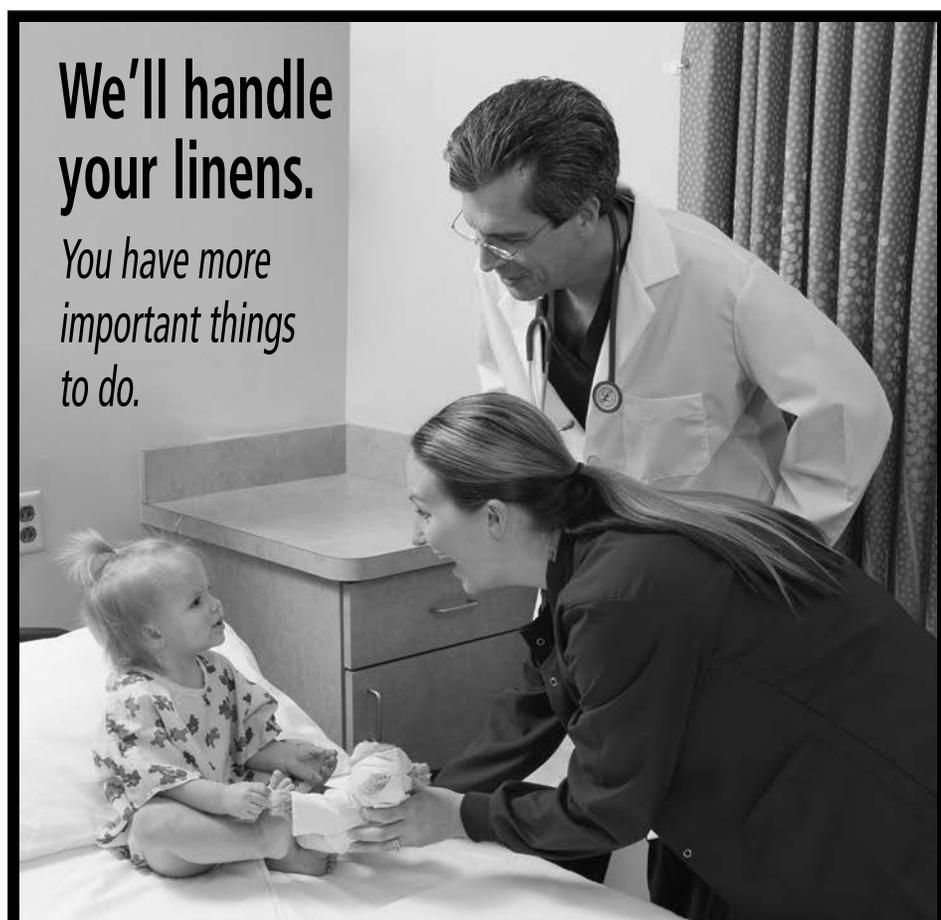
What's Next

Answering the question, "What is the most important reason for obtaining health care benefits?" supports making the right Medicare option selection. Medicare eligible can do their own homework on the Medicare.gov website or use an insurance professional.

Insurance professionals put top priorities into perspective and save research time on selecting Medicare health and drug plans, identifying participating Medicare doctors/other providers, and determining the quality ratings of Medicare Advantage plans.

Richard Klass, President, 2CY, Inc. can be reached at rklass@2cy4u.com. John Arfanis, President, Arfanis, Inc., can be reached at johnarfanis@gmail.com.

¹ <https://www.medicarefaq.com/faqs/medicare-annual-enrollment-period/>
² <https://www.medicarefaq.com/faqs/medicare-advantage-open-enrollment-period/>
³ <https://www.medicare.gov/Pubs/pdf/11219-Understanding-Medicare-Part-C-D.pdf#:~:text=There%20are%20specific%20times%20when%20you%20can%20sign,certain%20enrollment%20periods%20each%20year.%20See%20page%205.>
⁴ Kaiser Family Foundation Research, October 2015



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HCA Florida University Hospital Merges Latest Medical Technology with Patient-First Approach

While most of South Florida stood quiet before sunrise on Nov. 15, more than 650 medical professionals took on the monumental task of moving 48 patients from Plantation General Hospital. Although Plantation General had provided outstanding medical care to central Broward residents for more than 50 years, the time had come to transition to a state-of-the-art hospital six miles away.

That day, HCA Florida Healthcare welcomed the first patients to its brand-new HCA Florida University Hospital in Davie. The \$360-million facility on University Drive, adjacent to Nova Southeastern University, offers the best of both worlds to South Floridians: a world-class medical facility combined with a unique concierge approach to healthcare.

The lights of police-escorted emergency vehicles illuminated the streets as these healthcare professionals successfully met the challenge of transferring every patient from Plantation General to HCA Florida University Hospital safely and without interruption in care.

It was no easy task, but one the staff had prepared for over many months. With a communications team ready to transition operations at each hospital, the process was akin to a symphony,

carefully orchestrated to execute each patient's transfer flawlessly.

"During our transition, our number one goal was to make the process as seamless as possible for our patients," said Madeline Nava, Chief Executive Officer of HCA Florida University Hospital. "Fortunately, we were able to rely on careful planning and training to transfer all the patients quickly and with great success."

With 600 physicians, HCA Florida University Hospital has plenty of room to grow. It starts with 165 beds, but can expand to 600 based on the community's needs. The hospital offers maternity, Level III NICU, orthopedics, oncology, neuroscience, diagnostic services, imaging, and more.

"HCA Healthcare built this hospital with intuitive technology and a thoughtful layout, allowing our staff to provide care with speed and quality," said Kristin Hinsley, Chief Operating Officer of HCA Florida University Hospital. "Everything from the placement of elevators to the concierge on each floor."

The 330,000-square-foot multispecialty facility is equipped with the latest technology in order to offer a full range of robotic and minimally invasive surgical services and the best acute patient care in the area.



The hospital boasts the newest available CT, MRI, and mammography imaging, a newborn footprint identification system for every baby, smart beds, and high-tech neonatal intensive care monitors – just some of the features that make HCA Florida University Hospital "the hospital of the future."

The surgical floor includes a multimillion-dollar robotic surgical system providing surgeons with 3D high-definition views with zoom 10 times greater than the human eye. This ultramodern surgical assistant will enable surgeons to

make smaller incisions and maneuver the tiny instruments with smooth precision and greater range of motion. This will all combine to help patients recover faster and feel less pain than traditional surgeries.

To elevate the patient experience, the adult inpatient unit features 80 private patient rooms equipped with smart TVs. These TVs not only provide extra comfort but also help care teams communicate with patients by displaying schedules, goals, pain levels, and provider information.

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

Holy Cross Medical Group Names Vice President of Operations

Tom Hathaway, MPA, has been promoted to Vice President of Operations, Holy Cross Medical Group.

Hathaway was previously executive director of orthopedics and sports medicine department at Holy Cross Health where he was responsible for 20% surgical growth in a COVID-19 impacted year, led efforts to centralize and expedite clerical and clinical recruiting resulting in a 30% onboarding improvement month over month and supported the ambulatory growth plan of the Holy Cross Medical Group throughout Broward County. Hathaway graduated from Fairfield University with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and earned a Master of Public Administration with a specialization in health finance from New York University Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service. He is a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives and Healthcare Leaders of New York.



Tom Hathaway

Palm Beach Health Network Physician Group Names New CEO

Palm Beach Health Network Physician Group (PBHNPG) recently announced Eric J. McBride, MBA, MHSA, is the new chief executive officer of the multi-specialty physician group. Tenet Florida Physician Services recently rebranded to the Palm Beach Health Network Physician Group (PBHNPG). Prior to joining the Palm Beach Health Network Physician Group, McBride served as the chief operating officer for Reliance Health Accountable Care Organization, in Detroit, MI. Before his tenure at Reliance Healthcare, McBride served as Vice President - Specialty Services with Beaumont Medical Group in Michigan. Additionally, McBride is a graduate of Slippery Rock University with a Bachelor's in Health Services and Business Administration. He received his Master of Health Services Administration and Master of Business Administration from Xavier University.



Eric J. McBride

St. Mary's Medical Center and the Palm Beach Children's Hospital Welcome Chief Nursing Officer

St. Mary's Medical Center & the Palm Beach Children's Hospital appoint Jessica Miller as their new Chief Nursing Officer (CNO). Prior to this appointment, Miller served as the CNO for former sister facilities, Florida Medical Center and North Shore Medical Center. She was also the lead CNO for the rest of Steward Healthcare's Miami hospitals, which they recently acquired from Tenet Healthcare. She also served as the CNO for sister facility, Coral Gables Hospital. During her 13 years of service to Coral Gables Hospital, Miller led the quality, risk management, infection control and wound care departments. She was also responsible for overseeing numerous surveys from government and regulatory agencies, and played a key role in four of the hospital's Top Performer in Key Quality Metrics recognitions from The Joint Commission. She received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing and her Master of Business Administration from Florida International University. Miller is bilingual in English and Spanish.



Jessica Miller



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Experts Convene for Third Miami Cancer Institute Summit of the Americas on Immunotherapies for Hematologic Malignancies

BY GEORGI PIPKIN

Thanks to the collaboration of physician scientists, patients with blood cancers are benefitting from rapidly evolving research, advances in immunotherapy and targeted molecular therapy. When some of the nation's top experts gather in January at the Third Miami Cancer Institute Summit of the Americas on Immunotherapies for Hematologic Malignancies, it's with the knowledge that sharing their findings will lead to even more options at the bedside.

Some 186,400 people in the U.S. are expected to be diagnosed with leukemia, lymphoma, myeloma and other blood cancers this year, according to the American Cancer Society. Thousands more are already in treatment.

"The speed at which the field is advancing is very encouraging," said symposium director Guenther Koehne,



Dr. Guenther Koehne

M.D., Ph.D., deputy director and chief of Blood & Marrow Transplant and Hematologic Oncology at Miami Cancer Institute, a part of Baptist Health. "But to maintain our forward progress we must not do our research in silos. We must share so that we can build upon what we have learned."

The in-person program, Jan. 21 and 22, features a powerhouse faculty that includes physicians from Memorial Sloan Kettering, Harvard Medical School, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, MD Anderson Cancer Center, Columbia University's Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center, the Abramson Cancer Center at the University of Pennsylvania and other leading institutions. Approximately 300 physicians and other healthcare providers attended last year's virtual Summit.

Dr. Koehne came to Baptist Health's Miami Cancer Institute from Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New

York, where in 1973, the world's first successful allogeneic transplant was performed. A pioneer in allogeneic stem cell transplantation and immunotherapies, Dr. Koehne believes the Summit offers a unique opportunity particularly for oncologists, hematologists, pharmacists, oncology nurses and other specialists to hear directly from those responsible for treatment breakthroughs.

"Treatments are becoming more sophisticated and every day we are learning more about how to target treatment to the individual," he said. "By discussing the most recent research, we move science forward, ultimately offering more options to patients and improving their outcomes."

Among the symposium topics are advances in immunologically and molecular based system therapies, new targeted diagnostic and therapeutic strategies for lymphoma, myeloma and leukemia, the role and timing of hematopoietic cell transplantation and the latest on CAR cell therapies.

Miami Cancer Institute's Blood and Marrow Transplantation program was

launched in July of 2019. It hit the 100-patient milestone in just 18 months. In addition, in July of 2020, as the program continued to expand, Hope Tower opened on the Baptist Hospital campus, adjacent to the Institute. With 39 private rooms on 6 Hope and 45 private rooms on 5 Hope dedicated for bone marrow and immunotherapy patients, the new facility gives patients who face lengthy hospital stays because of their compromised immune systems a spacious accommodation that includes a refrigerator, microwave, large bathroom and even room to exercise.

At the Summit, Dr. Koehne will share his research and the Institute's experience.

To register, or for more information on Miami Cancer Institute's Third Annual Summit of the Americas on Immunotherapies for Hematologic Malignancies, held at the Ritz Carlton Coconut Grove, go to <https://cmeonline.baptisthealth.net/immunotherapy-symposium>.

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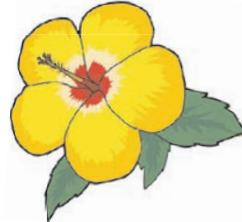
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The Broward County Medical Association Foundation was formed in August 1991 to further the charitable and educational goals of the Broward County Medical Association. As the delivery of health care undergoes a transition, the need for public education and communication with the medical community will increase. Please consider attending the dinner and contributing to the Foundation.

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Cover Story: Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center: Celebrating 30 Years of Research, Clinical Care and Community Engagement

Continued from page 1

Nimer says. “Our patients have access to more treatment options and more cancer clinical trials than most hospitals in the southeastern United States,” he adds. “Some cancer therapies are only available through the NCI – our ability to provide such therapies to Sylvester patients is an important consideration for the 6.3 million people who live in South Florida.”

Sylvester’s researchers conduct community-based studies to mitigate the impact of cancer on the region’s diverse population groups. “Typically, about 40 to 50 percent of our patients in clinical trials are Hispanic and 15 to 22 percent are Black,” Nimer says. “We are also the only cancer center in the U.S. that translates our clinical protocols into Spanish and Haitian Creole.” Sylvester’s many prevention and education initiatives include the Firefighter Cancer Initiative, which is working to better understand and minimize the increased risk of cancer faced by first responders across the nation.

Sylvester’s scientists also achieve research breakthroughs in their laboratories, leading to better understanding of the genetic, environmental, and metabolic factors that drive the growth of cancer cells and could provide targets for new therapies. “This type of translational research is the cornerstone of our comprehensive

approach to cancer,” says Nimer. “Through the years, we have built one of the best cancer epigenetic programs in the world. We also have phenomenal programs in fields like stem cell transplantation, sarcomas and hematologic malignancies or blood cancers.”

Today, Sylvester has more than 300 cancer-focused physicians and researchers, including more than 200 cancer experts recruited from the nation’s top cancer institutions over the past decade. Dr. Nimer points to Sylvester’s culture of excellence, innovation, and compassionate patient care as keys to the center’s recruitment strategy.

“We have a phenomenal culture of teamwork here that includes collaboration across medical disciplines as well as incredible community outreach and engagement” says Dr. Nimer. “As an up-and-coming cancer center, we have modeled Sylvester as a startup. As a result, we have recruited professionals from all over the country who are excited to be a part of our growth. After all, we support innovative approaches to all aspects of cancer care, creating a buzz that attracts talented people of all levels of experience.”

Dr. Nimer adds that Sylvester’s supportive atmosphere includes medical, nursing and other healthcare professionals, as well as patients and families. “I think everyone

here will tell you how positive the atmosphere is,” he says. “It’s not easy to be a cancer specialist for your entire career, and deal with life-or-death situations, so we try to take care of our people in all regards.”

Multidisciplinary collaboration is another distinctive aspect of Sylvester’s comprehensive cancer care including research, clinical and educational initiatives from areas as diverse as music, engineering, marine species and computer science.

“We also have collaborative programs with cancer specialists in more than 15 different countries,” adds Dr. Nimer. “We offer training programs for professionals to help them address cancer challenges in their own countries. That’s a vital part of our mission.” Recognizing the center’s focus on addressing inequities in cancer care, the World Health Organization (WHO) recently designated Sylvester as the first WHO Collaborating Centre for Cervical Cancer Elimination.

Closer to home, Sylvester will continue to play a leading role in cancer prevention and treatment throughout South Florida, says Dr. Nimer. “We are committed to building awareness in a culturally sensitive manner, so that our team can make a positive impact in our community.”

For more information, visit Sylvester.org.

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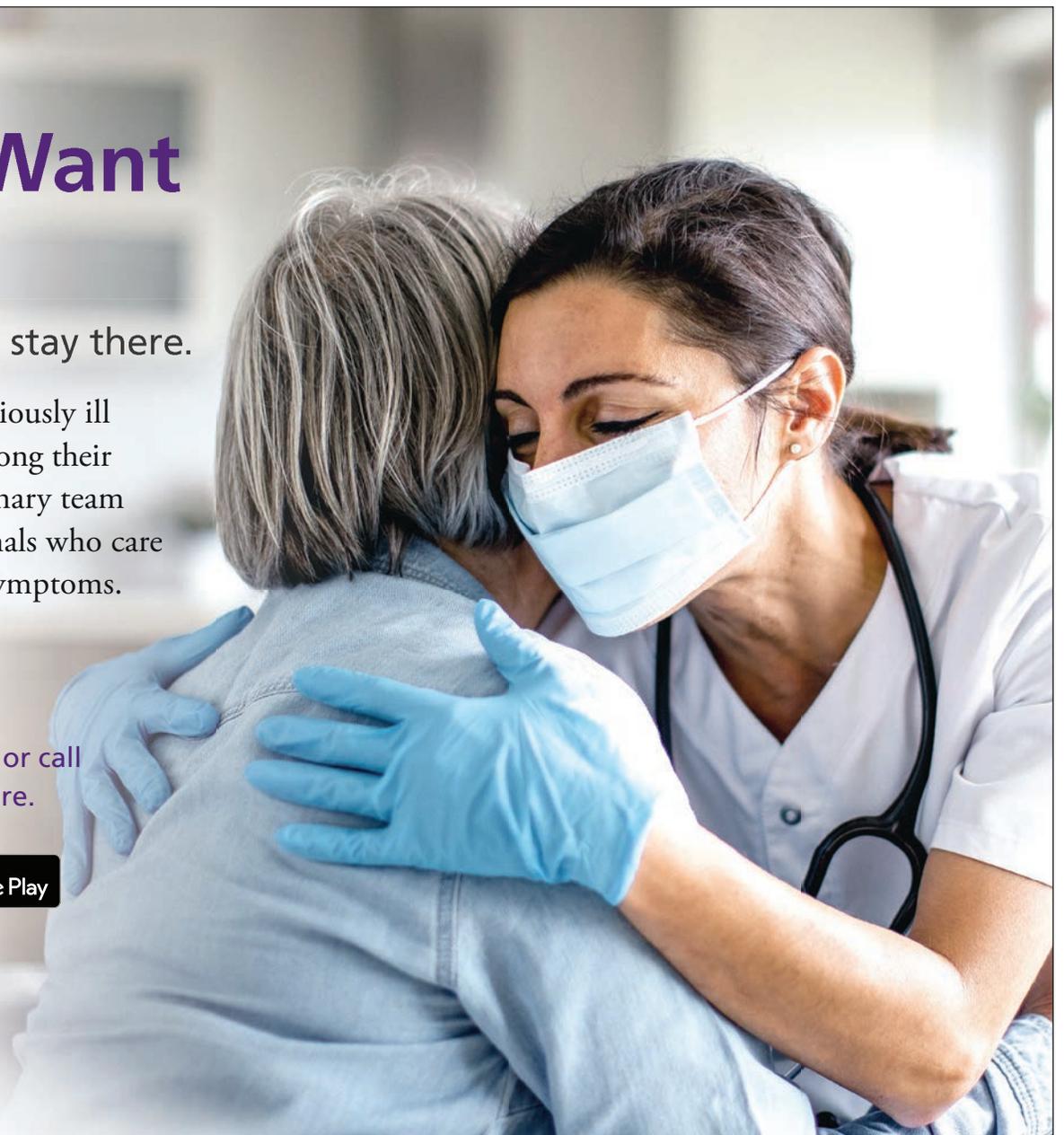
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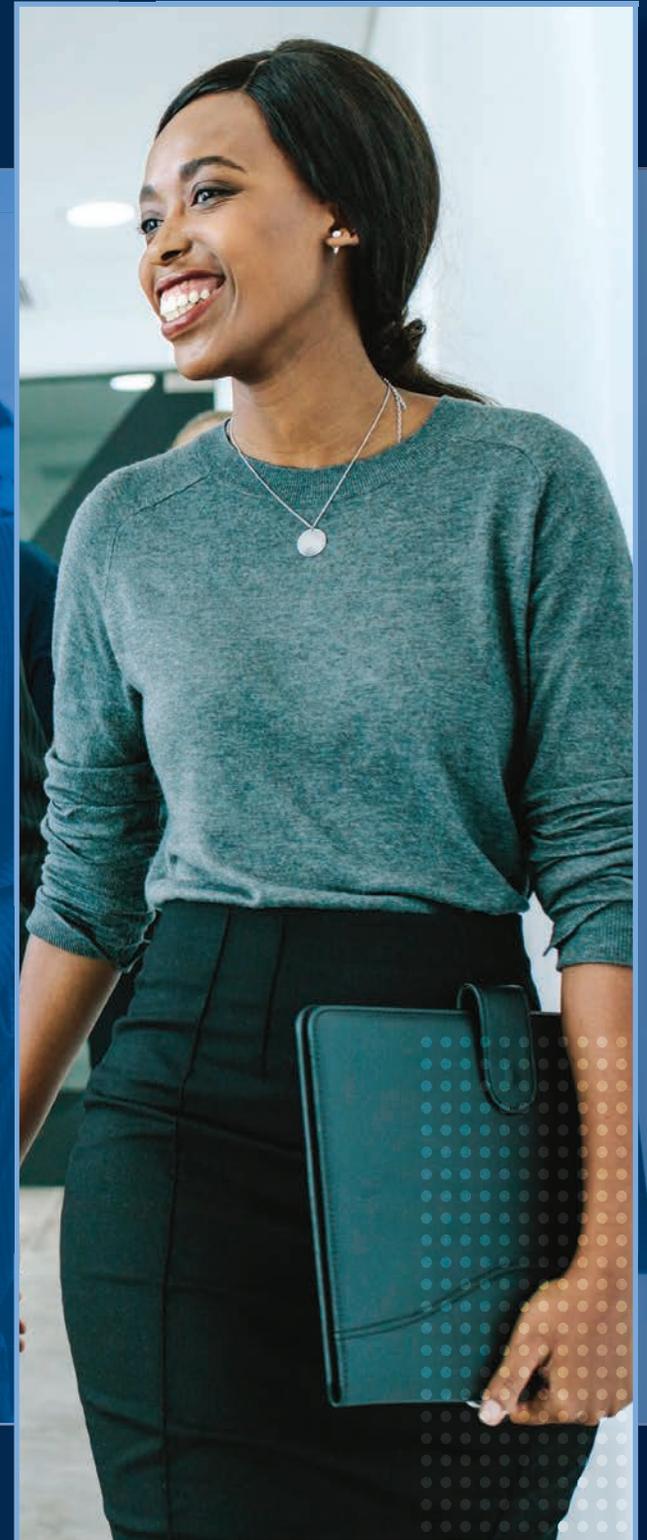


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Cover Story: iCare: An Advanced EHR Delivered in the Cloud

Continued from page 1

This powerful cloud platform provides fully integrated EHR technology at a fraction of the price of installed traditional software.

“The vast majority of health record systems out there were developed by engineers that really didn't understand how a physician and the physician practice operates,” explains Kesti. “Doctors were trained to follow a certain protocol or procedure as they see a patient, called SOAP notes. They take notes and go through a system. Most EHRs don't follow that type of system so it forces the doctor to do patient encounters differently than they were trained or used to, or that just comes naturally to them. With the advanced technology that we have, doctors should be able to have up-to-date and very accurate information at their fingertips on any given patient and be able to maneuver around very quickly. iCare has basically taken the clunkiness out of the electronic health record system and made it more intuitive.”

There are several primary benefits of iCare's EHR system, according to Kesti.

“It's ease of use, the ease of learning how to use it, and so very little or limited training time needed,” he says. “There's also very little implementation which is key when you ask a physician to switch their system. The iCare system takes the physician's data and populates it into the right locations and spots. So it takes away that headache of changing.”

iCare is also reliable. It leverages secure and innovative cloud

environments, available to give users peace of mind. It's also affordable. In fact, it costs less to operate than any solution on the market.

“Another great benefit is that it's universal,” explains Kesti. “It can be used for all different areas, from a large hospital to a multi-practice to a small practice, and in different departments in the hospital. It can cover a broad range of disciplines as well. For example, cardiologists can use it because they can easily adapt these. They have templates that they can pick from that are cardiac specific and then they can adapt them to what they want.”

Healthcare providers should be reviewing their EHR systems on a regular basis, notes Kesti.

“You should be reviewing your EHR every six to twelve months to make sure different factors are being met,” he says. If you've had your system for more than three years, you should assess it. You should take a look at what else is out there if it's not meeting your needs. Most EHRs do update themselves. It's like your phone or laptop. When do you know when you need a new laptop? You can't wait until it stops working. You're always assessing it to make sure your needs are met. Can you imagine, if you're in a hospital and your EHR stops working? You can't wait until it stops working, but before it even starts getting slow, it's probably a sign that you need an upgrade or a new system.”

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Quality Health Care Concierge Expands to Help Ease COVID Testing

BY LOIS THOMSON

Believing that health care should not be a one-size-fits-all, Michelle Kavall, R.N., M.S.N., who is the acting Founder and President, started Quality Health Care Concierge three years ago. Originally from New York, Kavall said, "I've always been an entrepreneur, and I knew that when I came to Florida I wanted to focus on health, wellness, and individualized care for people. It's always been my mission and vision to create something that is personalized, something where we're delivering superior attention to our clients based on their needs, not just in the health care realm, but also holistically, physically, emotionally – all different aspects of wellness."

This personalized care is offered by a team of approximately 15 nurses, all highly educated and qualified, who visit people in their homes, whether for a one-time visit or for ongoing care. "The clients don't have to go anywhere! It's a benefit leading to our customers staying away from getting exposed, while they remain in the comfort of their own home. It is a concierge service that provides consistency and comfort without any inconvenience."

After hearing consistent requests, Quality Health Care Concierge expanded



Michelle Kavall

into COVID Testing, but once again, in the comfort of the individual's home. COVID testing is now a large portion of the business, as many travelers are heading overseas. Kavall said, "We have found that a lot of people are traveling internationally, and a number of large corporations are mandating their employees be tested; but nobody wants to go to urgent care, nobody wants to stand in long lines at test centers." In those instances, a nurse is sent to the

person's home or designated location to perform a non-invasive test. "Our team can guarantee results the same day, oftentimes within just a few hours, and we work with multiple CLIA Certified Laboratories. It's ideal for international travel because they're usually in a time crunch, with most people having 24 to 72 hours to get to their destination. But for others, it's the peace of mind that a professional is able to help them without needing to leave the comfort of their home or hotel."

Kavall said the rapid response time is part of the quality offered by the company. The response is always same-day, as the team is hyper-responsive to get folks the appointment they need. Phone lines operate 24/7, meaning customer service is always accessible via call or text messaging, so a customer who may be busy in a meeting can send a text to schedule their same-day appointment. "We're really on top of it to make sure everybody gets what they need, and especially when they need it. We take pride in our reputation, making our process seamless and very simple."

The coverage area includes all of Southeast Florida, and Kavall said they have even been to Florida's Gulf Coast. She said, "Quality Health Care oftentimes has high-end clients who prefer to

continue about their day without any inconvenience. They want to know that a registered nurse will be there without skipping a beat."

Kavall is expecting business to increase in January as President Biden has mandated that all companies with more than 100 employees have everyone tested who is not vaccinated. She said Quality Health Care Concierge already has large corporate contracts where nurses are sent to corporations for weekly testing. "We get the test done very discreetly, and we make it very comfortable. Privacy and compliance are top priority."

She added, "I take quality into consideration, that's so important to me. I have my hands in every detail, every day, to make sure we're producing the right kind of quality service. As you can imagine, that's one of the reasons why I named the company Quality Health Care Concierge."

In 2022, Kavall is expanding Quality Health Care Concierge to provide at-home IV Therapy, Mobile Phlebotomy, Remote Telemedicine, Holistic Care Support, and multiple other services to further the concierge experience.

For more information, call (888) 981-5595 or visit www.QualityHealthCareConcierge.com.

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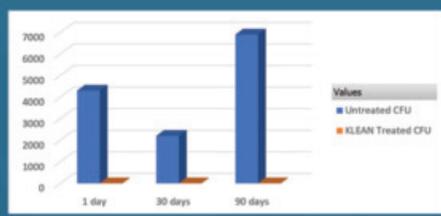
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Cover Story: Remote Patient Monitoring Transforming Healthcare Delivery

Continued from page 1

visits and remote patient monitoring had limited acceptance with only a 1% market share. However, when the pandemic further contributed to staffing shortages and professional stress and burnout, it fortified the entrepreneurial spirit of WITHmyDOC to provide new methodologies and remote resources for physicians and patients.

“Now, the increased education and improved reimbursement guidelines have given remote patient monitoring more traction and physician acceptance which results in a greater opportunity for remote patient care,” he said.

With the extreme nursing shortages caused by expansion of lucrative opportunities for travel nurses; and heightened physician burnout rates due to intense hospital-based monitoring of COVID patients; along with the COVID fear trend of patients postponing office visits; there was a need for an alternate business strategy for physician practices to provide quality care to patients.

Patients have many reasons for not making it to the office from transportation issues to childcare responsibilities, or job and low-income constraints. Virtual monitoring can alleviate many of these valid excuses with home monitoring devices and video to provide needed diagnosis and care to patients in their homes, community settings and other locations particularly as hospitals face the crisis of high occupancy due to COVID.

RPM@Home®

WITHmyDOC created and launched the RPM@Home® program which places high value on patient engagement, adoption and adherence resulting in improved outcomes.

Using artificial intelligence this platform helps monitor patients and transmits real-time data enabling healthcare providers to review patient biometric data as frequently as needed between office visits, making it easier to detect, diagnose and treat symptoms such as high blood pressure, low oxygen levels, increase/decrease in weight due to medications, arrhythmias, high temperature and elevated blood glucose levels. Studies show that incorporating RPM in chronic disease management of patients with co-morbidities can significantly improve patient quality of life by preventing complications.

RPM@Home® patients are provided with wireless sensor kits to use at home to electronically record vital signs that are to be monitored.

For example, the O2 saturation sensor is a clip the patient puts on his finger to record the oxygen level; an EKG patch is put on the chest and it records tracing of the heart rhythm; the blood pressure monitor wirelessly records systolic and diastolic measures directly into the system. The kit also includes an 8-inch tablet, which is used to capture and record information into the database.

Education and Communication Is Vital

However, providing equipment to patients at no cost, without vital education of and communication with patients regarding the commitment to monitoring their vitals to avoid further deterioration does not promise patient adherence success. For example, thanks to client feedback, WITHmyDOC recognized that nurse staffing shortages are creating problems for physicians and so they created their teams – PEP squad (Patient Engagement Professionals) and MED squad (RN Patient Specialists) – to help with the heavy lifting, according to Rodriguez.

“Our PEP squad provides training to ensure confidence, knowledge, and ease of use. They work with patients in their home to introduce RPM and follow-up to assure understanding not only on how to use the equipment itself, but on the importance of consistent transmission of their physiological data to the care team for monitoring. Additionally, our MED Squad specialists are available if a full-service clinical monitoring program is preferred and provides a valuable benefit by easing the burden on physicians,” he said.

WITHmyDOC nurses can provide monitoring of key vitals and simultaneously encourage patient engagement through regular communications, check-ins and reminders.

The MED squad checks the automatic alerts categorized into non-urgent, urgent, and emergent groupings and connects with the physician to determine care plans. The staff understands how important it is for patients to become comfortable with the new technology and ease-of-use early on and for physician alerts to be shared in real time.

Rodriguez explained that the RPM@Home® system is not meant to replace traditional office visits. Its pur-

pose is to consistently provide more data to physicians to help guide their decision-making, increasing proactive intervention to reduce costly ER visits that are a financial burden on our health and satisfy reimbursement guidelines. Providers can increase their care footprint through the use of RPM, relieving their time stress and yielding more job satisfaction.

Improved Care for Vulnerable Populations

Additionally, the American Rescue Plan and the FCC COVID-19 Telehealth program now allows Community Health Centers to use federal grant funding for telehealth and RPM services specifically for the vulnerable under-insured and uninsured communities who otherwise often forego care due to lack of transportation, inability to find a doctor or lack of time to seek primary care due to physical challenges, home childcare responsibilities and/or job hour limitations. Care is postponed until it is urgent and often at a higher cost and more ominous to recuperation.

Rodriguez summarized, “RPM@Home® kit offers many advantages using the latest breakthroughs in medical technology to monitor chronically ill patients that typically require more attention. Proactively reducing ER visits and readmissions minimizes emergent situations which could help to alleviate provider burnout. The platform allows providers to receive real-time patient information to quickly and efficiently review a large number of monitored patients. Its reporting functionality also facilitates billing.”

“By using artificial intelligence and predictive analytics, this user-friendly, end-to-end, web-based intelligence system is designed for success, and is here to stay,” he predicts.

For additional information, visit www.withmydoc.com to request a demo.



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Breast Cancer Surgeon Dr. Eleni Anastasia Tousimis Joins Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital as Medical Director of Scully-Welsh Cancer Center

Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital welcomes board-certified and fellowship-trained breast cancer surgeon Eleni Anastasia Tousimis, M.D. Dr. Tousimis will also serve as the Medical Director of the Scully-Welsh Cancer Center. Dr. Tousimis earned her medical degree from Albany Medical College in New York. She completed the General Surgery Residency Program at Guthrie Clinic in Pennsylvania. She completed her Breast Oncology Surgery Fellowship at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York, and Surgical Oncology Fellowship in minimally invasive techniques at the European Institute of Oncology in Italy. Dr. Tousimis completed her MBA at MIT in Boston.

Dr. Tousimis has been a practicing breast surgeon for the past twenty years. She was initially an associate Professor of Surgery at Weill Cornell New York Presbyterian Hospital, then a Professor of Surgery and Director of the Breast Cancer Center at Georgetown University hospital. She was the former President of the American Medical Women's Association.



Dr. Eleni Anastasia Tousimis

Holy Cross Health Adds Geriatrician at New AgeWell Center

Geriatrician Laura Alvarez Orduz, M.D., has joined the staff of the new AgeWell Center at Holy Cross HealthPlex. Dr. Alvarez Orduz attended medical school at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia in Bogota, Colombia before training in epidemiology at the Universidad de Los Llanos in Villavicencio, Colombia. She participated in clinical rotations at University of Miami and went on to complete her residency in internal medicine at St. Mary Medical Center Long Beach in Long Beach, California, which is affiliated with UCLA and a geriatric medicine fellowship at Yale University. Previously, she spent five years as a general and primary care physician in Columbia.

Fluent in both English and Spanish, Dr. Alvarez Orduz is a member of the American Geriatric Society and American Medical Association. She is board certified in internal medicine and certified in advanced cardiac life support and basic life support. She holds a medical license in Florida, Connecticut and Colombia.



Dr. Laura Alvarez Orduz

Rheumatologist Rochelle Rosian, MD, Joins Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital

Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital welcomes board-certified rheumatologist Rochelle Rosian, M.D., as Medical Director of Rheumatology. Dr. Rosian completed her undergraduate degree at Youngstown State University, near her hometown of Canfield, OH, before graduating from Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine. Her residency at Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh was then followed by a rheumatology fellowship at Cleveland Clinic. For 25 years Dr. Rosian has cared for patients as a staff physician in the Department of Rheumatic and Immunologic Diseases at Cleveland Clinic in Ohio. Most recently, she served as Director of Regional Rheumatology, overseeing a regional practice that included nearly a dozen rheumatologists across multiple locations in northeastern Ohio.



Dr. Rochelle Rosian

Family and Sports Medicine Physician Jenny Berezanskaya, DO, Joins Cleveland Clinic Martin Health

Cleveland Clinic Martin Health welcomes board-certified family medicine physician Jenny Berezanskaya, D.O. Dr. Berezanskaya is board-certified in both sports medicine and family medicine by the American Board of Family Medicine, as well as family medicine by the American Osteopathic Board of Family Medicine.

Dr. Berezanskaya is skilled in ultrasound-guided procedures, including joint injections and lavage. She is also trained in osteopathic manipulative medicine and Botox injections for treatment of migraines.

Dr. Berezanskaya earned her Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree from New York College of Osteopathic Medicine. She completed the Family Medicine Residency program at Morristown Medical Center in New Jersey. She completed the Sports Medicine Fellowship program at University of Miami Sports Medicine Institute.



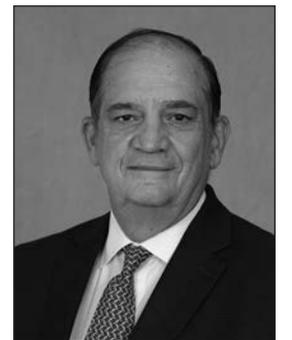
Dr. Jenny Berezanskaya

Dr. John Ricotta Joins Prime Vascular Institute

John J. Ricotta, M.D., FACS, an internationally renowned vascular surgeon with over four decades of experience providing diagnosis and treatments for vascular disease ailments, and clinical professor at The George Washington University School of Medicine, has joined the Prime Vascular Institute in Boca Raton.

Prior to joining Prime Vascular Institute, Dr. Ricotta led a successful practice at Capitol Vascular Care and served as clinical professor of surgery at The George Washington University School of Medicine & Health Sciences located in Washington DC. Dr. Ricotta is also professor emeritus at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, School of Medicine. In addition, Dr. Ricotta's experience includes serving as chair of surgery at Washington Hospital Center and director of the Regional Vascular Program for MedStar. Dr. Ricotta also served as medical director of Livanta BFCC-QIO.

For his education and training, Dr. Ricotta completed a residency and was named chief resident at Johns Hopkins Hospital, located in Baltimore, MD. In addition, Dr. Ricotta completed an instructorship in surgery, internship in general surgery and medical school at Johns Hopkins Hospital. Prior to medical school, Dr. Ricotta graduated from Yale University located in New Haven, CT



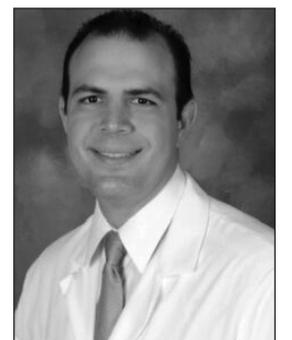
Dr. John Ricotta

Dr. Omar M. Rashid Named to American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network's National Board of Directors

Omar M. Rashid, M.D., JD, FACS, FSSO, DABS, has been named to the Board of Directors of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), the advocacy affiliate for the American Cancer Society (ACS). As a member of the Board, Dr. Rashid will provide leadership and guidance for ACS CAN, which pursues evidence-based public policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem nationwide.

Early on, Dr. Rashid recognized the important role public health policy plays in improving outcomes for cancer patients, completing a dual MD-JD degree at Duke University Schools of Medicine and Law. He then completed General Surgery residency at Virginia Commonwealth University Health System and Massey Comprehensive National Cancer Institute while at the same time completing a legislative fellowship in the Virginia General Assembly working with staff on complex health policy issues.

During this time, Dr. Rashid received multiple awards for his cancer-related health policy research and recognition including being appointed as the Administrative Chief General Surgery Resident at VCU Health System as well as an appointed official to serve Gov. Tim Kaine (D) and later his successor Gov. Bob McDonnell (R). He completed his Complex General Surgical Oncology Fellowship at the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute in Tampa and was appointed as an Administrative Co-Fellow, serving as a clinical instructor in surgery. While at the Tampa-based institute, he was awarded multiple awards for his research focusing on cancer, robotic surgery and health policy before returning home to South Florida.



Dr. Omar M. Rashid



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

Rendina, Astrea Development and PAM Health Celebrate Construction Start of Rehabilitation Hospital in Jupiter

Rendina Healthcare Real Estate and Astrea Development recently began construction on a 42-bed licensed inpatient rehabilitation in Jupiter. Located in a desired section of Jupiter known as Abacoa, the 48,941-square-foot facility will be across the street to the south



of Rendina's headquarters on approximately 5 acres of land. The hospital will be fully leased and operated by PAM Health ("PAM"), an industry leading operator of physical rehabilitation and specialty hospitals across the country.

The hospital will serve patients in the Palm Beach and Martin County regions by offering inpatient and outpatient programs, a procedure room, pharmacy, physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy. Once open and operating, PAM will employ over 100 full-time and 60 part-time employees at this location.

A thorough study of the market, including a bed need analysis, was used to identify the ideal location for the new hospital.

"PAM Health will use the new location to address a gap in market," said Richard M. Rendina, Chairman and CEO of Rendina. "Not only is this Rendina's first inpatient rehabilitation project, but an opportunity to address a growing need in our own backyard by providing our community rehabilitation services from the best operator in this space."

Astrea CEO Erik de Vries and President Richard Fiske have a successful track record developing similar facilities and brought the opportunity to Rendina in 2020. Richard Fiske is a longtime member of Rendina's Advisory Board.

"We are thrilled to partner with Rendina and PAM Health to deliver this state-of-the-art physical rehabilitation hospital that will provide high quality care to the community and serve an unmet need," said Richard Fiske, President of Astrea.

The hospital is expected to open in Q4 of 2022.

First Hospital Based Focused Ultrasound Incisionless Procedure for Parkinson's & Essential Tremors in the Region Takes Place at Delray Medical Center

Delray Medical Center is now the first hospital in the region to treat a patient with the new MR-guided focused ultrasound by INSIGHTEC™. This technology is a scalpel-free treatment for essential tremor and medication-refractory tremor-dominant Parkinson's disease. This device uses sound wave energy to treat brain tissue as the source of the tremor and there is no surgical incision or anesthesia necessary.

The MR-guided focused ultrasound combines two technologies, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), which pinpoints the exact location in the brain responsible for the tremor, and ultrasound, which precisely delivers over 1,000 highly focused beams of acoustic energy at that exact location without damaging any surrounding brain tissue. Some of the benefits to this technology include:

- No surgical incisions resulting in reduced risk of infection.
- Quicker recovery time with no surgical incision, allowing a return to daily activities within days.
- Performed as an outpatient procedure – most patients go home within 23 hours.
- Immediate and significant reduction in hand tremors.
- Treatment has minimum side effects.

Palm Beach Health Network Increases Ease of Access to Its Services with a New Tenet Transfer Center

The Palm Beach Health Network announces the formation of the new Tenet Transfer Center. The transfer center will support patients in need of a transfer or a direct admission to the hospitals. It is staffed 24/7 by registered nurses and clinicians trained in critical care and emergency medicine, and they are well-versed on the Palm Beach Health Network's services and departments.

"The goal of our new transfer center is to provide a seamless experience for the patient, provider or sending-facility, and make access to our comprehensive services easier, while getting patients to the facility that can best accommodate their needs," said Maggie Gill, chief executive officer of the Palm Beach Health Network and Delray Medical Center. "The Palm Beach Health Network offers the highest-level of care within Palm Beach County, along with a wide array of service lines and technology, and this convenient option will allow clinicians get their patients into our system with ease."

Some of the capabilities of the transfer center include:

- Responsive and single point of access-no phone transfers between departments and holds; faster connection to on-call clinical specialists who understand your patients' needs.
- Predictable and efficient patient transfers facilitated by an experienced RN staff.
- Efficient delivery of pertinent clinical documentation.
- Enhanced care coordination and timely follow-up regarding patient disposition.
- Access to high-quality services at hospitals that can provide the appropriate level of care.
- Increased reporting to provide transparency on completed patient transfers.
- COVID-Safe standards in place for the safety of patients and visitors.
- Continued expansion of services to meet patients' needs.

Health Care District Opens New Testing Site

The Health Care District of Palm Beach County announced a new COVID-19 testing site opening in Belle Glade. The District's mobile health clinic will provide rapid antigen testing while stationed outside the county's only public hospital, Lakeside Medical Center, located at 39200 Hooker Highway.

"As the Omicron variant becomes more dominant and COVID-19 hospitalizations continue to rise across the state, the Health Care District wants to enhance testing during the holidays to help take pressure off the Emergency Room in Belle Glade," said Belma Andrić, M.D., MPH, Chief Medical Officer at the District. "We'll be providing people with testing and if needed, treatment, thanks to AMR."

American Medical Response (AMR) will be onsite providing Regeneron monoclonal antibody treatment to patients who tested positive for COVID-19 and meet the criteria to receive it.

No appointment is needed and walk-ups are welcome.

Eliza and Hugh Culverhouse Jr. Make \$1 Million Donation to the Desai Sethi Urology Institute at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine

As a display of immense gratitude, Eliza and Hugh Culverhouse Jr., have made an extraordinary \$1 million donation to further the Desai Sethi Urology Institute at the University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine as a global leader in the field of urology.

The gift is in honor of Dipen J. Parekh, M.D., the chief operating officer at the University of Miami Health System, executive dean for clinical affairs, founding director of the Desai Sethi Urology Institute at the Miller School, and the Victor A. Politano, M.D. Endowed Chair in Urology. Parekh is one of the world's most experienced robotic surgeons in urologic oncology and is the founding director of the new Urology Institute.

Hugh Culverhouse, a successful South Florida attorney and businessman, witnessed Dr. Parekh's expertise firsthand in March of 2020.

"My prostate-specific antigen (PSA) level started skyrocketing and I have a family history of prostate cancer," said Culverhouse. "Dr. Parekh was extremely sensitive in explaining to me why my prostate needed to be removed."

After a successful surgery and an ideal recovery, "the outcome has been nothing short of incredible. I have quickly regained control of my urinary functions. Everything I was afraid I would lose, I did not," said Culverhouse. "I live without the fear of dying in the same manner as my father and grandfather. A life without fear is precious."

The Culverhouse's extraordinary generosity will help in the establishment of a premier Urology Institute within the Miller School, which will accelerate breakthrough advances in research and expand clinical care.



Eliza and Hugh Culverhouse Jr.

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Cover Story: South University Expands with Two New Programs

Continued from page 1

in the community. "PAs are one of the alternate professions that help satisfy some of that need, so we try to make sure our students are very well educated in a well-rounded curriculum, and that they get as much experience as they can. Usually they're able to do quite well, they really excel."

The PA class began in January 2021 and the AA followed in September, and both programs have proved to be good additions to the university. Dr. Schugar said the PA field is very competitive, and as a brand new program, it received more than 1,500 applications for the initial 40 cohort spaces. She said the program increased the class size to 50 the second year, and for accrediting purposes it must remain at that size for several years; but the number of applications increased to 2,200 for those 50 spots.

Dr. Nguyen added that "the students from that class are from all over the United States. It's a very sought after field of study."

One reason, according to Dr. Schugar, is that the field offers numerous opportunities. "Unlike nurse practitioners, physician assistants get trained in all disciplines of medicine – emergency, women's health, pediatric – and they do their clinical experiences in all those areas. So they're well-rounded and are able to fit in almost anywhere."

The PA program runs for 27 months, while the AA program is 29 months. The length is necessary because of the heavy clinical experience required by the accrediting body. Additionally, all students are required to go to campus for their studies and their labs, which will be done face-to-face.

Jeff Carroll, program director for the AA program, said, "Our accrediting body requires 2,000 clinical hours in their training. With our previous numbers at South University, we're well over 2,500." The number of hours required is one reason for the nine-quarter format.

Carroll also pointed out that the AA program has an affiliation with the University of Florida's College of Medicine in the Department of Anesthesiology. "Their program is one of the best in the country, with all of the resources they have, so we partner with them to use those resources for our anesthesiology training. We're very proud to have that type of resource."

Before finalizing the new programs, advice was sought from PACs – program advisory committees – that are made up of area professionals, both clinical and faculty. Dr. Schugar said, "We meet with the PACs about every other quarter, especially now while we're growing the program, because we want to get input on certain things about the curriculum – what's necessary, or if there are any deficits that we need to correct."

Dr. Nguyen said, "One of the strong points of the programs is we partner with community health care providers, and one sign of a quality PA program is to have strong clinical affiliations to give our students hands-on training that's essential from quality hospitals and clinics."

Dr. Ilaria Gadalla, Physician Assistant Department Chair and Interim Assistant Dean for the College of Health Professions, and Dr. Jeffrey Bishop, medical director for the PA program, are well-known practicing physicians from the community, and Dr. Schugar said, "Because of them and their connections, we have been able to secure more than adequate clinical rotation for our students, which is something most programs are really struggling to do right now." Dr. Nguyen added, "Our students are very privileged to have them involved in our curriculum design and construction, and to receive training from seasoned PAs and physicians."

For more information, call (561) 273-6500 or visit www.southuniversity.edu/west-palm-beach.

Golisano Children's Hospital Announces Pediatric Neurosurgery Program in Collaboration with Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital

Golisano Children's Hospital announced a new pediatric neurosurgery program in collaboration with Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital.

The new program will allow children who have neurological conditions which require surgery to receive that high level of care at Golisano Children's Hospital instead of traveling outside of the area to larger cities, like Miami or St. Petersburg.

"We are so proud to be able to offer this service to the children and families in our community," said Alyssa Bostwick, chief nurse executive and vice president of operations at Golisano Children's Hospital. "There is a huge need in our region for pediatric neurosurgery, and more importantly, it's growing every year. Due to the population growth in Southwest Florida, and younger families moving to the area, we're seeing more and more children who need our services. This neurosurgery program, in affiliation with Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital, has been two years in the making and we know it will have a major impact."

The affiliation with Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital began in 2019 when the two organizations entered into an agreement to expand care for kids across Florida's west coast by working together to deliver the highest quality care, leverage resources and create better value for families.

Through the affiliation, the two children's hospitals collaborate in several ways, including pediatric research studies and protocols, telehealth counseling and consultations, educational conferences, and the recruitment of a dedicated pediatric neurosurgeon to be based out of Golisano Children's Hospital.

Through the extensive recruiting process, Dr. Theodore Spinks, a pediatric neurosurgeon with more than 15 years of experience, has been chosen to lead the neurosurgery program at Golisano Children's Hospital.

He recently joined the team and has already performed several surgeries, allowing families to stay in Southwest Florida to receive this high level of care.

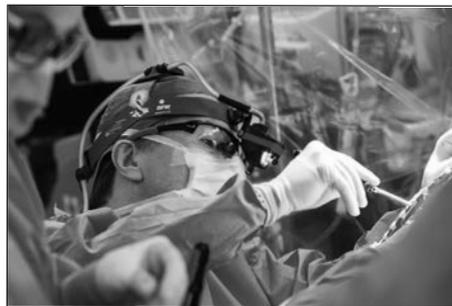
Accolades Accolades Accolades Accolades

University of Miami Health System Recognized as a Mitral Valve Repair Reference Center from the American Heart Association and the Mitral Foundation

UHealth – the University of Miami Health System has received the Mitral Valve Repair Reference Center Award from the American Heart Association and the Mitral Foundation for a demonstrated record of superior clinical outcomes resulting from evidence-based, guideline-directed degenerative mitral valve repair.

The Mitral Valve Repair Reference Center Award was developed to identify, recognize, and promote the nation's recognized medical centers for mitral valve repair surgery. UHealth earned the award for demonstrating adherence to evidence-based treatment guidelines as well as an ongoing commitment to reporting and measuring quality and outcome metrics specific to mitral valve repairs.

"We are proud that the work we have done in the area of mitral valve repair has been recognized by the American Heart Association and the Mitral Foundation," said Joseph Lamelas, M.D., chief and program director of cardiac surgery at UHealth and the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. "This is truly a team effort, and we are proud to be able to offer our patients the best possible outcomes in their journey to better heart health."



Dr. Joseph Lamelas

Jupiter Medical Center Earns "Top Hospital" Distinction in Rigorous Evaluation by National Patient Safety Organization

Jupiter Medical Center's commitment to patient safety has again been recognized by the watchdog organization widely acknowledged as defining the toughest standards in hospital safety and quality.

National nonprofit, the Leapfrog Group, has recognized Jupiter Medical Center with its Top Hospital Award, one of the most competitive distinctions that hospitals can receive. Only 46 hospitals in the nation have been designated as Top Hospitals. This award comes just three weeks after Jupiter Medical Center earned its seventh consecutive Leapfrog "A" Hospital Safety Grade for achieving the highest standards in safety. Jupiter Medical Center was the only hospital in the region awarded with seven consecutive "A" grades.

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DADE COUNTY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Dade County Medical Association (DCMA) - "The voice of Physicians in Miami Dade County." Supporting its members in all aspects of the practice of medicine; to serve physicians and their patients by establishing and promoting ethical, educational and clinical standards for the medical profession, and to advocate the highest principle of all, the integrity of the patient/physician relationship. For more information: visit the website www.miamimed.com or please call Angel Bosch at (305) 324-8717 or email Angel@abosch@miamimed.com

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HEALTHCARE CANNABISNEWS™ FLORIDA

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Marc Egart, CPA, P.A. is a South Florida CPA firm of dedicated accountants who work closely with our clients providing accounting services as well as tax preparation and bookkeeping. We offer value-added services in areas of assurance, CFO services, and other areas of compliance. Our philosophy is client focused service that addresses the needs of our personal and corporate clients whether they are considered a startup venture or a seasoned organization. For more information, please visit egortcpa.com or call us at (754) 301-2183.

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S.R. Construction Services (SRCS) is a FL statewide division 1 commercial & industrial turn-key General Contractor. One of the most critical and over looked challenges for any General Contractor operating in the Medical Cannabis sector is the inability to 1. find a bank to provide basic depositary and other financial services and 2. meet the stringent qualifications and required ongoing reporting and monthly audits for a (CRB) Cannabis related business. SRCS satisfies both. Noteworthy Experience: Cultivation (both indoor and outdoor facilities) including Research Nursery Facilities; Large scale Processing & Distribution (New Construction & Renovation); Fertigation Systems: Dosatron (Injectors / Nutrient Delivery Systems), Growlink and Consolidated Water Systems; IT Automation Systems: Climate Control Systems CCS, ARGUS Control Systems, Ridder Controls and HydroFarm; Industrial Hardware: Vitalis Extraction Technology systems, Eden Labs Extraction, Shaeffer Fans, Thermocore SIP panels, Nichiha Building Wall Panels, Permatherm Panel, NexG3n Table systems, RollaBond Rack Systems, numerous LED (Light-Emitting Diode), HPS (High-Pressure Sodium) grow light systems. Completed more than 80 Retail Dispensary renovations. CRB Bankable. For more information go to www.S-R-Construction.com, or contact Eric@S-R-Construction.com, (561) 290-0402

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MEDICAL MARIJUANA TREATMENT CENTERS

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Curaleaf Florida offers premium, safe and reliable medical cannabis products to our patients. Our mission is to improve lives by providing clarity around cannabis and confidence around consumption. Advanced industry research is used to develop our products. We cultivate our cannabis products using the highest standards of production with medically precise extraction and purification methods. Dispensaries are located across Florida with delivery offered statewide. Free patient consultations are available. Please visit us at <https://curaleaf.com/>

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DocMJ Values - We're big believers in the virtues we live and work by — empathy, compassion, and kindness. We're here to support patients in getting the help they deserve as quickly as possible. We strive to accomplish that in the most effective way possible. **Our Mission** - We aim to bring affordable medical marijuana recommendations to qualified patients across the state of Florida. We work tirelessly to be the most convenient, streamlined, and cost-effective solution for Floridians, and our mission is to provide the highest quality of care in the process. Check us out at www.DOCMJ.com or call (888) 908-0143

PRODUCTS AND SUPPLIES

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Global Advanced Botanicals (GAB) is a physician driven company dedicated to producing only high-quality and medical grade cannabidiol. The force that drove this company's establishment was providing healthier medical alternatives for families; this is the reason GAB strives to hold only the highest of standards. For more information, go to www.gabcbd.com or call (305) 960-7898.



HEALTHCARE CANNABISNEWS™ FLORIDA

Cresco Labs Announces Opening of 44th Dispensary in Pensacola



Cresco Labs announced the opening of a new Sunnyside dispensary located at 3900 N 9th Ave. in Pensacola, FL. Sunnyside Pensacola is the Company's second store in the Panhandle region. With today's opening, Cresco Labs operates 12 Florida stores and 44 nationwide. "This is our fourth Florida new store opening since the closing of the Bluma Wellness acquisition, and we're on target to double our store count in the state by the anniversary date," said Charlie Bachtell, CEO and Co-founder of Cresco Labs. "We're going deeper and expanding accessibility to our branded products in the two biggest medical markets, Florida and Pennsylvania. We're already the top seller of branded cannabis in Pennsylvania, and we're excited to expand access to those same amazing products to patients throughout Florida."

Trulieve Opens Port Richey Dispensary

Trulieve Cannabis Corp. announced the opening of a new medical cannabis dispensary in Port Richey, Florida. The Port Richey location is Trulieve's 112th dispensary in Florida and its 159th nationwide, following the relocation of the Tampa North Dale Mabry medical dispensary. As the state's leading medical cannabis provider, Trulieve's retail employees are trained to provide personalized patient care and support individuals at every stage of their cannabis journey. Trulieve dispensaries throughout Florida offer on-site consultations to help patients obtain appropriate medical products and dosages to ensure optimal cannabis experiences.

Cannabist Medical Marijuana Dispensary Opens in Delray Beach

Columbia Care Inc. is pleased to announce the opening of Cannabist in Delray Beach.

More than a dispensary, Cannabist is Columbia Care's new award-winning retail brand that provides a higher experience built on passion, technology innovation, community commitment and product standards. Cannabist dispensaries center around making cannabis shopping approachable and straightforward, accommodating the vast range of experience levels patients may have when they walk through the doors. Technology will enable a seamless and personalized shopping experience anywhere, from in-store to at-home. Each Cannabist location will have Forage, Columbia Care's proprietary online cannabis discovery tool.



(l-r) Greg Meyer, Kimberly Reynolds,
Michelle San Miguel

Cresco Labs Announces Opening of 45th Nationwide Dispensary in Sarasota

Cresco Labs is expanding its Sunnyside brand in southwest Florida with a new store located at 8307 Lockwood Ridge Rd. in Sarasota. Sunnyside Sarasota marks Cresco Labs' 13th Florida location and 45th nationwide store.

"We are excited to open Sunnyside Sarasota to continue to expand access to our branded products for Florida patients," said Charlie Bachtell, Cresco Labs' CEO & Co-founder. "This is our fifth new dispensary since entering Florida in April, and we expect to continue to expand across the state in the New Year so more patients have access to our products, which have proven to be some of the most popular in other states."



Photo credit: Business Wire

Trulieve Expands Patient Access to Medical Cannabis with Eighth Tampa-area Dispensary

Trulieve Cannabis Corp. opened its eighth medical cannabis dispensary in the Tampa area. The Tampa-Fairgrounds Trulieve is located at 7702 E. Hillsborough Avenue near the intersection of I-4 and I-75. "Trulieve is excited to expand access to medical cannabis in Tampa and to continue building strong relationships in the community," said Kim Rivers, CEO of Trulieve. "Our company is driven by our commitment to providing tailored, high-quality patient care to as many patients as possible."

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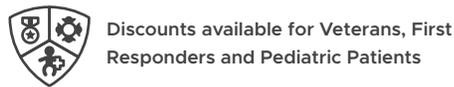
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Florida Medical Marijuana Physicians Group

ZOOM Meetings ▶ **Wednesday, January 12 & Wednesday, January 26**
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



HEALTHCARE CANNABISNEWS™

FLORIDA

Trulieve Announces Grand Opening of Okeechobee Dispensary

Trulieve Cannabis Corp. opened its newest medical dispensary in Okeechobee, Florida. The Okeechobee location is Trulieve's 111th in the state.

"Trulieve looks forward to expanding access to medical cannabis in Okeechobee and building strong relationships with the community," said Kim Rivers, CEO of Trulieve. "Our company is driven by our commitment to providing tailored, high-quality patient care to as many patients as possible, and after opening more than 40 new dispensaries across the state this year, we are proud to expand our retail presence in southeastern Florida."

Ayr Wellness Announces Opening of 43rd Florida Location in Eustis

Ayr Wellness announced the opening of its newest dispensary in Eustis, Florida. The dispensary will occupy over 3,000 square feet of prime retail space in the idyllic lakeside city of Eustis, just south of The Villages – a vibrant, 55+ community widely touted as America's most popular retirement community. The store is the first Florida dispensary to have been fully designed and built by the Ayr team and incorporates design elements inspired by the company's upcoming Boston-area flagship dispensaries in Back Bay and Watertown.

Jon Sandelman, Founder, Chairman and CEO of Ayr Wellness, said, "With 43 stores now open in Florida and another 30 locations under lease, we continue to expand our presence with our latest opening in Eustis. The Eustis store is notable both for its prime location, and for being Ayr's first Florida store to incorporate our customer-centric design philosophies. The retail experience highlights our improved product selection, curated to meet consumer needs across every product category, and is designed to foster meaningful relationships with every customer and community member who comes through our doors."

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Trulieve Expands Executive Leadership Team *Steve White named President after Harvest acquisition*

Trulieve Cannabis Corp. (CSE: TRUL) (OTCQX: TCNNF) ("Trulieve" or "the Company"), a leading and top-performing cannabis company in the United States, today announced several new executive appointments including; President, Steve White; Vice President & General Counsel, Nicole Stanton; Director of Investor Relations, Christine Hersey; and Executive Director of Corporate Communications, Rob Kremer.

The White, Stanton and Hersey appointments follow the Company's October 1, 2021, closing of the acquisition of Harvest Health and Recreation Inc. ("Harvest").

"We are thrilled to officially announce the appointment of several members of the legacy Harvest team to key roles within our organization," said Kim Rivers, Trulieve's Chief Executive Officer. "The addition of talent and experienced leadership was a key component of the Harvest acquisition and further advances our strategy of expansion through the addition of

regional assets and teams within our hub model. We also are adding to our leadership team as the company continues to experience significant growth."

These leaders deliver a breadth of experience from multiple industries to Trulieve's leadership team:

Steve White, President – Mr. White co-founded Harvest Health & Recreation in 2011 and served as Chief Executive Officer until the acquisition of the company by Trulieve. As an early pioneer in the U.S. legal cannabis industry, Mr. White led the company as it grew from a single dispensary to become one of the top multi-state operators with cultivation, manufacturing, and retail operations in several markets. Mr. White spearheaded one of the industry's most successful license application teams, paving the way for rapid growth through organic license awards and capital efficient expansion. As a former litigator, Steve White successfully navigated the complex patchwork of dif-

ferent regulatory regimes across various U.S. markets while advocating for expanded access to cannabis for patients and adult use consumers. Steve White serves as a member of the boards of the Arizona Dispensary Association and charitable organization Harvesting Hope. Mr. White graduated from Arizona State University Honors College summa cum laude with a B.S. in Political Science and earned a Juris Doctorate from Washington & Lee University, School of Law.

Nicole Stanton, Vice President and General Counsel – Ms. Stanton served as Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary of Harvest since 2019, overseeing the legal department and compliance program. She received the Public Company General Counsel of the Year award by the Arizona Corporate Counsel in April 2021. That same year, the Harvest legal department was nominated for Legal Department of the Year. Prior to joining Harvest, Ms. Stanton was employed by the

national law firm of Quarles & Brady LLP for nearly 20 years. She served as the office managing partner of the firm's Phoenix office from 2013-2018, as well as the firm's assistant general counsel from 2009-2019. While managing partner, she was responsible for overseeing more than 100 lawyers and 75 professional legal staff, covering 11 different legal practice areas. She is a veteran litigation and legal ethics counsel. Her success as defense counsel garnered her an established and credible reputation across business practices including awards as one of the Top 100 Lawyers in Arizona from AZ Business Magazine (2015-2018) and Phoenix Business Journal's Most Admired Leaders (2014). Ms. Stanton holds a Bachelor of Science in Communication from the University of Utah and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Arizona, College of Law. She has taught legal ethics at Arizona State University's Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law and is a member

Continued on following page



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Back Cover Story: Cannabis Spotlight

Continued from back cover

practicing cannabis medicine since October 2016. As mentioned, I was impressed with our patient testimonials, yet disturbed to find they have no job protections, lost telehealth for re-certifications, and are subjected to repeated threats of proposed THC caps from the Florida legislators. Now I am fighting for my new patients, who are seemingly discriminated against based on their medication. Since joining the Florida Medical Marijuana Physicians Group, I have connected with other like-minded individuals who are advocating for their patients' rights, and together we are ensuring that this field moves forward scientifically and systematically, while protecting our patients' needs and safety.

Do you see Florida moving toward recreational cannabis and how will this affect your practice?

Yes, eventually I see Florida moving forward with recreational cannabis for adult use in several years. I believe this will benefit those who are unwilling or afraid to access the system medically. I think there will still be a role for medical cannabis for those patients who prefer evidence-based professional guidance, as well as preferred access to medical products (perhaps higher-potency), faster service at the dispensaries, and no taxes. Until then, I can assure that we will continue to advocate for expanded patient access to this important medicine, as well as hiring and employment protections for patients, reciprocity for out-of-state card holders to access our system when visiting, no medical THC caps, product safety, patient education, and telehealth for re-certification of existing patients.



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Wake Up
CANNABIS

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Continued from previous page

of the prestigious American Law Institute.

Christine Hersey, Director of Investor Relations – Ms. Hersey served as Director of Investor Relations at Harvest since June 2019. She has over 20 years' experience in corporate, buy-side and sell side roles working in and covering a variety of sectors including biotech, cannabis, cleantech, and consumer retail at Durant Partners, Efficacy Capital, M.S. Howells, Savitr Capital, and Wedbush Securities. Ms. Hersey previously covered global securities traveling throughout the U.S., Europe and Asia. Prior to her career in finance, Christine worked as an environmental engineer and project manager. Ms. Hersey earned a B.S. in Civil Engineering from Worcester Polytechnic Institute, M.S. in Civil Engineering from Northeastern University, and an MBA and M.S. in Finance from Boston College.

Rob Kremer, Executive Director of Corporate Communications – Mr. Kremer has nearly 30 years of experience in both corporate and agency settings. In his role at Trulieve, he will oversee both internal and external communications. Kremer spent the past 10 years as a partner at Rhythm Communications where he developed and implemented successful programs and campaigns. Client leadership includes Chick-fil-A, General Mills, Mizuno, as well as celebrities such as Champ Bailey, Ludacris and Ray Lewis, among many others. Previously, he served as in-house PR at both Coca-Cola and Aetna U.S. Healthcare, as well as an internal communications consultant at Hewitt Associates. Several campaigns under his stewardship have been recognized for regional and national awards. Mr. Kremer is a graduate of the Henry W. Grady School of Journalism at the University of Georgia and serves on numerous philanthropic boards.

Back Cover Story: At Vivant Medical Marijuana, Doctor-Patient Relationships Key

Continued from back cover

icine is used the right way.

"I've seen quite a lot of improvement in patients' health; many are no longer taking any kind of antidepressants or benzodiazepines or drinking alcohol, and they are sleeping better and going back to work," she said. "But it's important that they understand how the medicine works and find the right balance to make it a positive experience."

When patients call, Dr. Moise-Johnson spends a minimum of 45 minutes educating them on the benefits of medical marijuana; the different illnesses it treats and why; the endocannabinoid system and the importance of terpenes.

"By understanding the different terpenes, you can find something more customized to your needs," she said. "It's also important to understand how these products work and how to take them so that patients don't just go into the dispensary blindly.

"At Vivant, they are always going to have that exclusive doctor-patient relationship."

To learn more, visit Vivant at www.vivantmedicalmarijuana.com or call (800) 574-9491.

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Columbia Care Transforms Florida Footprint to New Award-Winning Cannabist Retail Experience



I-r) Marcel Martinez, Ray Naslund, Angel Marrero, Conner Nelson, Celeste Ivy, Pablo Serrano PHOTOS COURTESY OF CANNABIST

Columbia Care Inc. announced it has completed the rebranding of its footprint across the state of Florida to the new Cannabist retail design and experience.

“Our completion of the rebrand in Florida is an extremely important milestone in our nationwide transition to Cannabist. This is our first market-wide Cannabist launch and represents a critical step in Columbia Care’s evolution,” said Nicholas Vita, CEO, Columbia Care. “The Cannabist experience is industry-leading, as we aim to provide the best products and the best customer service in the industry, enhanced by our innovative technology solutions that facilitate an efficient, personalized and targeted shopping experience. We look forward to bringing Cannabist to even more customers and patients across the country in 2022 as we expand throughout our national retail footprint.”

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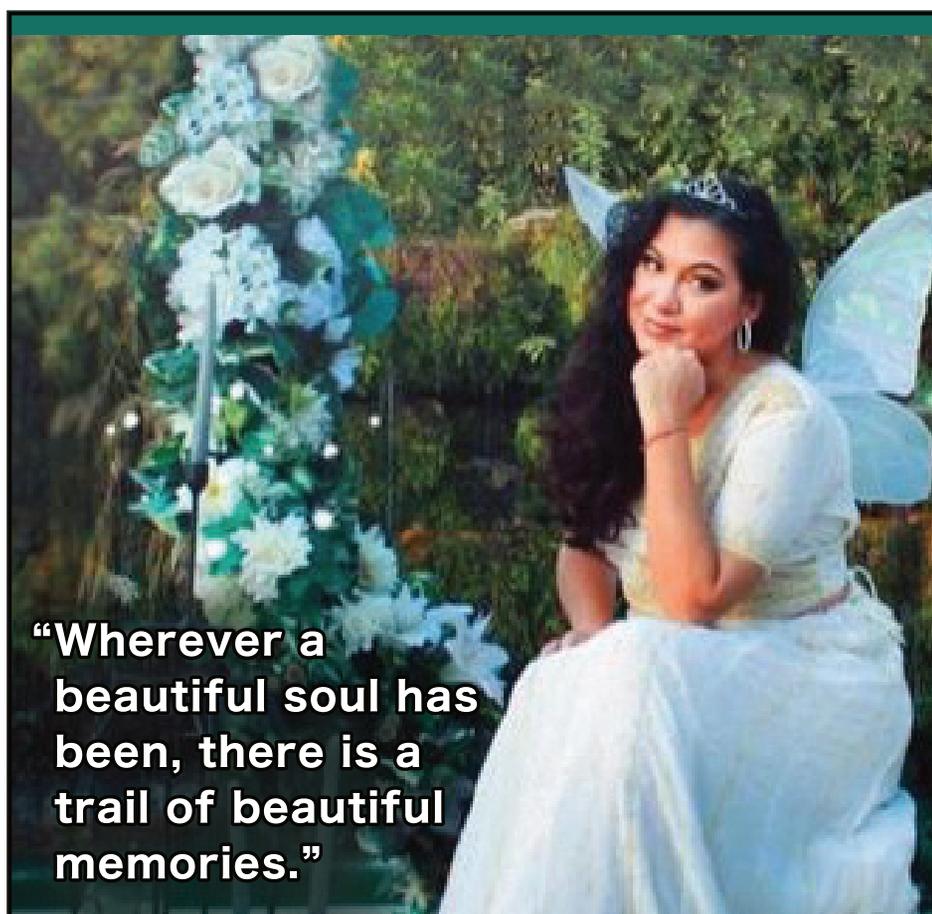
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“Wherever a beautiful soul has been, there is a trail of beautiful memories.”

Cannabis News Florida extends its sincere sympathies to the family and friends of Jenifer Perdomo, a true Canna-Warrior in her Cancer Battle.

Very few people have influenced, educated and touched our community like Jenifer.

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HEALTHCARE CANNABISNEWS™ FLORIDA

Back Cover: What Exactly is “Cannabis Research?”

Continued from back cover

an effort to “make wise decisions, “maximize sales and profits”, or “interpreting market trends” just to name a few. In such cases, statistics may or may not be as important as the bottom line. This in no way minimizes the importance of the information. It simply involves a different process and/or approach and applies the data in a way to meet business-related goals.

Is there a connection or a disconnect with such different approaches and perception of cannabis-based research?

More than likely the answer to these questions is “yes” to both. There is clearly a connection that should occur between research grounded in business as well as research grounded in science. For example, if medical researchers find a statistical difference in favor of a positive intervention using a combination of or an isolate of a cannabinoid, the effective use for patients will only be successfully conveyed and disseminated through effective measures learned through marketing the prod-

uct, identifying price points and margins, and ongoing improvements and findings. However, regardless of how good a product appears to demonstrate positive findings, if this is not conveyed in a professional business-like manner, it will not reach its potential from either a healthcare or a business perspective.

Where the majority of the industry to date has found itself is the polar opposite of what was just described. Though certainly not the case with all cannabis-based companies, many have in fact found successful business practices based upon their own internal research. The outcome has been positive, some finding greater success than others. However, few of the numerous cannabis-based businesses that manufacture and sell product to consumers have actually conducted the clinical research previously described to the standards expected in the medical and healthcare industry. Additionally, of those that have conducted product efficacy research, the majority have done so in-house. There is truly nothing wrong with this approach, as it does make sense to test one’s own product. In fact, most would argue that it is an essential step that needs to take place to be able to stand behind a product and sell it to a consumer base. However, such findings and any statements claimed from one’s own research will be viewed as being biased in opinion from those in the medical and healthcare industry. Think about it, have you ever seen a cannabis company put out information that they tested their own product, and it wasn’t good? Of course not, so the expectation of any self-published or even just self-promoted “evidence” will be expected to state nothing but positive claims of one’s own product. This is typically referred to having a conflict of interest – that is, those doing the testing have a financially vested interest in reporting positive results.

There is no shortage of business research in the cannabis space. In fact, as noted, many credible companies are performing their own-house product research as it relates to consumer benefits. In fact, some could argue that in a relatively new area of fast-growing interest that ample research already exists. For example, a simple National Library of Medicine search solely using the word “cannabis” yields over 27,000 published research articles. However, most healthcare providers do not read where these studies are being published: Plant Science, Molecules, or Nature as a few examples. Some do read journals like Addiction, and slowly more are paying attention to the Journal of Cannabis Research and Cannabis and Cannabinoid Research. It is a process. The area of research that could be served well is continued product research performed by 3rd party, independent testing researchers

with results being published in journals that focus and emphasize clinical application. In particular, journals of specialized areas such as sports medicine, geriatrics, pediatrics, neurology and others would benefit from contemporary cannabis-based findings.

Society is at an international tipping point toward its views of cannabis. In some places, scientific research is leading the way. In others, business research is leading the way. Yet in other places, a disconnect remains that connects the two worlds absent any perceived or real conflicts of interest. Identifying models that address such concerns will be a key to the future success of any efficacious findings that cannabis intervention may play in the well-being of individuals. Likewise, studies without bias can produce true understandings of any concerns related to short or long-term adverse effects, unknown drug interactions, and potentially findings that haven’t yet even been considered.

This is an opportunistic time to define cannabis research in a collaborative way that is inclusive of all those vested in the industry. Private business partnering with research Universities is one reputable method of achieving this goal. It is a process. It takes time, it takes educating, and it requires patience from the beginning to the end. The process is something University researchers excel in and are prepared for the many hurdles, and oftentimes one that private business is not prepared for. Building teams and working together on realistic timelines, having a solid strategic plan in place, and recognizing funding amounts necessary to achieve study goals are all essential building blocks toward unbiased research. Doing so then allows the findings of studies to be reported and presented to all stakeholders in the highest and most professional manner possible.

Cannabis research is ripe for ideas, partnerships, sharing of findings, and product efficacy. Consumer demand will drive apportion of acceptance and reputable research will drive the rest!

Dr. Jeff G. Konin is a Clinical Professor in the Department of Athletic Training in the Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing and Health Sciences at Florida International University (FIU) where he directs the Global Initiative for Cannabinoid Research and Education.

To learn more about FIU’s cannabinoid research and education initiative you can visit their website at <https://go.fiu.edu/GlobalCannabis>. Views represented in this column do not reflect that of Florida International University and are solely attributed to Dr. Jeff G. Konin.



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CANNABIS BUSINESS DIRECTORY

page 29



Columbia Care Transforms Florida Footprint to New Award-Winning Cannabist Retail Experience

page 34

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Dr. Daphnee Moise-Johnson

At Vivant Medical Marijuana, Doctor-Patient Relationship Is Key

BY VANESSA ORR

One of the most important aspects of medical care is having a doctor you can trust who understands your health conditions before providing recommendations. This holds true in the case of medical marijuana certification and recertification as well.

"What distinguishes me and my practice is that I'm available, accessible, and I believe it's important to educate people to empower them to make better choices," said Daphnee Moise-Johnson, M.D., Vivant Medical Group. "Medical marijuana is a medicine, and it needs to be treated as such."

Dr. Moise-Johnson has been an emergency room physician for 20 years and opened Vivant Medical Marijuana in Tampa six months ago to provide more of a preventative type of care to patients.

"I wanted to get into more functional, integrative medicine to better help people find answers to their health problems before they find themselves at the ER in the middle of the night," she said.

While Dr. Moise-Johnson believes strongly in the benefits of medical marijuana, she wants to ensure that the med-

Continued on page 33

Cannabis Spotlight

Kevin M. Hughes, MD

Board-certified Pediatrician and Certifying Medical Cannabis Physician
All Natural MD

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

I have personally witnessed the benefits of cannabis helping both mine and my partner's patients. I honestly did not expect the feedback that I have received. I thought people on chronic opiates or benzodiazepines would always stay on these medications, or possibly succumb to them. Instead, I see patients abandoning these harmful medications, as well as unexpected ones such as antidepressants, stimulants for ADHD, gabapentin, sleep aids, and even blood pressure and diabetic medications! Cannabis can help with pain, anxiety, depression, PTSD, OCD, overall mood regulation, sleep, movement disorders, appetite, attention, creativity, weight control, exercise tolerance and recovery, to name several. Because of this program, a patient can now order, by name, a safely cultivated or manufactured cannabis product that has either worked for them before or helped others with similar conditions.

What motivates you to be a part of the cannabis industry and how did you get started?

I am a board-certified pediatrician and had been working at the same pediatric urgent care center for the past twenty years, a practice that I helped grow from infancy, and where I intended to retire. Along came COVID and selfish corporate policies, and I was terminated for trying to keep my patients and staff safe. Naturally, I was devastated to leave my niche after years of service to my patients and my community. After becoming a cannabis patient, I soon started to understand the plant as a medication. I immersed myself in research articles and courses to further advance my knowledge and soon joined my current practice, All Natural MD, which has been

Continued on page 33



Dr. Kevin M. Hughes



Dr. Jeff Konin

What Exactly Is "Cannabis Research?"

BY DR. JEFF G. KONIN

It is likely a safe assumption that if you are reading this edition of *Cannabis News Florida* that you take up some space in the cannabis world. Perhaps you come from the business angle, or the agricultural space, possibly analytical chemistry, healthcare, or many others. We make up an extremely diverse group of individuals who collaborate in one shape or another to achieve one of many common goals: understanding, achieving, and disseminating cannabis efficacy.

Each of our unique disciplines view "research" slightly differently. For example, in the medical and healthcare professions, we lean toward a commonly and possibly overused term called "evidence-based" research. This simply means that to be able to validate that something works, it has undergone the highest levels of clinical studies and has shown a statistical significance. We throw out terms such as meta-analysis, systematic reviews, and double-blind clinical trials just to name a few. By contrast, research knowledge such as those presented in a case study format, or by an expert opinion, are viewed to represent a lower level of acceptance. Additionally, such studies may be viewed differently if they were performed in a lab, on animal models, or proposed in theory as compared to human studies.

When one looks up the definition of "business research", results yield a common theme that acquiring information in

Continued on page 35

PūrWell Offers Pain Relief Without NSAIDs

PūrWell launches PūrRelēf, a first-of-its-kind organic gummy that provides a safe and effective alternative to NSAIDs (Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs.) Millions of people rely on NSAIDs to control symptoms of chronic pain and inflammation, however, NSAIDs come with some risk. Studies have shown they may cause toxicity to one's liver, kidneys, and upper GI-tract. PūrRelēf combines powerful flavonoids from Skull Cap and Green Tea to provide extraordinary anti-inflammatory support, while added benefits of Boswellia and Turmeric supercharge the anti-inflammatory action. CBG and Delta-8 isolate round out the overall analgesic effects. Unlike NSAIDs that may cause undesirable side effects, PūrRelēf is a combination of GRAS (Generally Regarded As Safe) ingredients, that have shown no toxicity over periods of long-term use. It is a COX-1, COX-2 and 5-LOX inhibitor. PūrRelēf's convenient form makes it easy to consume, and the Appleberry flavor is derived from organic fruit extract.

