COVID RECOVERY

South Florida’s Healthcare Industry Recovery Is on the Mend Despite New Variants – Here’s How

BY ALEX BINELO

Our hospital systems and healthcare workers have been put to the ultimate test over the past two years. With over five million confirmed cases in Florida and new variants spreading rapidly, COVID-19 continues to impact every player in the local healthcare industry.

During the first couple of months of the pandemic, we saw some medical practices struggle due to a decreased demand for services that patients didn’t consider “essential.” Then, numerous hospitals lost revenue after experiencing a significant reduction in elective demands without adequate support create. The New York Times opinion piece authored by Dr. Danielle Ofri was titled “The Business of Health Care Depends on Exploiting Doctors and Nurses.” She goes on to state that the integrity of healthcare workers to put their patients first seems to administrators, like everything that is going well as the work gets done. The cost is burnout, turnover, and increased suicide for the physician. It means lost revenue, recruitment costs, and costs to ramp up of a new practice of approximately $1M per provider for the organization. If the loss is one of a specialized proceduralist the cost may be much higher. Hidden costs are those of loss of organizational prestige, reputation, and patient base. The Mayo Clinic estimates that for every point lower on a five-point physician satisfaction scale the provider is 30-50% more likely to leave.

We blame the EMR. We blame administrative tasks that are better done by support staff that have been pushed to physicians. The EMR is a fine tool for collecting data, and physicians and clinical staff have turned into data entry clerks. Documentation “must haves” that have been pushed to physicians. The EMR is a fine tool for collecting data, and physicians and clinical staff have turned into data entry clerks. Documentation “must haves” that have been pushed to physicians.

Palm Beach County Medical Society recognizes a physician’s worth.

We understand the business case to maintain a physically, emotionally and morally healthy physician population in South Florida. It has been well documented by the AMA the level of burnout, moral distress, and physical tolls taken on physicians that ever-increasing work demands without adequate support create. The New York Times opinion piece authored by Dr. Danielle Ofri was titled “The Business of Health Care Depends on Exploiting Doctors and Nurses.”

Dr. Claudia Mason

Salute to Physicians: A Cautionary Tale for Organizations

BY CLAUDIA MASON, MD

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PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

Top Five Access Challenges and Solutions in Response to COVID

BY JAMES MOFFETT

Who could have imagined in March of 2020, when COVID hit, that it would have longstanding implications on how the needs of COVID and non-COVID patients are met?

There were several challenges created by COVID with the increased volumes of patients seeking access to care for both COVID and non-COVID-related needs. Call volumes are higher than ever, resulting in long wait times and difficulty returning calls in a timely fashion. Patient appointment wait times for new and follow-up visits are unreasonably long as physicians, and care teams struggle with the added demand of COVID patients, the loss of staff availability due to COVID compounded by record rates of turnover across the entire health care landscape.

COVID has changed the nature of the patient encounter, limiting visitors, increasing safety measures and disciplined use of personal protection equipment (i.e., masks, face shields, gowns) for both the care team member and the patient, increasing the time...
The free medical malpractice expert review is no longer just a matter of signs hinting at a hardening market. Indisputable evidence is now at the forefront. Malpractice rates are going up across the board. Weaker malpractice carriers are being placed into receivership or sold. Juries in Florida are making shockingly high awards. And this is only the beginning.

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These are just a few of the questions you should be asking in this volatile market. It's too late for a no-obligation medical malpractice insurance review. Just contact Risk Strategies at 800.966.2120 or matt@dannagracey.com.
Florida Atlantic University’s Executive Master of Healthcare Administration (EMHA) program prepares students to master the current landscape and key trends of the healthcare industry.

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Golisano Children’s Hospital Receives Asthma–Friendly Hospital Award from The Florida Asthma Coalition

The Florida Asthma Coalition is honoring Golisano Children’s Hospital of Southwest Florida for being recognized as an Asthma-Friendly Hospital. The award represents Golisano Children’s Hospital’s efforts to create a safe and healthy environment for their patients with asthma.

The Asthma-Friendly Hospital designation is a recognition designed to improve asthma management at hospitals by reducing health risks for asthma patients, prevent and minimize asthma-related ER visits and hospitalizations, and reduce readmissions for acute severe asthma exacerbations.

To earn this recognition, team members at Golisano Children’s Hospital successfully completed multiple criteria that focused on professional development for nurses, physicians and respiratory therapists on asthma management and the creation of an asthma action plan. They also updated educational folders that give to patients and families who are admitted for asthma to make them more robust. The Golisano Children’s Hospital team also added new, kid-oriented videos to the learner iPads in the hospital.

Next Gen CCM, the Quadruple Aim, and Patient Centricity

Your Doctor In Touch (YDIT) leverages patient centricity to help advance the Quadruple Aim (QA) in its Next Gen Chronic Care Management (CCM) program. This CCM program generates high patient satisfaction, increases patient engagement and retention in CCM, ensures maximum MIPS scores, and therefore, greater revenue for participating medical practices. Along with the large increase in Medicare CCM reimbursement for 2022, participation in this innovative program is a must for primary care practices.

The Quadruple Aim

The Quadruple Aim framework—enhanced patient experience of care, better health of populations, reduced health care costs and increased physician satisfaction—guides continuous improvement in health care. The four pillars are integrated to function in concert, so implementation of all four pillars is required for optimal effectiveness. YDIT has strategically embedded the QA to guide Next Gen CCM delivery.

Patient Centricity

Patient centricity is front and center in Next Gen CCM. From the beginning, Medicare CCM has required shared decision-making between practitioners and patients. When patients believe health care professionals genuinely listen and act on what matters to them, they are more likely to be engaged in their care. Therefore, YDIT has built a patient-centered culture by recruiting compassionate care managers who listen closely to patient priorities and provide them the most appropriate supportive CCM services.

Patient-Centricity/QA Combination

Patient centricity is pivotal to advancing the QA in Next Gen CCM, and together these two value-added components of Next Gen CCM work together as follows:
1) Patient experience of care is enhanced by focusing on what matters most to the patient. Patient satisfaction increases when they become engaged in their care.
2) Better outcomes for the Medicare patient population having multiple chronic conditions result from adherence to QA guidance and patient shared decision-making.
3) Reduced Medicare costs result from increased patient wellness.
4) Physician satisfaction increases and burnout decreases by having healthier patients, meeting MIPS requirements, and generating significant new revenue.

Summary

The Next Gen CCM innovation of pairing patient centricity with the QA creates synergy that increases patient satisfaction, improves patient outcomes, improves MIPS scores and promotes patient wellness. Your Doctor In Touch promotes health and disease prevention through health caring.

To find out how you can set your practice up for success with MIPS and Next Gen CCM, contact Richard Grosso at richard.g@ynit.us.
Dr. Scott Rice is CMO at Your Doctor In Touch.

The pandemic has demonstrated that the world needs more practitioners who are competent in public health, epidemiology and research.

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NOW ENROLLING FOR FALL 2022
ACHE of South Florida Member Spotlight: Jorge Paoli-Bruno, MD, MBA, FACHE, CPE, FAAFP

By Vanessa Orr

In February 2022, Jorge Paoli-Bruno, M.D., MBA, FACHE, CPE, FAAFP, became the medical director at Anthem, Inc. Healthsuns Plans, one of the largest health benefits companies in the United States. His background as a family physician, a health systems administrator and financial expert helped prepare him for his new journey, as did his relationship with the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE).

“I spent the last seven years working for Jackson Health System in the Corrections Health Services section, running services to the Miami-Dade Corrections and Rehabilitation Department, one of the largest correctional systems in the United States,” said Dr. Paoli-Bruno, who served as both the medical director and interim chief medical officer for the organization. “In addition, I continued visiting clinics and supervising mid-level providers at health care clinics and comprehensive outpatient rehabilitation facilities on the outside.

“I am very excited that I will be able to utilize these skills as the medical director at Anthem, which is a Top 500 company nationwide. Through its affiliated companies, Anthem serves more than 118 million people, including more than 45 million within its family of health plans,” he added.

Dr. Paoli-Bruno first became interested in the healthcare field while exploring a biomedical engineering major at Marquette University. Changing gears, he enrolled at the University of Puerto Rico to pursue a major in biology and decided to continue on to medical school.

“I went into family medicine because I wanted to understand the broad spectrum of a human being. I didn’t want to specialize in just one area,” the board-certified doctor explained. Because he was also intrigued by numbers, Dr. Paoli-Bruno decided to pursue an MBA with a concentration in finance, which led to an interest in healthcare management. “I was still having face-to-face contact with patients while getting the management point of view,” he said, noting that this mix of interests also led to his earning a Certified Physician Executive (CPE) credential along with an American Academy of Family Physicians’ Fellowship.

Dr. Paoli-Bruno’s most recent accomplishment came this past February, when he became a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

“The American College of Healthcare Executives is a prestigious distinction that shows that I am a leader among leaders in healthcare administration and demonstrates my competency in all areas of healthcare management, and my lifelong commitment to change and improvement,” he said. “Being a Fellow signifies not only ‘tenure’ but additional work in the community within organized medicine, within teaching, and a greater commitment to continuing professional development and/or research,” he explained. “Achieving the Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives is a prestigious distinction that shows that I am a leader among leaders in healthcare administration, and demonstrates my competency in all areas of healthcare management, and my lifelong commitment to change and improvement.”

The doctor, who joined ACHE in 2008, said that he appreciates the networking and mentoring opportunities that were provided by the organization, and is very proud of this latest achievement.

“Earning a fellowship shows evidence that you are moving forward; that you have the desire to keep doing better all of the time,” he said. “It also shows that you have knowledge that is important in any healthcare facility or system.”

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In appreciation to

Enrique Escalón, M.D.
Pediatric Hematologist/Oncologist

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Our services range from complex catastrophic illnesses that require intensive care, post-surgical medical rehabilitation to patients suffering from chronic diseases requiring respiratory and rehabilitative therapies. Kindred Hospitals provide outcome-oriented cost effective care for patients with a wide spectrum of medical conditions.

Admissions to Kindred Hospitals may be recommended by physicians, acute-care hospitals, rehabilitation hospitals, managed care providers, case management companies or by the patient’s family. In all cases family tours are encouraged.

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While hospice is considered a medical intervention, it is more precisely a fully funded federal benefit intended for patients with advanced illness. As part of an entitlement program that patients pay into, it is a benefit they can use—and tap into sooner.

If patients do, they receive the holistic care that a physician alone cannot provide. With hospice, an interdisciplinary team works together to deliver coordinated care. A social worker helps patients with their social needs while a chaplain assists with spiritual care. Nurses and physicians address the patient’s ongoing pain relief, yet the entire approach is team-based and comprehensive.

The origins of hospice as a community-based service began in the 1960s, when Dr. Cicely Saunders founded St. Christopher’s Hospice in London. The facility paired expert symptom relief with physical, social, spiritual, and psychological care to meet the needs of patients and their families. This model evolved in the U.S., and the federal benefit under Medicare Part A became permanent in 1985. Payroll taxes currently paid by employees and employers help fund this, and individuals eligible at 65 for Medicare Part A are entitled to access this benefit. Hospice is also covered by most insurance and Medicaid.

Yet so many are not aware of it. Over 48% of Medicare decedents do not access their hospice benefit. As a physician, it is my civic duty to inform patients of the financial benefit as well. Hospice and palliative care may not be covered in medical plans, but hospice care is available in Medicare Part A. We must share this with our patients. It breaks my heart to see patients suffer. If we have a holistic approach for providing compassionate care, it is our responsibility to offer this solution sooner.

When selecting a hospice provider, look for the level of engagement by hospice team members and the patient and family. The attention a patient receives in hospice should increase. It takes an expert team to help navigate the emotions arising during this stage of life. In hospice, families become part of the care plan.

The pathway of serious illness is not unique. Diseases progress at the same anywhere in the world. Yet, the U.S. is the only country to have a fully funded hospice benefit through Medicare Part A. We must share this with our patients. It breaks my heart to see patients suffer. If we have a holistic approach for providing compassionate care, it is our responsibility to offer this solution sooner.

Dr. Andy Arwari is a medical director for VITAS Healthcare in Miami-Dade, as well as an assistant professor at Florida International University and affiliate assistant professor in Medical Education at the University of Miami. For more information about end-of-life care, visit VITAS.com.
Value Is Here to Stay!

A message from our President

Courtesy of Cleveland Clinic, “Value-based care is a simple and proactive concept of improving care for patients. With its core based on overall wellness and preventive treatments, value-based care improves healthcare outcomes and reduces costs.”

When you do a search for articles about value in healthcare, prepare to sit for a while, as the number of citations will be great (about 764,000,000 results). Needless to say, none of us has enough hours in a day, month, year or a lifetime to cruise through all that material.

Therefore, courtesy of Paul Keckley, let us take a shorter journey and focus on the value discussion dating back to the first identified value agenda created by the Affordable Care Act (2013), which Keckley labels “Value Agenda 1.0.” This value agenda included several pay-for-performance programs (retreads) and new alternative payment models.

CMS defines Value-based programs as those that, “reward health care providers with incentive payments for the quality of care they give to people with Medicare. These programs are part of our larger quality strategy to reform how health care is delivered and paid for. Value-based programs also support our three-part aim: Better care for individuals, Better health for populations, and Lower cost.” Think about the Triple Aim that transforms to the Quadruple Aim with the addition of health equity (or joy in work, if you are so persuaded).

It is against this backdrop that we change administrations (Obama to Trump) and along with this change in administrations comes a change in thinking about how to approach the goals expressed by the Triple and Quadruple Aims.

Keckley refers to this new approach as the “Value Agenda 2.0.” [2018] This particular agenda expresses the new leadership’s direction and implementation was accomplished by creating, “new alternative models and executive orders requiring price transparency for drugs, hospitals and insurers.”

In the review of the literature on the relative successes of both of these value agendas, the results appear mixed. Significant improvements occurred on the quality-of-care side of the equation and less so on the cost savings to Medicare side. Annual Medicare spending increases slowed over this period but did not hit the targets predicted before implementation.

Then the pandemic hit. Healthcare spending increases significantly and, “… public anxiety about health and wellbeing has spiked and health insurers and notable hospital systems are reporting record earnings.” Paul Keckley talks about the emergence of the “Value Agenda 3.0” now being driven by employers and consumers. This new paradigm will exhibit a coming together of parties to create common definitions and goals, greater price transparency, more inclusive of all healthcare purchasers (not just Medicare), and increased scrutiny of private capital firms entering the healthcare vertical.

Look at 2022 as the year of collaboration with common goals like, “value will be more precisely defined and directly linked to lower costs for individuals and families.” Changes in healthcare will continue, keep your eyes open or you may find yourselves left behind!
Throat Cancer Survivors Don’t Have to Sacrifice Ability to Swallow and Taste

Tamarac resident Kenneth Goff was home shaving morning when he felt a small lump on the left side of his neck.

“There was no pain, no nothing, but I could feel it by the way the razor moved,” said the 58-year-old father of five and grandfather of eight. “It wasn’t visible at all, but I could feel it right below the jaw line.”

After a CT scan at Broward Health Medical Center in August 2020, Goff was diagnosed with HPV-mediated squamous cell carcinoma, a type of throat cancer. This cancer is similar to what actors Michael Douglas and Stanley Tucci have battled. The treatment of HPV-related oropharyngeal squamous cell carcinoma may include surgery, radiation, chemotherapy or combination of the treatments.

Ryan H. Sobel, M.D., a head and neck surgical oncologist at Broward Health Medical Center, prescribed radiation to treat Goff’s isolated neck mass. Prior to radiation treatment, Dr. Sobel performed a submandibular, or sublingual gland transfer, an intricate surgery only a handful of surgeons across the country are skilled at performing. He is currently the only surgeon utilizing this technique in Broward and Palm Beach counties.

Dr. Sobel strategically relocated one of Goff’s saliva glands. It was moved about three inches from the right side of his throat under the chin to place it out of direct range of the damaging effects of radiation.

Patients diagnosed with throat cancer face a difficult choice: treat the cancer with radiation and risk losing their ability to swallow and taste, or don’t treat the cancer and risk terminal illness.

“By safely moving saliva glands away from direct radiation, we are able to help mitigate long-term risks such as the ability to taste and swallow and significantly preserve a patient’s quality of life,” said Dr. Sobel.

For Goff, his radiation treatments began with Evan Landau, M.D., a radiation oncologist at Broward Health. “He prepared me very well and told me in advance what to expect so I could prepare myself mentally and physically,” Goff said. “He said my taste buds would change during radiation and advised me to gain 20 pounds before starting treatment.”

The radiation treatment temporarily affected Goff’s saliva gland. He lost his sense of taste and suffered from severe dry mouth. He’s now 90% back to normal thanks to Dr. Sobel’s revolutionary procedure.

Goff was able to continue working as a probation officer during his treatments. “Everyone thought I was crazy coming to work during radiation,” he said. “I didn’t want to sit home. We have a great crew of people I work with who are very helpful and very supportive.”

Goff’s last treatment was December 2020, and now that his taste buds are fully back to normal, he’s happy to be cooking up his signature dish for his family. “My specialty is pork and beans and hotdogs,” he said. “We barbeque a lot.”

Grateful to the physicians at Broward Health Medical Center for treating his cancer in its early stages, Goff now advocates for being proactive about taking care of one’s health. “We need to take care of our bodies and pay attention to it,” he said. “I’m that kind of guy that when something doesn’t feel right, I run to the doctor.”

“Some people, when they feel a little lump, don’t do anything. When our bodies are trying to tell us something, we need to listen.”

Clinical Trial for DIPG Offers Hope for Children with Brain Cancer

Brain cancer is the second most common cancer among children after leukemia. But while new therapies have significantly increased the cure rate of pediatric leukemia, effective treatment for brain cancer still lags.

I am currently conducting a pioneer phase I clinical trial called ONC201 at the Miami Cancer Institute (MCI) testing a new targeted therapy for brain tumors. I am hopeful that this new drug will become the go-to treatment for cancers such as diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG), a cancer that currently has no long-term survival rate. This is one of the hundreds of clinical trials for cancer in which we’ve enrolled patients for the past three decades.

I joined the Children’s Oncology Group (COG) in 1996 to find cures for pediatric cancer working with experts worldwide. The COG is supported by the National Cancer Institute and COG researchers have been instrumental in numerous advances.

Through COG’s multiple clinical trials, acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL) in children saw an increase in survivorship from 60 to 90 percent. Only 50 years ago, a diagnosis of ALL was a death sentence. The next target is to get the same results – or better – for brain cancer, DIPG and other pediatric cancers.

DIPG – Uniquely Difficult to Treat

In children with DIPG, the average survival is six months to 18 months after diagnosis. DIPG cannot be treated with surgery because the tumor is located where breathing and heart function are controlled. Removing the tumor would cause catastrophic injury to these vital centers.

The Miami Cancer Institute, where I serve as Medical Director of Pediatric Oncology, is one of five centers in the U.S. doing a trial with ONC201, a new generation of chemotherapy called “targeted therapy.”

We know our children are tolerating this new drug very well but it is too early to have any conclusion on the impact of the drug on survival. At some point, we may be able to combine ONC201 with chemotherapy or immunotherapy for a more robust response.

While the children are monitored regularly in my office at MCI, the medication is given once a week by pill or via compounded liquid for younger children. The first dose is given under our supervision at MCI after which the children return once every three weeks for assessment. There are currently 12 children participating in the trial, ranging in age from 5 years old to adolescents.

All of the Institute’s pediatric patients are under my care, including the majority of those receiving proton therapy. We regularly attract children from throughout Florida and other countries looking for our expertise in diagnosing and treating cancers like leukemia, brain tumors, kidney cancer and bone tumors, among others.

Regional Collaboration Offers Children More Opportunities

One of our goals is to expand COG treatment opportunities to patients of the other KIDZ Medical Services hematology/oncology offices at Nicklaus Children’s Hospital, Palm Beach Children’s Hospital at St. Mary’s Medical Center, West Boca Medical Center in Boca Raton and Naples Community Hospital.

The dedicated KIDZ Medical Services hematology/oncology researchers, physicians, and other healthcare staff have, for decades, been involved in ground-breaking research to improve cancer survival by offering patients the most advanced treatments, such as with proton beam therapy, and opportunities to participate in clinical trials.

Keys to the medical advancements are multispecialty collaboration, medical expertise, participation in the Children’s Oncology Group research and a deeply-rooted commitment – some might say calling – to increase survivability for pediatric cancer patients.

Dr. Daghistani summed it up succinctly. “Research is the engine of everything and as long as we have hope in our heart and work hard on doing research and supporting research, we will beat cancer one day.”

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30 YEARS OF TRUSTED HEALTHCARE EXPERIENCE

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When It Comes to Patient Care
Focus on Consistency

I was recently talking with a director of a large regional health system. She was lamenting the fact that throughout the division she manages, there is a huge bell curve in how doctors, nurses and the general staff treat patients. Whether it be a last-minute cancellation (or rescheduling) by a doctor, how a nurse handles a particular situation, or a staff member who makes a patient wait forever without a simple update. Despite years of beating the ‘patient first’ drum, she has mixed results. She asked me, ‘How do I get everyone to give the same excellent patient experience?’ My response was simply, ‘That is impossible.’ There is no way your worst team member can ever be as good as your best. However, what is possible is to narrow the gap, by focusing on being more consistent. Most organizations, whether they are in health care or not, have clear, non-negotiable standards which are clearly spelled out and the team knows they need to follow. For example, try being and employee and using “No Problem” (vs. “My pleasure”) at Chick-fil-A, pointing with one finger (vs. two) at Disney World, or not using a guest’s name when greeting them at the Ritz Carlton. The most difficult part of this is getting buy in. The easiest way to do this is by doing two things: First, assume that everyone on your team wants to do a great job when it comes to patient care/experience. Secondly, parlay that desire into conversation that will drive consensus on the fundamentals. Focus on best practices, simplicity, and common sense. Come up with a short list of things the team agrees to never do when dealing with patients and their families. Share it. Train to it. Hold each other accountable to execute. You can narrow the gap and that will result in a consistent overall experience. Your scores will soon reflect your efforts.

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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Dr. Hayder Al-Azzawi is a colorectal and general surgeon specializing in robotic abdominal procedures, anorectal procedures and laparoscopic abdominal procedures for a wide range of colon and rectal cancer, digestive and abdominal ailments. In 2021, Dr. Al-Azzawi completed his 1,000 robotic-assisted colorectal procedure at Good Samaritan Medical Center in West Palm Beach. In addition, Dr. Al-Azzawi performs robotic-assisted colorectal procedures at Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center. Dr. Al-Azzawi uses the da Vinci Xi Surgical System by Intuitive for robotic-assisted surgical procedures. Dr. Al-Azzawi is board-certified by both the American Board of Surgery and American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery. Prior to opening an office on the campus of Good Samaritan Medical Center and joining the hospital staff in 2013, Dr. Al-Azzawi completed a Colorectal Surgery Fellowship at the Cleveland Clinic in Weston, FL, and his general surgery residency and internship at Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN. Dr. Al-Azzawi’s offices are located in Jupiter, Palm Beach Gardens and West Palm Beach.

Anne Fischer, MD, PhD

Dr. Anne Fischer is a board-certified and fellowship-trained pediatric general and thoracic surgeon with a passion for children, “our adored patients.” Dr. Fischer specializes in advanced minimally invasive laparoscopy (MIS), thoracoscopic surgery for lesions in the chest or chest wall such as pectus deformities. For challenging cases, she does laparoscopic neonatal surgery with prenatal counseling and complex oncologic surgery for childhood malignancies. In addition, Dr. Fischer is the Section Chief of Pediatric Surgery at Palm Beach Children’s Hospital and on-staff at St. Mary’s Medical Center in West Palm Beach. Dr. Fischer’s office is located on the hospital campus with clinics in Jupiter and Royal Palm Beach. For her training, Dr. Fischer completed a pediatric surgery fellowship at Boston Children’s Hospital/Harvard Medical School. Previously, she completed a fellowship at the Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins Medical School in Baltimore, MD, where she had done her residency and internship in general surgery as well as medical school.

Jordan Luskin, MD, MS

Dr. Jordan Luskin is a highly skilled urologist with expertise in the latest urology therapies for general urology as well as innovative robotic urology care. He specializes in the Urolift® System, a treatment option for an enlarged prostate condition, advanced prostate biopsies, urologic oncology care, minimally invasive benign hyperplasia (BPH) treatment and local therapy for prostate cancer. Dr. Luskin also provides expert urologic care for kidney, adrenal, bladder, urinary incontinence and urethral ailments as well as penile reconstructive surgery, advanced minimally invasive robotic-assisted urologic procedures using the da Vinci Surgical System, and no needle, no scalpel vasectomy. His areas of interest includes Peyronie’s disease and sexual medicine care, reconstructive urology and all aspects of general urology, clinical and surgical care. He is board-certified by the American Board of Urology. Dr. Luskin is on-staff at Good Samaritan Medical Center in West Palm Beach. He has been practicing medicine since 2010. Prior to professional practice, Dr. Luskin completed his residency in urology, a general surgery internship and graduated medical school from Georgetown University School of Medicine located in Washington, DC.

Hayder Al-Azzawi, MD

Dr. Chadwick Hampton is a board-certified and fellowship-trained orthopaedic surgeon specializing in robotic-assisted minimally invasive hip and knee replacement and arthroscopic treatment of knee and shoulder injuries. Dr. Hampton’s care focus also includes complex, primary and revision joint replacement surgery and joint preservation of the hip and knee. In addition, Dr. Hampton specializes in custom knee replacements as well as a muscle sparing approach to direct anterior and mini-posterior hip replacement surgery. Dr. Hampton is on-staff at Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center and his office is located near the campus of the hospital. For his education and training, Dr. Hampton completed a fellowship in adult reconstruction and joint replacement at the Hospital for Special Surgery located in New York, NY. Additionally, Dr. Hampton completed a fellowship in orthopaedic surgery research and his orthopaedic surgery residency at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, MD. Dr. Hampton graduated medical school from the Howard University College of Medicine in Washington, DC. A U.S. Military Veteran, Dr. Hampton served as a Major in the U.S. Army prior to entering professional practice.

Ali R. Malek, MD, FAHA

Dr. Ali R. Malek is a fellowship-trained interventional neurologist and endovascular neurosurgeon board-certified in neurology, vascular neurology and neurocritical care. Dr. Malek is also the Director of the Neurointerventional and Comprehensive Stroke Program at St. Mary’s Medical Center and the Palm Beach Neuroscience Institute. Under Dr. Malek’s direction, the program was amongst the first to have access to stent retrievers used in stroke care and participated in research trials to demonstrate their efficacy. Today, Dr. Malek and the program’s armamentarium include all of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved stent retrievers and recanalization devices for the extraction and removal of stroke causing blood clots within the brain. Dr. Malek was the first in Florida to use the TIGERTRIEVER device, a blood clot removal tool adjustable inside the brain. For brain aneurysm care, Dr. Malek implements the latest in advanced flow diverters for the treatment of intracranial aneurysms and the newest endovascular device for the treatment of bifurcation aneurysms. Dr. Malek says success in this type of lifesaving care would not be possible without support and collaboration of emergency medical services (EMS), emergency department doctors and nurses, support staff, inpatient neuroscience and neurointerventional teams, outpatient care teams and continuum of care by nursing staff.

Dennis Reyes, MD

Dr. Dennis Reyes is an experienced neurointerventionalist specializing in endovascular neurology treatments for the care of emergent strokes and brain aneurysms. In 2020, Dr. Reyes was the first in South Florida to provide treatment of brain aneurysms with the Surpass Evolve Flow Divertor. In 2021, Dr. Reyes become one of the first in Florida to use the RED 62™ Reperfusion Catheter for rapid aspiration of blood clots from brain arteries in the treatment of large ischemic strokes. Dr. Reyes is dedicated to offering his patients the latest advanced technology for treatment of brain aneurysms, strokes, carotid disease and other vascular malformations of the brain. He is dual board-certified in general and vascular neurology and on-staff at Delray Medical Center and St. Mary’s Medical Center. Dr. Reyes finished his internal medicine internship and neurology residency at Cleveland Clinic Florida in Weston. In addition, Dr. Reyes completed a vascular neurology fellowship at the National Institute of Health (NIH), National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) program located in Bethesda, MD, and an interventional neurology fellowship at Baptist Health South Florida, Miami Cardiac and Vascular Institute. Dr. Reyes is bilingual in English and Spanish, and his office is located at the Palm Beach Neuroscience Institute in Boynton Beach.
Dr. Joseph Ricotta is the National Medical Director for Vascular Surgery and Endovascular Therapy at Tenet Healthcare. Dr. Ricotta was the first in Florida to perform the transcarotid artery revascularization (TCAR) procedure, a clinically proven, minimally invasive and safer approach for the treatment of carotid artery disease and to prevent future strokes for high surgical risk patients. In 2021, Dr. Ricotta, a TCAR Clinical Operator of Experience, completed his 200th TCAR procedure at Delray Medical Center a national TCAR Center of Excellence. In addition, Dr. Ricotta was the first surgeon in the U.S. to perform endovascular robotic surgery using the Corinudius CorPath® GRX Robot for peripheral vascular procedures. He was also the first in the Southeastern U.S. to perform the VenaSeal™, a vein disease, closure procedure for the treatment of venous insufficiency. Dr. Ricotta also specializes in the treatment of aortic and peripheral aneurysms, pulmonary embolism, peripheral arterial disease and limb salvage. Additionally, Dr. Ricotta provides care for venous disease, varicose veins, May-Thurner Syndrome, thoracic outlet syndrome, renal and mesenteric disease, and dialysis access. Dr. Ricotta is dedicated to training tomorrow’s physicians as the Program Director of Vascular Surgery Fellowship at the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine at Florida Atlantic University.

Paley Orthopedic & Spine Institute

Dror Paley, MD, FRCSC

Dr. Dror Paley is an internationally renowned orthopedic surgeon with 35-years of experience and over 20,000 surgeries performed. Dr. Paley specializes in pediatric and adult orthopedics for upper and lower limbs including limb and stature lengthening, deformity correction and joint preservation. In 2009, he founded the Paley Orthopedic & Spine Institute at St. Mary’s Medical Center in West Palm Beach, one of the largest medical tourism institutes in the world treating patients from 50 states and over 100 countries. The Paley Institute has 16 physicians and surgeons’ on-staff with Centers of Excellence in pediatric orthopedics, limb and stature lengthening, foot and ankle deformity, clubfoot, cartilage repair, joint replacement, hip preservation, spinal deformity, pain management, sports medicine as well as physical and occupational therapy. Dr. Paley is fluent in six languages and opened the Paley European Institute in Poland. During his medical career, he has published seven books, 75 book chapters, and 179 peer reviewed articles. Holding charitable endeavors close to his heart, Dr. Paley runs both the Paley and the unfLIMITed Foundations.
**Health Care District of Palm Beach County**

**Richard Giroux, DO**

Richard Giroux, D.O., is the Health Care District’s Medical Director for Transportation and Associate Medical Director of the Aeromedical Program. Dr. Giroux is a board-certified emergency physician who serves in multiple leadership roles at South Florida emergency departments, including Lakeside Medical Center and serving as Chief of Emergency Medicine for Palms West Hospital. Dr. Giroux also holds key local Emergency Medical Services positions. He serves as the Medical Director for the City of Stuart Fire Rescue and Associate Medical Director for Palm Beach County Fire Rescue and Palm Beach Gardens Fire Rescue. Dr. Giroux has been practicing for over eight years. He completed his emergency medicine residency training at Mt. Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach, Florida where he served as Chief Resident. Dr. Giroux is a member of the Florida Association of EMS Medical Directors and the Palm Beach County EMS Medical Directors Association where he also served as Vice Chairman.

**Jamie Bell III, MD, MS**

Elijah “Jamie” Bell III, M.D., MS, joined the Health Care District of Palm Beach County in August 2020 as Associate Vice President and Medical Director of Information Technology. Previously, Dr. Bell was an Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine and Physician Informaticist at the UCLA Department of Emergency Medicine. Dr. Bell works with IT on all matters dealing with physicians and clinical workflow. He is the lead physician champion for the Epic Journey project and coordinates the physician champions for the clinics and inpatient areas. In addition, Dr. Bell leads the clinical informatics team for the enterprise. Born and raised in Florida, Dr. Bell attended Florida State University, where he obtained a BS in Economics. He graduated from Harvard Medical School with an MD, and completed his residency in Emergency Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine while serving as Chief Resident during his final year of residency. He subsequently completed a two-year fellowship in Clinical Informatics at UCLA, where he also obtained a Master of Science in Biomedical Informatics.

**C. L. Brumback Primary Care Clinics**

**Gloria Matilde Florez, MD**

Gloria M. Florez, M.D., is a family medicine physician with the C. L. Brumback Primary Care Clinics’ West Palm Beach clinic. These Federally Qualified Health Centers operated by the Health Care District of Palm Beach County served over 33,000 adult and pediatric patients last year at ten locations countywide. Dr. Florez is board certified by the American Board of Family Physicians and has been practicing since 1987. She is bilingual in Spanish and English. Dr. Florez attended medical school at the Universidad de Caldas in Manizales, Colombia and completed her residency in family medicine at Wyckoff Heights Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York. She is a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians. Among her duties of integral care of adults, she treats children in need with diabetes. Her greatest satisfaction is having the opportunity to educate her patients and improve their health as a whole within their limited resources.

**Lakeside Medical Center**

**Luis M. Perezalonso, MD, FACEP**

Luis M. Perezalonso, M.D., FACEP, is the Emergency Department Medical Director and Chief of Staff Elect at the Health Care District’s rural, acute care teaching hospital, Lakeside Medical Center. Dr. Perezalonso is also an attending Emergency Medicine Physician at Jupiter Medical Center. During his 11-year medical career, Dr. Perezalonso has served as the Medical Director at North Shore Medical Center in Miami and Assistant Medical Director at St. Mary’s Medical Center in West Palm Beach. He served as a clinical instructor for the Family Medicine residency program at Lakeside Medical Center and for Emergency Medicine students at Florida Atlantic University, University of Vermont, Ross University, and Nova Southeastern School of Medicine. Dr. Perezalonso attended Ross University School of Medicine in Dominica, West Indies. He completed his emergency medicine residency at the University of Puerto Rico in San Juan. Dr. Perezalonso is a member of the Florida College of Emergency Physicians and American College of Emergency Physicians. He is also a Fellow of the American Board of Emergency Medicine. Dr. Perezalonso is fluent in English and Spanish.

**Darnel V. Dabu, MD, MPH, FAAFP**

Darnel V. Dabu, M.D., MPH, FAAFP, is a family medicine physician with the C. L. Brumback Primary Care Clinics at the Jupiter Clinic. Dr. Dabu is board-certified by the American Board of Family Medicine and has been serving patients since 2007. He specializes in the treatment of lifestyle diseases, especially diabetes, hypertension and hyperlipidemia. Dr. Dabu earned his Doctor of Medicine at the University of Santo Tomas where he is a member of Tau Mu Sigma Phi. He completed his family medicine residency at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, AHEC-SA where he received Chief Resident and Most Outstanding Resident awards. Dr. Dabu holds a Master of Public Health from the University of the Philippines and a Degree of Fellow from the American Academy of Family Physicians. Dr. Dabu’s professional affiliations include the American Academy of Family Physicians, the Florida Academy of Family Physicians, American Society for Quality and American Medical Association. He has rapped for Habitat for Humanity of Palm Beach County and paddleboarded for Crossing for Cystic Fibrosis.

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**SALUTE TO PHYSICIANS**
**JUPITER MEDICAL CENTER**

**K. Adam Lee, MD, FACS**

Dr. K. Adam Lee serves as Medical Director of Jupiter Medical Center’s Anderson Family Cancer Institute’s Thoracic Surgery Center. A pioneer and leading practitioner of thoracic surgery using minimally invasive and robotic techniques, Dr. Lee’s program was recently awarded U.S. News and World Report’s highest honor as a high performing hospital for lung cancer surgery. He leads a multidisciplinary team of experts who share ideas and knowledge to develop a personalized treatment plan for each patient.

Dr. Lee received his medical degree from New York Medical College, completed his general surgery residency at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York and his cardiothoracic residency at the University of Massachusetts. Board certified in cardiothoracic surgery and general surgery and a Fellow in the American College of Surgeons, Dr. Lee has spent many years traveling around the United States as an instructor of robotic thoracic surgery.

**Nichole Corry, MD**

Dr. Nichole Corry is a board-certified internist who believes in a highly personalized, holistic approach to patient care. With an emphasis on prevention and overall wellness, Dr. Corry’s practice focuses on longevity and helping her patients feel their best, at any age.

A diplomat of the American Board of Obesity Medicine (ABOM), Dr. Corry has extensive training in the science of obesity and in supporting patients who want to lose weight or maintain weight loss. As a concierge medicine physician, she is able to spend more time with each patient to develop the strong doctor-patient relationships that are essential to patient care.

Dr. Corry has served as a flight surgeon in the U.S. Navy and as an assistant professor at Yale-New Haven Hospital, the primary teaching hospital for Yale School of Medicine and Yale School of Nursing. She received her medical degree from Albany Medical College and completed her residency at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center.

**HIALEAH HOSPITAL**

**Tony Diaz, DO**

Dr. Tony Diaz is an orthopedist in Hialeah, Florida and is affiliated with multiple hospitals in the area, including Hialeah Hospital and Palmetto General Hospital. He received his medical degree from Nova Southeastern University - College of Osteopathic Medicine and has been in practice for more than 20 years. He did his surgical internship at the University of California, Naval Hospital in Oakland, CA. Dr. Diaz specializes in general orthopedics, arthroscopic, and reconstructive surgery. He provides treatment for tendinitis, sports injuries, and muscular strains. His team of professional staff always offers you detailed instructions on how to move forward. His affiliations include Society of Naval Flight Surgeons, American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons and the American Medical Association.

**Coral Gables Hospital**

**Gilbert D. Beauperthuy-Rojas, DO**

Dr. Gilbert D. Beauperthuy-Rojas is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon and a national and international leader in the treatment of sports injuries and degenerative conditions of the shoulder, hip, and knee. He is dedicated to providing exceptional care, and uses scientifically proven state of the art procedures in arthroscopy, joint replacement, minimally invasive surgery, and cellular rejuvenation. Dr. Beauperthuy-Rojas has been serving the Miami community with excellence in Orthopedics for over 25 years. He places an emphasis on rapid recovery to enable his patients to return to work, to sports, and to resume their daily life.

Dr. Beauperthuy-Rojas is the Medical Director of the Orthopedic Center of Excellence at Coral Gables Hospital. Under his leadership, the 245-bed hospital became the first facility in the Miami-Dade area to achieve certification of center of excellence in both total hip and total knee replacement from the Joint Commission. He is an avid athlete, who has participated in multiple endurance events. His vast knowledge of athletic injuries and treatments utilizing the newest and most proven techniques for joint pain, combined with his expertise in sports medicine and cell rejuvenation, gives him the distinct ability to return patients to an active lifestyle.

**FLORIDA MEDICAL CENTER**

**Carl C. Eierle, MD**

Dr. Carl C. Eierle is Board Certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgeons, Fellow of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, and Fellow of the American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons. His surgical focus includes the full spectrum of primary, complex, and revision joint replacement of the hip, knee, and shoulder. He utilizes many innovative and advanced techniques including computer navigation, minimally invasive surgery, Direct Anterior Approach hip replacement, and partial knee replacement. He also has a subspecialty interest in non-arthroplasty hip preservation surgery, including hip arthroscopy and femoral osteotomy, and osteoplasty. Dr. Eierle served as the Director of the Joint Replacement Service at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, MD from 2006-2012. Under his guidance, the Total Joint Service was expanded to become the busiest arthroplasty service in the DoD. In 2008, he was honored with the Orthopaedic Educator of the Year Award for his dedicated training of orthopaedic surgical residents. In 2010, he was named by the Surgeon General as one of the TOP FIVE orthopaedic surgeons in the Navy. Prior to joining OCSF, Dr. Eierle served the Navy for 24 years that included multiple operational deployments, overseas tours, and a combat surgical tour in Iraq. After his Navy retirement, he established the Joint Replacement Center at Memorial Hospital West and served as its Medical Director from 2014-2021, establishing MHW as a destination center for total joint replacement in Broward County. In 2021, Dr. Eierle established a new Joint Replacement Center at Florida Medical Center in North Broward.

**North Shore Medical Center**

**Pedro Jose Valdes, DO, FACC**

Dr. Pedro Jose Valdes is a highly motivated and bilingual physician. A Board Certified Osteopathic Physician within the State of Florida who completed internship, residency, and fellowship training programs at Palmetto General Hospital. He is a practicing Interventional cardiologist serving the greater South Florida community. Dr. Valdez is experienced in acute and primary care setting with extensive experience working with underprivileged and underserved minority populations. He is able to establish a strong rapport with all of his patients. With a blue-collar work ethic, Dr. Valdez is aiming to constantly improve the lives of those he serves. He earned his Doctor of Medicine / Doctor of Osteopathy degree from Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine in Blacksburg, VA, where he graduated with honors. He graduated Cum Laude from Barry University with his undergraduate degree.

**PALMETTO GENERAL HOSPITAL**

**Ritesh Kaushal, MD**

Dr. Ritesh Kaushal is a renowned neurologist associated with Palmetto General Hospital. He specializes in cerebrovascular disease, occlusion precerebral artery disease, congenital heart disease, headache and migraine, epilepsy, and nervous system disorders. He earned his medical degree from Topiwala National Medical College and completed his internship in internal medicine at Weiss Memorial Hospital. Dr. Kaushal is certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology with a focus on neurology. Dr. Kaushal completed his residency in neurology at the University of Chicago Medical Center. He pursued his fellowship in stroke/neurocritical care from Saint Louis University, St. Louis. Dr. Kaushal furthered his expertise with a fellowship in endovascular/interventional neurology from Saint Louis University Hospital. He is a member of the American Heart Association and is fluent in English, Hindi, Urdu, and Punjabi. He has earned the best resident award. He believes in providing patients with all the information they need to make educated decisions about their health care.

**South Florida Hospital News**
Shaye Moskowitz, M.D., PhD

With more than 20 years of clinical neuroscience expertise, Shaye Moskowitz, M.D., Ph.D., leads Broward Health’s neuroscience services and is a member of the Broward Health Physician Group.

Dr. Moskowitz is driven to ensure his patients are comfortable, well-informed and receive the highest level of care possible. He is also a resolute advocate of educating people on preventative care and treatment options to help curb the debilitating effects of strokes and neurovascular disease.

Dr. Moskowitz has been published by numerous peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed publications and contributed to several chapters in medical books. He’s practiced medicine throughout the United States.

Dr. Moskowitz earned both his doctorate in philosophy and medical degree at the State University of New York Downstate Health Sciences University in Brooklyn. He completed his neurosurgery residency and endovascular surgical neuroradiology fellowship at Cleveland Clinic in Ohio.

Maxine Hamilton, M.D.

Maxine Hamilton, M.D., specializes in internal medicine, and her professional interests include diabetes, cardiovascular care and preventive medicine. Dr. Hamilton, who has nearly 40 years of experience, is recognized for providing patient-centered and individualized care.

As the medical director of Broward Health International, she helps care for patients from around the world, including a newlywed who fell into a dormant volcano in St. Kitts and suffered spine fractures and a 36-year-old from St. Croix who had multiple organ failure and required a limb amputation.

“I am an internist by training, and at Broward Health we work with multiple specialists to provide the best possible outcomes for our patients,” said Dr. Hamilton.

She obtained her medical degree from the University of West Indies in Jamaica, West Indies. As part of her post-graduate work, Dr. Hamilton completed her residency and internship at Harlem Hospital Center in New York, New York. She had an additional internship in internal medicine at Spanish Town Hospital in Jamaica, West Indies.

Stephen Swirsky, D.O.

Stephen Swirsky, D.O., knew early on he wanted to be a physician. However, his path to becoming an orthopedic sports surgeon had a few detours.

“From the time I was young, I had the idea that I would be a doctor,” he said. “However, through various educational endeavors, I became an athletic trainer and then a physical therapist.”

Dr. Swirsky eventually decided to attend medical school to pursue his dream of becoming a physician. A sports medicine specialist, he is part of the Broward Health Physician Group.

Dr. Swirsky has served as a medical director, delegation physician and team physician for USA Judo and various Olympic games, saying, “I chose orthopedic surgery as my career path likely, in part, to the various injuries I sustained when I was younger and playing sports.”

Dr. Swirsky is enthusiastic about caring for athletes, weekend warriors and everyone in between. He uses minimally invasive robotic surgery to help achieve optimal results for patients.

“Robotic-arm assisted technology provides us with an innovative option to treat adults living with mid- to late-stage osteoarthritis of the hip and knee,” he said.

Israel Penate, M.D.

Israel Penate, M.D., is a board-certified internal medicine physician at Broward Health Coral Springs. He was instrumental in the launch of the hospital’s state-of-the-art catheterization lab in 2020. That same year, Dr. Penate was nominated as the hospital’s chief of staff.

The 15-year veteran provides guidance to medical staff and helps ensure communication between medical staff, administration, and the North Broward Hospital District Board of Commissioners.

“I love being able to interact with patients, and I especially like preventive medicine,” he said. “The point where a disease can be detected and treated early is often the most-rewarding for a physician.”

For the next generation of physicians, Dr. Penate encourages them to “listen to your patients and be compassionate. There are patients I have had for years and being able to develop those long-lasting relationships with them and their whole family is incredible.”

Dr. Penate earned his medical degree at Instituto Superior De Ciencias Médicas De Villa Clara in Santa Clara, Cuba. He completed his residency program at Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center in Bronx, NY.

Chutt K. Chandran, MD

Dr. Chandran is a member and past president (2011 – 2012) of the Broward County Medical Association. He also holds the designation of Fellow of the American College of Physicians. Over the years, Dr. Chandran’s professional affiliations included the Florida Medical Association, the American Medical Association, the American Society of Addiction Medicine, and the American College of Medical Quality.

Dr. Chandran received his medical degree from Ross University School of Medicine in Dominica. He completed his internal medicine residency at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital in New Jersey. He is board-certified in internal medicine and has been practicing medicine for 30 years.

Scott Zhang, MD

How medical care is provided changes with time and technological advances. One constant is the relationship between the healthcare professional and the patient. This is one of the things about being a physician that is crucial to Scott Zhang, M.D.

“In a world of changing healthcare with patient-and-technology integration, physicians should think of how to establish a good patient-doctor relationship,” said Dr. Zhang.

Since 2016, he has provided leadership and oversight for strategic planning, business development, and the recruitment and retention of physicians at the 250-bed hospital in western Broward County.

“I am very proud of becoming the chief medical officer after holding multiple leadership roles, including chief of staff at Broward Health Coral Springs,” said Dr. Zhang.

For the next generation of physicians, Dr. Zhang encourages them to “listen to your patients and be compassionate. There are patients I have had for years and being able to develop those long-lasting relationships with them and their whole family is incredible.”

Dr. Zhang earned his medical degree at University of Miami School of Medicine and completed his residency in general surgery at University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. He completed his fellowship in bariatric and minimally invasive surgery at the University of Miami Health System.

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SALUTE TO PHYSICIANS

BROWARD HEALTH IMPERIAL POINT

Jason A. Walters, MD

As an avid golfer, Jason A. Walters, M.D., can relate to athletes who want to resume physical activities in the quickest and safest manner. Whether he is treating a young athlete or a weekend warrior, Dr. Walters takes time to develop a personalized approach to treating each patient.

A member of the Broward Health Physician Group, Dr. Walters is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon specializing in sports medicine. His focus is on complex knee, shoulder, elbow and ankle injuries. He uses advanced technology and techniques to treat patients with a minimally invasive approach. His surgical specialties include arthroscopic shoulder rotator cuff repairs, labral repairs, meniscal repairs, and multi-ligament reconstructions of the knee, including anterior and posterior cruciate ligament reconstructions.

He earned his medical degree from Howard University and completed his orthopedic surgical residency at Howard University Hospital. Dr. Walters also completed an orthopedic sports medicine fellowship with Allegheny General Hospital in Pennsylvania. During his fellowship, Dr. Walters provided expert, personalized care for professional sports teams, including the Pittsburgh Pirates. He currently serves as head team physician for Dillard High School in Fort Lauderdale.

BROWARD HEALTH PHYSICIAN GROUP

Charles J. Zeller IV, DO

Charles J. Zeller IV, D.O., has long been fascinated with the human body. Prior to medical school, he obtained a master's degree in human anatomy.

"During that part of my education, I was fascinated by the complex nature of the structures within the head and neck," he said.

Dr. Zeller is an otolaryngologist and head and neck surgeon with the Broward Health Physician Group. His specialties include thyroid surgery, sleep apnea surgery and disease and surgeries of the ear, nose and throat. A board-certified physician, Zeller has been in practice for more than 20 years.

He obtained his medical degree from Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine. Dr. Zeller completed two fellowships at St. Vincent Medical Center in Indianapolis, Indiana: one in microvascular and reconstructive surgery and the other in head and neck surgical oncology. His post-graduate training also included a residency at Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine and OhioHealth Doctors Hospital.

“I am proud to be a part of the Broward Health system and look forward to the future growth of our otolaryngology and head and neck surgery programs.”

Benjamin Klein, DO

Benjamin Klein, D.O., practices family medicine with the Broward Health Physician Group. Dr. Klein’s interest in being a doctor started close to home. His grandfather was a physician.

“I saw how well-liked he was in our community,” he said, “and all the good things he did for people. Dr. Klein chose family medicine to ‘help the most people possible.’ He most enjoys being able to help patients who have a range of medical needs – from those seeking preventive care to people with chronic conditions.

“I want my patients to know that I am a calm, approachable person,” Dr. Klein said. “They can come to me with any of their concerns so that together we can find the best outcome.”

Dr. Klein received his medical degree from Midwestern University Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine in Glendale, Arizona. He completed his post-graduate residency in family medicine at Broward Health Medical Center.

E-mail Your Editorial Submissions to editorial@southfloridahospitalnews.com
David Buchalter, MD

Dr. David Buchalter is a board certified fellowship trained orthopedic surgeon with over 30 years of clinical experience. He is on staff at Delray Medical Center, where he has previously served as Chief of the Department of Surgery and Chairman of the Board of Directors. He did his training at The Hospital for Joint Diseases in New York and completed advanced fellowship training in Joint Replacement surgery. Dr. Buchalter uses cutting-edge methods to perform the innovative anterior pathway total hip replacement surgery. This three-inch incision is made in the area of the groin, and is minimally invasive, allowing patients to walk immediately after the procedure. His total knee replacements are done using advanced technology which helps him obtain a near perfect aligned and balanced knee. The recovery is faster and less painful than standard knee replacement surgery. Dr. Buchalter is a member of the American Association of Orthopedic Surgeons and the prestigious American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons.

Jean-Pierre Awaida, MD, PA

Dr. Jean-Pierre Awaida is board certified in general cardiovascular medicine and in interventional cardiology. He is currently the medical director of the cardiac cath lab at Delray Medical Center and also served as Chairman of the Cardiology Department from 2018 to 2020. Dr. Awaida began practicing general and interventional cardiology in 2008 after completing his specialty training in Interventional Cardiology at the Massachusetts General Hospital – a Harvard Medical School affiliated hospital, in Boston. Prior to that, Dr. Awaida completed his internship and residency in Internal medicine at the Good Samaritan Hospital in Cincinnati where he was appointed to serve as Chief Medical Resident and then pursued three years of cardiology training at the Montreal Heart Institute affiliated with the University of Montreal. His areas of interest include coronary artery disease and coronary procedures including emergency coronary procedures to the heart in the setting of heart attacks, management of heart failure and heart rhythm diseases. Dr. Awaida is currently an Affiliate Assistant Professor at FAU’s Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine.

Nicholas Sama, MD

Nicholas Sama, MD

Dr. Nicholas Sama is a board certified orthopedic surgeon with fellowship training in trauma and reconstructive surgery and is the medical director of orthopedics at Good Samaritan Medical Center. Dr. Sama specializes in the surgical treatment of complex fractures in the arms and legs, and has been a member of the medical community in South Florida for nearly 20 years. Dr. Sama prides himself in always trying to provide compassionate, comprehensive care. He completed his medical training at the University of Miami, School of Medicine. He then completed his orthopedic trauma and reconstruction fellowship at Hospital for Special Surgery/Weill Cornell Medical College. The scope of his practice includes evaluation and non-operative care of problems with bones, muscles, tendons, ligaments, as well as the treatment of arthritic conditions. He has provided surgical intervention to amateur and professional athletes from many sports, and to those involved in non-sports-related accidents and injuries.

Zachary Grabel, MD

Dr. Zachary Grabel is a fellowship-trained spine surgeon. Raised in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, Dr. Grabel received his undergraduate degree at the University of Florida, where he was named Outstanding Four-Year Scholar and graduated summa cum laude. He went on to earn his medical degree from Brown University, where he was inducted into the prestigious Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA) honor society. He then completed his orthopedic surgery residency at Emory University, where he received the Outstanding Chief Resident Award. Dr. Grabel completed a combined orthopedic and neurosurgical spine fellowship at the Cleveland Clinic, in Cleveland, OH, where he worked with world-renowned spine surgeons. He received training in both orthopaedic and neurosurgical spine surgery techniques and continues to combine them in his practice. Dr. Grabel is also an avid researcher. He has published many peer-reviewed articles and presented at national and international spine conferences. He treats a variety of conditions, ranging from degenerative spine disorders such as spinal stenosis, disc herniation, myelopathy, and radiculopathy to complex deformities and spine tumors. He uses a variety of techniques, including minimally invasive spine surgery, artificial disc replacement, laminoplasty, anterior spine surgery, lateral spine surgery, deformity correction, and more traditional posterior spine decompressive and fusion techniques.
In tribute to our physicians for their dedication to our patients and the practice of medicine,

Happy Doctor’s Day!

St. Mary’s Medical Center

George Kamel, MD

Dr. George Kamel is a board certified craniofacial and pediatric plastic surgeon on staff at St. Mary’s Medical Center & Palm Beach Children’s Hospital. He diagnoses and treats patients with complex facial deformities, including craniosynostosis, cleft lip and palate, facial fractures, facial nerve paralysis, and microtia as well as head anomalies, vascular malformations, and congenital breast conditions. As a pediatric plastic surgeon, Dr. Kamel routinely performs complex craniofacial reconstruction on the face, including the lip, palate, nasal reconstruction, and cranium resulting from birth defects, cancer treatments, or traumatic injuries and uses cutting edge 3D technology to help reconstruct and restore normal tissue. Dr. Kamel earned his medical degree from Penn State College of Medicine and completed his general surgery and plastic surgery training at Albert Einstein College of Medicine/Montefiore Medical Center in New York City. He also completed a research fellowship at Harvard/Massachusetts General Hospital at the Center for Regenerative Medicine. Dr. Kamel completed a craniofacial and pediatric plastic surgery fellowship at University of California San Diego/Rady Children’s Hospital.

Rami Elkhechen, MD

Dr. Rami Elkhechen is a board certified fellowship trained sports medicine orthopedic surgeon on staff at St. Mary’s Medical Center. His interests include performing hip arthroscopy, open shoulder surgery, cartilage preservation, and orthobiologics. A native of Boca Raton, Florida, Dr. Elkhechen graduated with a neuroscience degree from the University of Miami. He then moved up to New York City for medical school attending New York University School of Medicine in Manhattan. Dr. Elkhechen did his residency at the State University of New York at Downstate Medical Center. Prior to his time at St. Mary’s, Dr. Elkhechen pursued specialty training at the Ochsner Sports Institute in New Orleans, Louisiana where he also served as the assistant team physician for the New Orleans Saints, and Pelicans.

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In tribute to our physicians for their dedication to our patients and the practice of medicine,
Weissberger has enjoyed practicing pulmonary medicine and hopes to continue caring for patients as part of Pulmonary, Critical Care & Sleep Disorders Institute of South Florida.

Carlos Sanchez, MD

Dr. Carlos Sanchez is a Pulmonary/Critical Care physician originally from Argentina. He has been practicing medicine since 1998 and studied at several universities including UMDNJ, Beth Israel Medical Center, and Hofstra University. He was the Chief Medical Resident at UMDNJ where he studied Internal Medicine, Pulmonary Medicine, Critical Care Medicine, and Sleep Medicine. Dr. Sanchez is certified in both Internal and Pulmonary/Critical Care medicine and he now specializes in treating conditions such as COPD, Emphysema, Chronic Bronchitis, Asthma, and other pulmonary diseases.

In his free time, Dr. Sanchez participates in philanthropic events that support those in his community. When he is not treating patients or attending philanthropy events, you can find him spending time with his family.

Edwin Harvey Hamilton, MD, D. MIN.

Dr. Edwin Harvey Hamilton, D. Min. passed away on his 91st birthday, January 31, 2022. Dr. Hamilton was a member of the Broward County Medical Association for 53 years, and was an Emeritus Member. He was honored by the BCMA at the June 5, 2021 Annual Dinner for his dedication to the profession of medicine. Dr. Hamilton was installed in 2002 as the BCMA's first African-American President. Dr. Hamilton broke many barriers and contributed greatly to increase the quality of health for the African-American community. It is likely that his outreach efforts saved many lives. Dr. Hamilton had continued to serve on the Board of Directors and had been on many BCMA Committees, and chaired the BCMA We Care Program.
Thank You, Doctors

South Florida depends on your expertise and excellent, compassionate care for hope and healing. On National Doctors Day, we say, “Thank you”—for your dedication to your patients and their loved ones and for making them feel welcome, safe and comforted. We appreciate you today and every day.

From all of us at Baptist Health, Happy Doctors Day!
On National Doctors’ Day, We Salute You!

Thank you to all South Florida physicians who honor their patients’ wishes for dignified end-of-life care by referring them to our expert teams at VITAS Healthcare.

We are proud to call you our partners.

We are available 24/7/365 to answer your questions and admit your patients in a timely manner. Our end-of-life care honors patients’ wishes, goals, and values in their preferred setting: home, nursing home, or assisted living community.

Happy National Doctors’ Day on Thursday, March 31!

Sincerely,
The VITAS hospice teams in Dade-Monroe, Broward, and Palm Beach counties, and the Treasure Coast

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Ross Wodicka, MD

An orthopaedic surgeon who has treated athletes from the NBA, NFL, MLB, MLS and University of Miami as well as weekend warriors, Ross Wodicka, M.D., specializes in minimally invasive arthroscopic surgery of the shoulder, hip, knee and ankle and revisions and complicated hip labral repairs at Holy Cross Health. A member of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, Arthroscopy Association of North America and American Orthopedic Society for Sports Medicine, Dr. Wodicka completed his orthopedic surgery residency at Jackson Memorial Hospital/University of Miami where he spent a year as Chief Resident. He was then chosen for a fellowship position in sports medicine at the world-renowned Southern California Orthopedic Institute in Los Angeles, where he received specialized training in the treatment of complex sports injuries, arthroscopy and shoulder and knee reconstruction. Dr. Wodicka graduated magna cum laude from the University of Georgia with a degree in biology and received his Doctor of Medicine at the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond.

Patrick Amar, MD, C.M.

Patrick Amar, M.D., C.M., is a gastroenterologist and hepatologist at Holy Cross Medical Group, a multi-specialty physician employed group of more than 160 physicians providing services throughout Broward and Palm Beach counties. Dr. Amar has demonstrated outstanding leadership, from starting a new office to building it into a successful practice with an excellent reputation. Board certified in Internal Medicine and Gastroenterology, Dr. Amar has participated in multiple research studies. He earned his M.D. from McGill University in Montreal, Canada and completed his residency in Internal Medicine at Jacobi Medical Center and Albert Einstein College of Medicine in Bronx, New York. He specialized in gastroenterology and liver disease and completed ERCP training, including therapeutic procedures, as a Gastroenterology/Hepatology Fellow at the University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Hospital. He graduated from Yeshiva University with a B.A. in Biology.

Daniela Egas-Bejar, MD

It is with great sadness that KIDZ Medical Services announces the passing of Daniela Egas-Bejar, M.D., a beloved pediatric hematologist-oncologist. Dr. Egas-Bejar had been a member of the NCH North Naples Hospital Medical Staff for the past seven years. Condolences go to her husband, Jose Ruben Valle, M.D., an NCH pulmonologist, and their three young sons, Ruben, Daniel and Christopher. Dr. Egas-Bejar had recently been voted by her peers to the Naples Illustrated magazine’s 2022 list of Top Doctors. Fond memories and expressions of sympathy for the Valle-Egas family may be shared at www.hodgesflatMapnsmg.com. In honor of Dani, donations may be made to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital (www.stjude.org) or the Cholangiocarcinoma Foundation (cholangiocarcinoma.org/egas/).
HAPPY DOCTOR’S DAY

YOU ARE APPRECIATED

On this Doctor’s Day and every day, we are grateful for all the physicians at UHealth - University of Miami Health System, Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center and the Miller School of Medicine for their unshakeable dedication to pushing medicine forward.

Thank you for leading with kindness and compassion, and treating and healing those who need you.

UMiamiHealth.org
SALUTE TO PHYSICIANS

Hayley Gershengorn, MD

Dr. Hayley Gershengorn’s expertise as professor and medical director of data quality analytics and critical care quality at the University of Miami Health System has been tested during COVID-19. Her involvement in creating many of UHealth’s inpatient policies and procedures helped ensure care could be delivered efficiently and safely. Dr. Gershengorn further led several research projects using data from COVID-19 patients engaged with UHealth to understand how policies and patient-specific factors impact outcomes.

“The best part of my job is the people I get to work with—my patients, their families, and worldwide colleagues,” Dr. Gershengorn said. “Without them, I would never have managed the stresses of this pandemic.”

Dr. Gershengorn continues her fifth year at UHealth, focusing on her research that leverages real-world practice to identify optimal strategies to deliver safe and effective care. Her other focus is to advance in hospital leadership to optimize health care delivery.

Stephanie Brown, MD

As associate professor and director of the Internal Medicine Residency program at the University of Miami/Jackson Health System, Dr. Stephanie Brown is heavily involved with leadership, Infection Control, and various hospitals to ensure adequate resident staffing and optimal workflow for their COVID-19 patients.

Dr. Brown transitions her passion for academic medicine from the frontlines to her research involving debriefing trainees in the ICU during COVID-19 while focusing on educational research and the intersection of gender and race in education and medicine.

“I love medicine’s ever-changing ways based on political and social landscapes and the evolution of science,” Dr. Brown said. “It is a field where personal and system improvement is a constant process but still enjoyable.”

Dr. Brown looks forward to continuing her leadership roles in education and clinical operations while creating a premier center to transition youth with special health care needs to adult services by age 18.

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

COURAGE & COMPASSION

So many days have been hard, and still, you’re here as givers of hope when patients and their families need you most.

We see that you care and offer a comforting hand. We see your courage and dedication. We see how much you give.

We hope you know that your gifts of expertise and compassion light up the darkest days.

And we can’t thank you enough.

#DoctorsDay2022
Memorial Neuroscience Institute

Tarek Zakaria, MD

Dr. Tarek Zakaria is excited about the advances being made in the treatment of epilepsy at the Memorial Neuroscience Institute, a level 4, comprehensive, epilepsy program.

“We’re one of the very few centers in Florida that offer ROSA, a robotic platform for non-invasive surgical procedures,” said Dr. Zakaria, who is medical director for both epilepsy and the institute’s adult neurology program. “We’ve also significantly reduced seizures, and in some cases eliminated them completely, using different treatment options, including surgery, NeuroPace, and newer technology based on brain stimulation and neuro modulation.” After an analysis of patient outcomes at Memorial’s epilepsy program, Dr. Zakaria and the team found 50% of patients reported a 90% reduction in the number of seizures. Using newer technology significantly reduced complications, morbidity, and mortality for patients when compared to traditional, invasive surgeries. “I’m happy that the improvements in treatment enables epilepsy patients to live the lives they deserve,” said Dr. Zakaria.

“And, one day, we’re going to find a cure.”

Brijesh Mehta, MD

Dr. Brijesh Mehta has worked with city and county-based emergency medical services (EMS) teams since 2016 to assess and expedite treatments for acute stroke victims before they reach the hospital. The education he and his Memorial-based team provide empowers first responders to assist stroke sufferers in the field and offers valuable information that helps neuro teams prepare to treat patients once the ambulance arrives. “We can improve the likelihood of good outcomes and reverse the effects of stroke in less than an hour,” said Dr. Mehta, medical director of the Comprehensive Stroke Program and neurointerventional surgery at the Memorial Neuroscience Institute. “By optimizing the systems of care, we have brought our response time to 30 minutes or less and we can have patients in the cath lab within the hour.”

Dr. Mehta says the follow-up data supports the positive impact of the innovative approach. Patients have less stroke-induced paralysis and permanent disability, with some regaining their strength and walking out of hospitals on their own just days later.

Memorial Primary Care

Christopher Ramsaran, MD

A primary care and non-surgical sports medicine physician, Dr. Christopher Ramsaran treats a wide variety of patients, from the acutely/chronically ill to those with musculoskeletal injuries suffered during exercise or athletic activities. “Our practice has grown to include a younger, more health-conscious audience that looks to us for well visits as well as sports injuries.”

Caring for athletes requires a different type of expertise that illustrates the value of Dr. Ramsaran’s combined specialties. Diuretics are usually the prescribed medication to treat hypertension, to cite just one example, but they would dehydrate an athlete during strenuous exercise and cause adverse outcomes, so different medications are required. Dr. Ramsaran is part of Memorial’s team of sports medicine specialists that manage the care of athletes at several local universities. Another area of focus among that group is on concussion education, diagnosis, and treatment, including working with neurologists to ensure individuals with symptoms receive immediate follow-up care.

Memorial Healthcare System

Candice Sareli, MD

“Transforming Hope into Reality” is a phrase Dr. Candis Sareli believes accurately describes the impact of research now being done within Memorial Healthcare System that has provided South Floridians convenient access to clinical trials and alternative treatments on par with any found in traditional university settings.

“We’re a centralized hub supporting research being done by 130 physicians conducting up to 150 clinical trials in 36 specialties,” said Dr. Sareli, Memorial Healthcare System’s chief medical research officer. “We also assist our Graduate Medical Education program in their submissions to publications that document scholarly activity.” Dr. Sareli started Memorial’s academic research program in 2011 after nearly seven years as director of clinical research at the University of Pennsylvania. She believes strongly in the need for alternative treatment options and loves the fact that by utilizing science and reason her team can add to the information available within the art of medicine.

Paula Eckardt, MD, FACP, FIDSA, AAHIVS

While many have become aware of Dr. Paula Eckardt as one of the architects of Memorial Healthcare System’s ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the chief of Memorial’s Division of Infectious Disease also continues to focus on treating patients with HIV. “Broward County has one of the highest rates of new HIV cases in the nation. These patients need monitoring and ongoing care regardless of the amount of COVID-related activity or restrictions in our community,” said Dr. Eckardt. “That means an increased reliance on telemedicine, an approach that many with HIV had previously resisted because of concerns about privacy. At the height of COVID, when in-person care was interrupted by shutdowns at outpatient clinics, the online consultations Dr. Eckardt had long advocated for became a critical part of treatment protocols.”

As medical director of Memorial’s Ryan White Clinic, Dr. Eckardt leads a multidisciplinary team that ensures HIV/AIDS patients have access to medications, mental health, case management services. “This program is a source of pride for the infectious disease expert, recently earning three awards for viral suppression.

Aharon Sareli, MD

Perspective is pivotal for critical care physicians, especially in the age of COVID-19.

“One fundamental I live by is that my worst day is better than any of my ICU patients’ best day,” said Dr. Ari Sareli, Memorial’s chief of critical care medicine and Memorial Physician Group’s chief physician executive. “COVID has created extreme challenges for providing healthcare, but our goals as physicians remain the same: to care for patients, the community, and positively impact the lives that we touch.”

Even when faced with a wall,” said Dr. Sareli, “We’ll reach our goals and become the destination for care we all believe we can be.”

“Community support, and hires well,” said Dr. DeMassi. “We’ll reach our goals and become the destination that is expanding and on pace to become a destination that we all believe we can be.”

Christopher R. DeMassi, MD, FACS

Much has changed in the roughly ten years since Dr. Christopher DeMassi joined Memorial Healthcare System after completing a neurosurgery residency and fellowship at Jackson Memorial Hospital. “Memorial had no strong epilepsy or neurology programs at that time, just a limited number of doctors working in those specialties. We were a community system that served local patients.”

Today, DeMassi leads a comprehensive neuroscience center that is expanding and on pace to become a destination that will draw patients from areas beyond South Florida. His roles include chief of the Memorial Neuroscience Institute, chief of neurosurgery, and medical director of the Memorial Spine Center. “I’m a clinician that grew into a leader. I still enjoy surgery because I have come to appreciate the fresh challenges of planning 5-10 years in advance and incorporating all the services we offer.

Memorial is a great healthcare system that’s focused on the right things, enjoys community support, and hires well,” said Dr. DeMassi. “We’ll reach our goals and become the destination for care we all believe we can be.”

Salute to Physicians

MEMORIAL REGIONAL HOSPITAL

Aharon Sareli, MD

GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

Saima Chaudhry, MD

In her role as Memorial Healthcare System’s chief academic officer, Dr. Saima Chaudhry oversees a Graduate Medical Education program that now offers training in 14 accredited programs. But while residents make up the bulk of that audience, it isn’t just the younger doctors that Dr. Chaudhry wants to see focus on learning. “Physicians have made a commitment to the public that they have the proper expertise for the job. The only way to honor that commitment is for the doctor to dedicate him or herself to lifelong learning.” Under Dr. Chaudhry’s leadership, Memorial has become an accredited source of continuing medical education, providing more than 22,000 hours of CME instruction to 13,000 clinicians during the past 12 months. “My focus has been on advancing healthcare by training and improving doctors,” said Dr. Chaudhry. “It’s my way of contributing to the public good.”

MEMORIAL PRIMARY CARE

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In recognition of Doctors’ Day, Steward thanks our physicians for their commitment to healing and the difference they make in our communities each day!

steward.org
Celebrating National Doctors’ Day
Recognizing our A-rated, Top Doctors

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MEMORIAL HOSPITAL WEST

Steven Katz, MD

After more than 20 years in emergency departments, Dr. Steven Katz knows the individuals that thrive in the pressure-packed environment are ones able to work effectively under pressure and stay calm in critical situations. But it’s a group dynamic he credits with taking the ED team at Memorial Hospital West to a different level. “Our teamwork is outstanding. All the doctors, nurses, and physician assistants get along and work collaboratively,” said Dr. Katz, the hospital’s chief of emergency medicine. In addition to his leadership role at Memorial Hospital West, Dr. Katz is also actively involved in the emergency medicine residency program on its campus and serves the larger community as medical director at Pembroke Pines Fire Rescue. He began his medical career as a paramedic at a firehouse in New York and says he says he has always been attracted to the pace, challenges, and excitement of delivering life-saving care.

MEMORIAL REGIONAL HOSPITAL SOUTH

James Salerno, MD

Dr. James Salerno is chief of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation and a driving force behind the growth of Memorial’s rehab program. Both inpatient and outpatient care now include multi-disciplinary collaborations between neurosurgeons and oncologists, to name just two of the additional specialists that may be part of a patient’s care team. “We’re becoming a destination for rehabilitation services, with more individuals aware of our reputation and seeking the expertise we provide,” said Dr. Salerno, a clinician whose practice focuses on the medically-complex transplant population. “The expansion of services extends our geographic footprint, both inside Memorial Healthcare System and in collaboration with other healthcare providers in the community.” Dr. Salerno believes the sophisticated level of service Memorial offers enables it to be an option for patients wherever they may be. He cites the success Dr. Jeremy Jacobs has had using telemedicine to provide orders to amputees throughout Florida for necessary procedures or a replacement prosthesis.

E-mail Your Editorial Submissions to editorial@southfloridahospitalnews.com
In these extraordinary times, we thank our EXTRAORDINARY DOCTORS.

These last two years have proven – time and time again – that being a doctor is more than just a job. It’s a calling. To all of our Jackson doctors, we thank you for your selflessness, expertise, bravery – and your resilience. You are heroes in our hallways, and throughout our community. On National Doctors’ Day, and every day, we salute you.
The past two years have created extraordinary challenges for physicians. Particularly for those caring for seniors, the COVID-19 pandemic imposed a physical, mental and emotional burden on doctors, who, in the blink of an eye faced new processes, new pressures and new priorities in keeping their patients safe and healthy.

As Conviva Care Centers closely monitored the pandemic, our physicians and operations staff continuously provided guidance to seniors on how best to safeguard themselves and their families. Our physicians led organization efforts to acquire and deliver COVID-19 vaccinations, and at the same time created safety protocols so our patient care operations could continue while protecting staff and patients alike. They proactively reached out to our most vulnerable patients, including those who contracted COVID-19, and delivered food to those facing difficulty in their daily lives.

With the pandemic beginning to relax its grip, this seems a good time to step back, catch our breath, and say thank you. Thanks to all of you who have invested so much of your time and energy in becoming a guiding light through this crisis and continuing to provide high-quality care for your patients.

I so appreciate the rich life experiences our elders have lived. For many of them, with age comes health issues and, quite often, diminishing social support. The physicians who lead the Conviva care teams know this well. They understand the importance of care management, addressing emotional and social health, and seeing the whole person, in order to help our patients live their best lives. Our physicians work to ease friction in care while participating in the joy our seniors hold in their lives. They build relationships with both our patients and their loved ones, so that together they can enable our patients to age well.

It takes a lot to become a physician, and it takes a lot to bring the skills and compassion of a physician to each patient interaction. We recognize not only the cognitive effort but also the emotional commitment that goes into providing care, every single day, for every single patient.

We honor our physicians for their sense of duty and humanity in providing the best care for our seniors, from seeing patients in our centers to quarterbacking our team effort to support our patients’ holistic needs.

**Pride and Gratitude**

Our primary care physicians are an inspiration for our organization and are a big reason why Conviva earned the 2021 eHealthcare Leadership Award in the “Best COVID-19 Pandemic Related Communications” category.

To our physicians and care team members: We are profoundly grateful to you for staying the course during these unprecedented times. Your care promotes longevity and improves lives. You know that healthcare isn’t only about managing diseases — it’s also about ensuring that our patients have the environment and support to thrive, including nourishing food, a loving community, and a safe place to live.

You are helping seniors live longer, fuller lives. It has been an incredible time of change and challenge, but your commitment to service as a healthcare professional has been steadfast. We thank you and we salute you.

Dr. Vivek Garg is Chief Medical Officer for Humana’s Primary Care Organization. Dr. Steve Lee is Chief Medical Officer, Florida Division, Conviva Care Centers. For more information about Conviva Care Centers, visit www.ConvivaCareCenters.com.

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We Salute our Physicians!

The Health Care District of Palm Beach County thanks the dedicated doctors and medical staff who keep our community healthy.

The Health Care District appreciates our providers who deliver care with passion to those who need it most. Our community-focused health system includes dedicated providers at our C.L. Brumback Primary Care Clinics, our teaching hospital, Lakeside Medical Center, on our air ambulance Trauma Hawk, at the Edward J. Healey Rehabilitation and Nursing Center, and in the school health clinics throughout Palm Beach County.

Learn more about our mission and opportunities to join our community-focused health system.

Visit www.hcdpbc.org and get social
Dear health care heroes, thank you for your compassion and resilience. You are truly Remarkable.

On this Doctors’ Day, we would like to take a moment to recognize and thank all caregivers who have united on the front line responding with bravery, compassion and resourcefulness. We are so proud of the incredible service our medical teams are providing to fight COVID-19 and help our community return to health and wellness.
Happy Doctors Day

Our doctors are the reason our patients can Age Well.

Every day – but especially on Doctors Day – we share our gratitude for talented, dedicated physicians everywhere. Doctors who are committed to their patients and to providing compassionate, attentive care are invaluable to our community.

Thank you!

ConvivaCareCenters.com
Frida Dunayer handles challenges of healthcare interior design

BY LOIS THOMSON

With her 30 years of experience in interior design – the past 21 with Saltz Michelson Architects – Frida Dunayer understands the difficulties that can arise in designing healthcare facilities. As she pointed out, “The environment we create for the patient is more important (there) than in other fields.”

Dunayer, director of interior design, explained some of the specifics: “When we are talking about different kinds of illnesses and treatments (for patients), we have to deal with the equipment and systems necessary for successful medical treatment. For example, air conditioning has a big impact in the design of a building because of the need to maintain the required temperature and cleanliness. Functionality of all the spaces is the main goal for us to reach.”

She also talked about working on hospitals, where patient health and safety take priority. “Let’s say we are doing a full renovation of a hospital. We design the project considering different phases, according to the demand for the rooms in each case.”

They work on one side of the building to minimize the disruption, and then on the other. “We normally work it like that. It takes longer, but that’s the way to deal with construction in a building that never closes.”

Once the design is finished, the construction begins, but there has been change in that area over the past few years. Dunayer said, “Currently, all the new normals are a reality; because of COVID, the challenges are mostly financial in the case of construction – and the challenge of not being able to get materials. Many of the constructions have to make sure that they are not going to have any problems budget-wise, so they increase the price even though it is not necessary. We have found several cases like that. Even though the price of materials has not increased, the constructors add an additional percentage because they are trying to predict prices three months in the future.”

While some of Saltz Michelson’s buildings are spectacular in their design, the healthcare facilities usually do not exhibit extravagance. Dunayer agreed that some clients like their buildings to stand out, but for others, “it’s not as important. And that doesn’t affect our decision of how we design the building. It doesn’t matter what the specialty, we try to do our best – look-wise, function-wise. We try to design within the budget but not sacrifice in looks. The expense is inside the medical facility because of equipment, special needs. Outside, to make a building attractive, we can use different materials or we can use different colors with paint and create the same effects. It’s really not difficult to design great buildings outside with a low budget.”

Dunayer said Saltz Michelson is able to handle projects of all sizes, and that over the past five years, approximately 60 percent of the work has been new structures. “Before, maybe 30 percent were new buildings and the rest were renovations and additions. Now it’s been different, and it’s been better.” She explained that even though renovations and additions are smaller in size, they can sometimes cause more difficulty than a new building. “When you start construction you find so many conditions that are hidden that you have to go back to the design. Meanwhile, when the construction is already underway, that can result in friction between the design and construction teams.”

The firm’s clients are a mixture, and include both public works and private. Dunayer said they are fortunate to have contracts with some medical facilities and government institutions, which usually run two to three years. One project that was just finished and is operational is BARC, Broward Addiction Rehabilitation Center, for Broward County; and another under construction, also in Broward, is the sexual assault facility for women and children. Additionally, following the renovation of an assisted living facility, the firm was given the opportunity to do three more such buildings. “Assisted living facilities provide residence and basic medical attention to elderly. The occupants usually stay temporarily to be treated for minor rehabilitation matters.”

Another of Saltz Michelson’s clients is the Seminoles. Dunayer said they just finished a project for the Immokalee community in central Florida. “We designed a medical clinic, a behavioral Health Center, a police station, a fire station, and an emergency operation building in case of disaster. They are trying to organize all services for the community on a single campus.”

Whatever challenges are taking place, Saltz Michelson – and Frida Dunayer – are able to handle them.

For more information, call (954) 266-2700 or visit www.saltzmichelson.com.

Good Samaritan Medical Center brings new technology and services to the newly redesigned Norma E. & Miles M. Zisson Comprehensive Breast Center of the Palm Beaches

Good Samaritan Medical Center part of the Palm Beach Health Network, announces a new look and new equipment in the redesigned Norma E. & Miles M. Zisson Comprehensive Breast Center of the Palm Beaches. The Palm Beach Health Network invested nearly a quarter of a million-dollars into the center, bringing a sleek and calm aesthetic look, along with some of the newest high-end technology for patients being treated for their breast health.

Some of the new additions to the center include:

• The Genius 3D Mammography™ exam with Hologic Clarity HD – This technology generates images of the breast, that are sharper and even more detailed so a cancer can be detected earlier, when it is easier to treat. It also cuts down on unnecessary follow-up appointments by up to 40% compared to 2D imaging alone. It also produces images quicker so less time for the patient to have their breast under compression.

• Allure Breast Biopsy Guidance System – This system allows doctors to quickly perform 3D breast biopsies on patients and accurately target regions of interest for a breast biopsy assisting in breast cancer detection.

• Supersonic Mach 40 Ultrasound – The Ultrasound system gives the highest resolution images of patients to enhance diagnostic certainty, regardless of tissue density.

South Florida Hospital News

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March 2022
AHCA, CMS and Fire Departments
Require an Annual Fire Door Inspection

Why is it required? Because it only takes one defective or non-compliant fire door to turn a small fire into a deadly inferno.

The purpose of official agencies such as AHCA, CMS, insurance carriers and local fire departments is to increase public safety by making sure Medicare-funded health care facilities are complying with all Fire and Life Safety and fire codes and concerns.

Next to full sprinkler systems, code compliant fire, smoke and egress doors are the facility’s next most crucial fire prevention device. The reason is that most fires usually start small and can be limited to the original area, providing that any fire door leading from the room is closed and is fully fire-code compliant. In addition, it is a fact that very few people are hurt or die from flames, it’s smoke and fumes that injure and cause death. Therefore, fire doors blocking the spread of fire, smoke, etc., are essential.

In addition, a properly engineered and closed fire door will cut off additional oxygen from entering the fire zone and fueling the blaze proving it is fully compliant with the fire code.

"Fire Safety" doors are the second line of defense against the spread of a fire and lethal smoke, with a complete sprinkler system being number one. Unfortunately, "Fire Safety" doors sadly have the most potential for failure due to the high frequency of use and sometimes, the simple lack of regular maintenance. For this reason, a need for strict regulatory compliance has been established by (a) The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), (b) The International Code Council (ICC), and (c) The Joint Commission, AHCA, and CMS [Healthcare], which requires the inspection of ALL Fire Doors at least annually.

A complete fire door inspection requires several things. First – you need a completed Door Schedule - listing every fire, smoke and egress door. Each door must be listed individually, and its exact location and other information noted. Our company National FireDoor attaches a permanent QR-coded ID label to each door’s hinge edge.

Facilities’ floor plans are also beneficial; however, some entities use the Fire "Life Safety Plans" for buildings. Without a complete door schedule a full inspection cannot be completed.

When an AHCA or other AHJ (Authorities Having Jurisdiction) shows up to do a life safety survey, one of the records facilities must keep available is a Fire Door ITM (Inspection, Testing & Maintenance) workbook or report. This report is a permanent record of the ITM for each door and must be available upon demand.

An annual inspection of ALL fire, smoke and egress doors is required and a report for each door must be made available to any AHJ upon request. In addition, your facility can be cited for failing to comply with Annual Fire Door Inspection (AFDI) Mandate requirements. Never forget, it’s facilities management that is held responsible for required safety inspections.

YOU may ask who is authorized to do the AFDI. The NFPA code states that anyone who processes the proven knowledge of Fire Safety Door Assemblies and Fire Code compliance experience is eligible as an inspector, providing they are acceptable to the AHJ. Most facilities utilize the services of professional companies such as National FireDoor, LLC, one of the fastest-growing companies in the Fire Door compliance inspection field.

National FireDoor offers several programs which run from Full Service (includes everything necessary for compliance with the directives required for Annual Fire Door Inspections) to programs which supervise a DIY program.

If you would like to discuss your compliance concerns, call National FireDoor for a no-obligation consultation. NFD can ensure your buildings conform to the inspection requirements for your facility now and in the future. National FireDoor can be reached at (305) 233-1477 or email info@Nationalfiredoor.com.

BY DAN ARCE
$168 Million Investment in State-of-the-Art Healthcare Facilities Keeps Jupiter Medical Center Leading and Looking to the Future

BY DENISE MOORE

World-class healthcare requires substantial investment to stay at the forefront of medicine.

Jupiter Medical Center is sparing no expense to provide the highest level of care to discerning patients throughout South Florida.

Since 2019, the award-winning medical center has invested $168 million in its future and the future of healthcare in South Florida. Substantial investments in campus expansion, state-of-the-art facilities, and advanced technology—all at the fingertips of the area’s leading physicians and specialists—result in nationally recognized care.

Jupiter Medical Center’s latest enhancements include:

• The Anderson Family Cancer Institute: This comprehensive treatment center ushers in a new era of cancer care in South Florida. It brings together multidisciplinary cancer experts, leading technology, care navigation specialists, and personalized treatment that is unmatched in the region.

• Expanded Emergency Department: When it opens in 2022, Jupiter Medical Center’s Emergency Department will expand by 5,000 square feet and incorporate the latest advanced emergency medicine technologies and expansive patient care areas. The improvements are designed to reduce wait times and enhance the patient experience.

• 80,000-Square-Foot Surgical Center: Plans for this $100 million, state-of-the-art Surgical Institute include 16 operating rooms, two hybrid operating rooms, anesthesiology workrooms, private consultation rooms, pre- and post-operative meeting areas, expanded nurses’ stations, clinical offices, and more.

The Surgical Institute will meet the increased demand for surgical care, expand access to minimally invasive treatment options, and elevate the patient experience. As they await for a loved one during surgery, for example, family members will receive real-time, clinical information and updates via private, patient-focused communication technology.

Top Ratings and Leading Surgical Technology

Jupiter Medical Center designed the Institute with the latest quality enhancements in mind, bolstered by seven consecutive “A” ratings from the Leapfrog Group, a national nonprofit organization whose annual hospital survey of inpatient and outpatient care is “the nation’s gold standard in evaluating hospital performance,” and a 2021 Top Hospital distinction by Leapfrog.

Jupiter’s operating rooms will leverage sophisticated infection prevention technology, including ultraviolet light sterilization, advanced ventilation design, and hands-free door operation. An expanded sterile processing department will enable faster cleaning and reduced sterilization times, enhancing the overall surgical infection-prevention process.

Combining advanced surgical, imaging, and information technologies, the new Surgical Institute also will utilize the latest in multilocation data collection to consolidate patient information and make it immediately available to clinical teams. This new functionality also makes it possible to perform 3D image-guided surgery, a leading-edge technology that aids surgeons by enhancing visualization of each surgical procedure and enabling them to perform surgery with greater accuracy.

Jupiter Medical Center’s focus on technology-enhanced multidisciplinary care prompted the addition of two advanced hybrid operating rooms. These hybrid suites will be equipped with the latest image-guided and robot-assisted surgical equipment. The suites combine a traditional operating room with an image-guided interventional suite to accommodate more complex procedures.

These state-of-the-art spaces also allow for the combination of image-guided surgery with surgical procedures that require traditional open incisions. Multidisciplinary clinical teams can transition seamlessly from minimally invasive procedures to an open procedure without the need to reschedule the surgery to a different day and time.

Jupiter Medical Center is well-positioned to provide world-class care across South Florida. Continued investment in sophisticated technology, specialized medical facilities, and leading physicians enables the medical center to lead the way in healthcare innovation and provide the level of care our community deserves.

For more information, visit www.jupitermed.com.

RESIDENTS OF SOUTH FLORIDA’S CITY OF SUNRISE NOW HAVE INCREASED ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY HOSPICE CARE THROUGH THE VITAS INPATIENT HOSPICE UNIT (IPU) AT SUNRISE HEALTH AND REHABILITATION CENTER.

Residents of South Florida’s City of Sunrise now have increased access to high-quality hospice care through the VITAS Inpatient Hospice Unit (IPU) at Sunrise Health and Rehabilitation Center. The newly remodeled hospice wing is expected to care for more than 500 Broward County patients each year.

“As the nation’s leading provider of end-of-life care, we are privileged to serve and support patients who require levels of care beyond routine hospice service,” said Kathleen Coronado, general manager for VITAS in Broward County. “The availability of this hospice unit helps ease the concerns of hospice patients and their families, relieving some of the burden on hospital staff and rooms, while providing the high level of compassionate care that VITAS is known for.”

The VITAS IPU includes 16 private patient rooms with special amenities for families and visitors, private areas for quiet conversation and reflection, and overnight accommodations for guests, in adherence to current COVID-19 regulations.

Patients receive high-acuity care, as needed for their individualized care plan, including medicine and nutrition, and modalities to ease pain and other symptoms.
West Boca Medical Center to Open New Boca Center for Orthopedics and Spine Care

West Boca Medical Center, part of the Palm Beach Health Network, is set to open up its newest hospital addition with the Boca Center for Orthopedics and Spine Care. This unit is designed to provide a seamless continuum of care with advanced treatment options. The Boca Center for Orthopedics and Spine Care enables patients to easily transition from surgery to recovery and rehabilitation. The hospital offers leading edge robotic technology used by our skilled surgeons to provide better outcomes. This dedicated unit allows patients to recover in the comfort of a private, specialized area within the hospital.

This new center is essential to providing some of the top orthopedic and spine care in our community so patients can receive the most precise and least invasive treatment options in our area,” said George Rizzuto, Chief Executive Officer of West Boca Medical Center. “Our dedicated staff and surgeons are experts in minimally invasive procedures giving our patients a chance to heal quicker and get back to their daily activities.”

Some of the benefits of The Boca Center for Orthopedic and Spine Care include:

- Separate private entry way within our Medical Surgical unit
- 8 patient rooms
- New orthopedically designed walk in showers
- Dedicated staff and upgraded furniture
- Dedicated patient navigator following your continuum of care
- Inpatient rehabilitation
- Outpatient physical therapy

Patients at the center undergoing inpatient joint replacements can benefit from either the Mako Robotic-Arm Assisted Surgery System or the CORI Surgical System. Both Robotic systems afford enhanced accuracy, potential for longer-lasting implants, less post-operative pain and a quicker recovery.
West Boca Medical Center Announces the Appointment of New Board Members

West Boca Medical Center announces the appointment of three new board members to its 2022-2023 Governing Board:

- Tim Ahlbum, President of Health Coverage Solutions, is a local executive with a wealth of knowledge in the healthcare insurance industry. He started his company, Healthcare Coverage Solutions in 2008 which is an agency specializing in Medicare coverage and life insurance plans for individuals over 65.
- Rabbi Rael Blumenthal, Rabbi at the Boca Raton Synagogue, was born and raised in Johannesburg, South Africa and studied for three years at Yeshivat Kerem B’yavneh. He holds a bachelor’s degree in computer science from Yeshiva University.
- Dr. Celina Moore, Advanced Pediatrics of Boca Raton, joined the medical staff at West Boca Medical Center in April 2006 and has held many medical leadership positions during her tenure. She completed her residency at Miami Children’s Hospital and serves on the Pediatric Management Committee.

HCA Florida Woodmont Hospital Welcomes Patrick George as New Chief Financial Officer

HCA Florida Woodmont Hospital announced that Patrick George has joined as Chief Financial Officer. Prior to joining HCA Florida Woodmont Hospital, George was the Assistant Chief Financial Officer at another HCA Healthcare Facility, Presbyterian St Luke’s Medical Center and Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children. He has been with the company for four years. George is a certified public accountant who holds a bachelor’s degree in accounting from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Chris Irizarry Appointed as Foundcare’s New Chief Executive Officer

Following an extensive national search, the board of directors at FoundCare, Inc. appointed Christopher Irizarry as the non-profit healthcare center’s second CEO in its 20-year history. Irizarry follows newly retired and founding CEO, Yolette Bonnet, in leading the Federally Qualified Health Center’s (FQHC) explosive growth. According to FoundCare’s board president, Vivianne Jean-Francois, Irizarry was unanimously selected for the promotion. He originally joined FoundCare in 2019 as the Chief Strategy Officer after 13 years of executive-level experience working with FQHCs throughout the country. Irizarry’s leadership was instrumental in launching FoundCare’s Women’s Health Program by adding prenatal and postpartum outpatient services and an in-house mammography-screening program. He also marshalled the construction and renovation of FoundCare’s latest 10,000-square-foot health center located on Okeechobee Boulevard in West Palm Beach, while expanding FoundCare’s behavioural health services.

Before his career credentials, Irizarry earned his administration of justice degree from Rutgers University in New Jersey and his master’s in public administration from the City University of New York (CUNY). He continued his professional development as a graduate of Leadership Palm Beach County and the UCLA/Johnson & Johnson Health Care Executive Program.

E-mail Your Announcements to editorial@southfloridahospitalnews.com

Ronald McDonald Charities of South Florida Announces the Appointment of Three New Board Members

Ronald McDonald Charities of South Florida has announced the appointment of three new members of its Board of Directors: Jennifer Beber, Alejandro Arias and Eduardo Alvarez.

Jennifer Beber, President and Chief Strategy Officer at Beber Silverstein Group, is an expert advertising and marketing professional with an exceptional ability to mine critical insights from consumers and apply them to client challenges. She has accumulated over 30 years of experience with hospital and healthcare marketing initiatives, working with clients such as Jackson Health Systems, CareMax, AvMed and more.

Alejandro Arias, a partner at Holland & Knight, LLP, is an experienced real estate attorney focused on land use and zoning matters. He is well-versed in creating multifaceted strategies for project approvals that include working with development teams, meeting with key constituencies, interacting with government officials and staff, preparing public outreach messaging and lobbying elected officials.

Eduardo Alvarez, Senior Operations Manager at Sunshine Gasoline Distributors, is a seasoned executive with years of experience in business administration and operations. He also currently manages various companies in a presidential capacity, such as Service Stations Maintenance Inc., Mendheim Construction LLC and Tri-County Equipment.
Cover Story: Top Five Access Challenges and Solutions in Response to COVID

Continued from page 1
required to conduct an appropriate patient encounter further reducing access. Ease of navigation from one care site to another has also been more complicated than before COVID. Due to these challenges, the Holy Cross Medical Group (HCMG) like medical groups across the country, have adapted to these demands and deployed new capabilities that will benefit patient access, safety, and care for years to come regardless of COVID.

Holy Cross Medical Group (HCMG) recognized and responded to the need to answer the phones quickly and effectively by centralizing the call center. HCMG started with the primary care offices and rapidly expanded to the larger specialty practices. This resulted in greater than 98% of patient calls being answered in less than 30 seconds. Specialized training allows for the call center representative to answer questions and schedule appointments. It is also important for the call center to be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, ensuring that patients have immediate access to their medical team.

While COVID has had heartbreaking implications across every community, it has also paved the way for advancements in technology such as telehealth and online scheduling. HCMG has taken full advantage of these new capabilities to serve our patients better.

It is essential to note that in addition to learning and deploying new capabilities, HCMG and other excellent healthcare organizations across the community have known how to keep patients and care teams safe while seeking care. It is crucial that those in need of care understand this and don’t delay care even though COVID continues to be a challenge in our communities.

James Moffett is President, Holy Cross Health Medical Group.

Century Ambulance Service EMS Professionals Receive Prestigious Stars of Life Recognition by the Florida Ambulance Association

Century Ambulance Service EMS professionals representing Taylor County, Columbia County and northeast Florida were recognized with the prestigious Stars of Life award recently at the 2022 Stars of Life medal ceremony. The four recipients representing Century Ambulance EMS professionals include: Michael Krohn, EMT, Taylor County; Greg Thacker, EMT, Columbia County; Cornelius Lavan, Paramedic, and Lauretta Kaylor, Dispatcher/Paramedic both from Jacksonville, Florida. These four individuals were nominated by their station supervisors.

The Star of Life medal is given each year by the Florida Ambulance Association to recognize that EMS saves, sustains, and touches lives every day and shines a light on all the important work these individuals do who have either resuscitated a patient, improved public health, had a positive impact in the community, or showed exceptional care and compassion.

“We are very proud of the courage and dedication demonstrated by our EMTs, Paramedics and Dispatcher throughout the year and their unwavering commitment to providing compassionate care at every level in their respective roles here at Century Ambulance, said Matt Johnson, Vice President-East and General Manager of Century Ambulance. “Over the past year, the tireless efforts of all EMS professionals throughout the state have been critical to ensuring the health and safety of all Floridians throughout this pandemic.” he added.

In addition to the Stars of Life recipients having the opportunity to meet Lt. Governor Jeanette Nuñez, attend meetings at the Florida State Capitol and also met with their state legislators and local representatives.

Century Ambulance Service is a Covalent Health Company and provides services throughout the state of Florida serving northeast Florida, Columbia County, Taylor County and Palm Beach County.

Cover Story: Medical Directorships Come with Responsibilities, Risks

Continued from page 1
wages for the established physician relationship has immediate availability versus waiting for the facility’s regulatory compliance is called into question.

“Many physicians don’t realize that their medical professional liability policy most likely excludes medical director-initiated duties,” said Gompers. “In order to protect themselves from any suits or liabilities, they may need to get a separate policy or be added on to the facility’s policy where they are serving as the medical director.”

“If physicians don’t make sure that the ancillary staff meets their in-service education requirements and are adequately trained or that all of the professionals in the facility have the correct licensure, they may also be liable if something happens,” added Gompers. “In the state of Florida and other places, the medical director is also responsible to make sure that a facility’s billing procedures are appropriate and meet all requirements.”

In Florida specifically, any licensed healthcare clinic may not operate without the day-to-day supervision of a single medical or clinic director, who is, in the state’s view, the focus point of maintaining high quality care and ensuring that the facility is operating in compliance with the law. When applying for recertification, medical directors will be reviewed by the state as part of the licensure requirement, and if there is a complaint about the facility, every facet, including the medical director’s role, will be reviewed.

“Anybody contemplating entering into a medical directorship should have a contract and consult with a healthcare attorney to ensure that the proposed business arrangement does not violate any state or federal laws such as corporate practice of medicine and payment arrangements,” said Gompers. “They need to make sure that they understand their duties under the contract and consider if they can appropriately perform those duties.

“They also need to make sure that they have their own liability coverage to protect themselves in this role, or make sure that they are included in the policy of the facility or clinic engaging them and get a Certificate of Insurance as evidence of such,” he added. “A number of physicians fail to realize how important this role is to the facility and how much exposure they may have.”

For more information, contact Bill Gompers at bill@dannagracey.com, (888) 777-7173 or visit www.dannagracey.com.

Visit us on the web at www.southfloridahospitalnews.com
Dr. Robyn Moncrief and Alex Gellman Make $2 Million Gift to Boca Raton’s Keeping the Promise Capital Campaign

Retired Boca Raton Regional Hospital Breast Surgeon Dr. Robyn Moncrief and her husband, Alex Gellman, have made a $2 million gift to Keeping the Promise — The Campaign for Boca Raton Regional Hospital. The couple’s generosity brings the total funds raised through the Keeping the Promise campaign to $225 million toward its goal of $250 million and amplifies the enormous philanthropic commitment from the medical staff.

“Dr. Moncrief holds a special place in the hearts of so many of us at our hospital and in this community,” said Lincoln Mendez, CEO of Boca Raton Regional Hospital. “As a breast surgeon, she has had enormous impact on patients and their families who depended on her extraordinary skill to save and enhance life. There is no greater accomplishment as a physician, as a person. Dr. Moncrief was part of the substantial growth of the Christine E. Lynn Women’s Health and Wellness Institute before she retired to spend more time with her husband and their philanthropy. The gift she is making with her husband, philanthropist and businesswoman Alex Gellman, underscores their commitment to Boca Regional and to our bold vision to expand. We are eternally grateful.”

The gift from Dr. Moncrief and Mr. Gellman will be fittingly recognized in the newly planned Sanctuary and will carry the name of Alex’s grandmother, Anne Brenner Gellman.

Nicklaus Children’s Hospital Awarded Grant from Rotary to Advance Behavioral Services for Children

Rotary has awarded Nicklaus Children’s Hospital $333,125 to support the expansion of the hospital’s tele-behavioral health program. The grant is a joint initiative of the Rotary Club of Key Biscayne in Florida and the Rotary Club of Windsor Roseland in Ontario, Canada. These critical funds will enable the hospital to expand availability of mental healthcare services for South Florida children and their families, addressing the increased demand brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. While also providing services in a safe virtual setting. The grant builds upon Nicklaus Children’s existing telehealth program, Pediatric Virtual Care, which has been operational since 2013. Pediatric Virtual Care offers convenient access to pediatric care for a wide range of services from the comfort of home or other location.

The grant funding is provided through The Rotary Foundation — Rotary’s charitable arm — to select programs undertaken by Rotary members that support sustainable, defined community needs around the world.

Nicklaus Children’s is working hard to address the behavioral health needs of the region, aided by telehealth, which enables the hospital to safely serve more children than in the traditional office-based model. In 2021, the hospital conducted nearly 30,000 virtual consultations and visits, with tele-behavioral health accounting for 51 percent of these. This follows another busy year in 2020, when the hospital conducted over 31,000 virtual visits, with 42 percent involving behavioral health.

The Rotary Club of Key Biscayne works closely with Nicklaus Children’s Hospital on local and regional advocacy initiatives and special event development. Later this year, once it is safe to gather, Rotary club members and Nicklaus Children’s leaders will host an event to promote awareness of the mental health needs of the region’s children and recognize donors, partners and contributors.

Broward Health Coral Springs Becomes the First Breast Milk Depot in Broward County

Broward Health Coral Springs is proud to partner with Mothers’ Milk Bank of Florida (MMBFL), as the first Milk Bank Depot in Broward County. Broward Health has utilized Pasteurized Donor Human Milk in the treatment and care of premature and critically ill babies in the neonatal intensive care units.

“We are excited for the opportunity to partner with Mother’s Milk Bank of Florida by utilizing the gift of donor milk for our tiniest patients, and now also by participating with our community with giving back as a depot location,” said Sabra Henry, Administrative Director, Women’s and Children’s Health at Broward Health Coral Springs.

Approximately 14% of Florida babies are born preterm according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Breast milk for premature or seriously ill newborns is an effective way to enhance the baby’s health, growth and development. Breast milk can reduce the incidence of serious and even fatal digestive tract infections. Once frozen donated milk is received at Broward Health Coral Springs’ Milk Depot, it’s sent via courier to the Milk Bank where it’s tested for bacteria and levels of nutrients and pasteurized to kill any bacteria or viruses. Before the pasteurized milk is dispensed, bacteriological testing is done to ensure its safety. Donor milk is dispensed to babies by a doctor’s prescription.

Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center Reaches Milestone of 19,000 Open Heart Surgeries

Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center, part of the Palm Beach Health Network, celebrates a major milestone in the history of its cardiac program, as the hospital completes over 19,000 open-heart surgeries. As the first hospital in Palm Beach County to start an open-heart surgery program, Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center continues to provide innovative, top quality cardiac care to the community. “Experience counts, and that’s what this achievement represents as an important part of the growth of our cardiac program for almost 40 years,” said Teresa Urquhart, chief executive officer for Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center. “When it comes to the heart, we remain focused on advancing the level of care we provide to our patients by adding some of the newest and latest cardiac procedures to our program.” Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center started its open-heart program in 1983, with cardiothoracic surgeon, Dr. Richard Faro performing the first procedure. Since then, the hospital has been recognized nationally for its cardiac care, and continues to be at the forefront of pioneering some of the latest medical procedures in the area.

Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center Implementing the ERAS System for Heart Surgery Patients

Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center is adopting the ERAS (Enhanced Recovery After Cardiac Surgery) system for patients undergoing heart procedures. ERAS is a dedicated clinical and perioperative surgical pathway to streamline goals of care and ensure a safer, more efficient and comfortable recovery for the patient. “ERAS represents a new way of thinking about recovery after cardiac surgery. The program focuses on patient centered care to involve you and your family in your own recovery”, said Dr. Nishant Patel, cardiac surgeon on staff at Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center. “Our multidisciplinary team here at Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center has worked

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Cover Story: South Florida’s Healthcare Industry Recovery Is on the Mend Despite New Variants – Here’s How

Continued from page 1

how to increase efficiencies by serving patients in new ways. In fact, BDO’s recent CFO Survey, which polled 100 healthcare industry CFOs with revenues ranging from $250 million to $3 billion, found that 63% of healthcare organizations are thriving and 82% expect to be thriving in one year. In South Florida, telehealth innovations have given primary care physicians the flexibility to provide patients with more convenient care and the bandwidth to garner additional business. Fewer in-person visits have reduced patient costs, allowing primary care facilities to benefit from cost-savings bonuses on captitated health plans, including Medicare Advantage.

In addition to making these operational pivots, healthcare organizations that received Provider Relief Funds (PRF) and related government funding are positioned to face new variants and come out of the pandemic with greater financial stability. A number of South Florida’s specialty practices have quickly rebounded because of the funds. While some of the federal funding program updates, such as changing eligibility criteria and the need for additional documentation, have required increased oversight to ensure compliance with the latest audit requirements, the funds have had an overall positive impact on South Florida’s healthcare industry.

Looking ahead, we expect to see continued growth and investment in South Florida healthcare. The influx of people moving to Florida from across the country and the substantial senior population has sparked a great deal of merger and acquisition activity from out-of-state private equity groups. These firms are attracted to opportunities for consolidation and acquisition and are heavily investing in Florida’s rapidly growing healthcare tech industry. The firms are also helping South Florida companies expand and replicate their success in regions across the country. Several medical centers are bringing South Florida’s full-service medical center concept, which involves multiple specialty offices in one large facility, to regions of Texas and California.

As South Florida further emerges as a healthcare hub, mergers and acquisitions are expected to continue, especially over the coming months before any new tax proposals are finalized.

While the state’s healthcare sector has seen unprecedented challenges over the last two years, it has proven incredibly resilient with access to better services and working systems in place to care for high volumes of patients. Adversity often breeds innovation, and the positive steps South Florida’s healthcare organizations are taking have positioned them to help more people in 2022 and beyond.

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Colorectal Surgeon, Sarah Vogler, MD, MBA, Joins Cleveland Clinic Martin Health

Cleveland Clinic Martin Health welcomes Sarah Vogler, MD, MBA, as Associate Chief of Staff for the Cleveland Clinic Florida region, and colorectal surgery. She is board-certified in general surgery, and colon and rectal surgery, and specializes in the evaluation, treatment and surgery of pelvic floor disorders.

After earning her medical degree at the University of Cincinnati School of Medicine, Dr. Vogler completed the general surgery residency program at the University of Utah Hospitals and Clinics, and the colon and rectal surgery fellowship program at the University of Minnesota. Prior to joining Cleveland Clinic Martin Health, Dr. Vogler was Vice Chair of Operations, Department of Colorectal Surgery at Cleveland Clinic in Ohio. She also served as Section Chief for Pelvic Floor Disorders at Cleveland Clinic where she oversaw the anal physiology lab and led multidisciplinary clinics and surgeries with urogynecology and urology for the treatment of pelvic organ prolapse.

Renowned Pediatric Oncologist Doused Daghistani, MD, Joins KIDZ Medical

Doused Daghistani, M.D., a renowned pediatric oncologist/hematologist, has joined KIDZ Medical Services. Dr. Daghistani diagnoses and treats cancer in children including leukemia, brain and other central nervous system tumors, lymphomas, neuroblastoma, kidney tumors, and malignant bone tumors. He will continue providing care at the Miami Cancer Institute where he serves as Medical Director of Pediatric Oncology and where he recently finished his third term as President of the Medical Staff at Baptist Hospital of Miami. Board-certified by the American Board of Pediatrics, Dr. Daghistani also holds a sub-board certification in pediatric hematology/oncology. He received his medical degree from Damascus University in Syria and his initial post-graduate training in France. He then completed a residency in pediatrics and a fellowship in pediatric hematology/oncology at the University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Hospital. An active scientist and researcher, Dr. Daghistani is part of the prestigious Children’s Oncology Group (COG).

Obstetrician and Gynecologist Crystal Taylor, MD, Joins Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital

Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital welcomes board-certified obstetrician and gynecologist Crystal Taylor, M.D. Dr. Taylor earned her undergraduate and medical degrees at Florida State University. She completed her residency at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston and is a member of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Colon and Rectal Surgeon Haane Massarotti, MD, Joins Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital

Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital welcomes Haane Massarotti, M.D. After earning her medical degree at the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine, Dr. Massarotti completed the Residency Program at Lehigh Valley Health Network in Allentown, PA. Prior to joining Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital, Dr. Massarotti was part of AdventHealth Medical Group in Tampa. She is currently a Fellow with the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgery and the American College of Surgeons.

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For more information, contact Charles A. Michelson, AIA, Principal, at (954) 266-2700 or cmichelso@saltzmichelson.com or visit www.saltzmichelson.com

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GEO Lawyers, LLP has successfully recovered over $65M representing hospitals and other medical facilities in PIP collections. Our proprietary software analyzes and identifies claims inappropriately paid by insurance companies and generates demand letters, which insurance companies typically pay. In the event the insurance company doesn’t, we then file suit. GEO Lawyers’ mission is to GET EVERY DOLLAR owed. For more information, call 844-432EVAL or visit www.gedlawyers.com.

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**NOSSAMAN LLP**
Founded in 1942,Nossmann LLP is an innovative, multi-disciplinary law firm. We counsel hospitals and other delivery systems, managed care organizations, research companies, ambulatory surgery centers, medical associations, physician groups, and senior living providers as well as practice entities and individual professionals. They turn to us for legal advice, risk management, and handling litigation, peer review proceedings, organizational and growth restructuring, IP licensing, and on matters of public policy.

For more information, visit the website www.nossmann.com for more information, or contact Paul DeMuro, in Fort Lauderdale, or email pdemuro@nossmann.com.

**BUSINESS/RESOURCE DIRECTORY**

**CONSTRUCTION, DESIGN, PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

**S.R. CONSTRUCTION**
S.R. Construction is a turnkey division 1 vertical construction company in the cannabis industry. S.R.’s diversification in the industry allows us to provide our partners with a true “end to end” model of where all of our construction needs from agriculture, labs, distribution and retail are single sourced under one roof.

**Neave Family Law**, P.A.
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When someone you love is seriously ill, there are so many decisions to be made. VITAS helps you make the right decisions that make sense.

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For more information, contact Matt Gracey at matt@dannagracey.com, or you can call (561) 276-3253.

**KAIROS INSURANCE GROUP**
Kairos works with clients from all sectors of the Cannabis industry, from manufacturer's to wholesale and retail operations to address the unique challenges facing the industry's efforts to provide quality insurance options for its employees. Kairos employs a specialty health & safety services team that can provide comprehensive solutions and provide superior service to meet all business needs. For more information about Kairos Insurance, call the lowest cost, contact Summer Westerbury at phone (719) 331-1832 or email summer@kairosinsurancgroup.com www.cannainsurancero.com

**MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS**

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For more information, visit the website www.boardroompr.com

**MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**

**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.miamiamed.com or please call Angel Bosch at (305) 324-8171 or email Angel at abosch@miamiamed.com.

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Marc Egort, CPA, P.A.
Marc Egort, 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 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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CBD PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

PūrWell
PūrWell was founded in 2018 by Nick DiFrancesco who partnered with a farm in Pueblo, CO where PūrWell hemp is grown, cultivated, processed, and packaged. PūrWell’s medical-grade products are designed for and are sold exclusively through healthcare professionals and in the PūrWell online store. PūrWell’s proprietary formulations are crafted specifically to meet the needs of the healthcare marketplace, offering a range of strengths and applications for seamless customized treatment. PūrWell has a variety of programs that enable healthcare providers to capitalize on the emerging CBD market. For more information, please visit www.purwell.com or call 844-PUR-WELL (787-9355).

CONSTRUCTION, DESIGN, PROJECT MANAGEMENT

S.R. Construction Services
From pre-construction through final DOH inspection, SR Construction Services is a valuable and scalable 3rd party extension of your organization’s infrastructure. SRCS is a turnkey, division 1, CRB Bankable, statewide contractor experienced in the large-scale commercial, industrial cultivation and retail dispensary projects in the cannabis market since Florida medical legalization. Having completed over 75+ retail dispensaries, offering 60+ day retail fast track construction options and finishing numerous large-scale indoor & outdoor cultivation facilities, S.R. Construction delivers expertise with all phases of your vertical license requirements in FL (Seed to Sale). Please view our portfolio: https://www.s-r-construction.com/industrial/ https://www.s-r-construction.com/commercial-tenant-projects. Contact us today to discuss your construction needs at Eric@S-R-Construction.com or (561) 290-0402.

CONSULTANT SERVICES

Zing Online Services, Inc.
A web design and hosting company http://www.zingonlineservices.com info@zingonlineservices.co

DATA & ANALYTICS

Strainprint™ Technologies
Strainprint™ Technologies is the leader in demand-side cannabis data and analytics. Strainprint™ was created by patients for patients with a mission to advance the scientific understanding of cannabis and its legalization as a mainstream therapy. We support cannabis patients, practitioners, industry, and government with the most sophisticated digital technologies for responsible cannabis use and global research. Strainprint™ is privacy compliant, military-grade encrypted and all patient data is completely anonymized and at rest in Canada. https://strainprint.ca info@strainprint.ca

EDIBLES

The Green Baker, LLC
The Green Baker, LLC is a full service chef driven infused edibles company. Through this innovative company The Green Baker also offers personalized virtual cannabis cooking classes, infused dining experiences, educational lectures on cannabis lifestyle and ready made edibles options for all dietary needs. Let The Green Baker help you better understand how cannabis can fit into your healthy lifestyle! www.thegreenbkr.com – (954) 546-4166 - IG @the.green.baker - FB The Green Baker, LLC

INSURANCE SERVICES

Kairos Insurance Group
An independent agency with access to many carriers, Kairos works with clients from all sectors of the Cannabis industry, from manufacturers to wholesale and retail operators to address the unique challenges facing the industry’s efforts to provide quality insurance options for its employees. Kairos employee benefit/health insurance specialists craft comprehensive solutions and provide superior service to meet all business needs. For more information about the best available coverage at the lowest cost, contact Summer Westber at 719.331.1832 or summer@kairosinsurancegroup.com www.cannainsurancepro.com

MEDICAL MARIJUANA TREATMENT CENTERS

Curaleaf Florida – Cannabis with Confidence
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/

MEDICAL MARIJUANA TREATMENT CENTERS

Trulieve
Trulieve is the first and leading medical cannabis company in the state of Florida. At Trulieve, we strive to bring you the relief you need in a product you can trust. We offer an extensive variety of premium medical cannabis products to meet our patients’ needs. Our plants are hand-grown in a facility with a controlled environment especially designed to reduce unwanted chemicals and pests, keeping the process as natural as possible at every turn. With over 70 locations statewide, including Miami, Kendall, Deerfield Beach, and Fort Lauderdale, Medical Marijuana Patients in the Miami-Dade area can be sure there is a Trulieve dispensary nearby. We also offer convenient delivery options, including free delivery for patients over the age of 65. For natural relief you can rely on, visit us at trulieve.com.

PAYROLL SERVICES

Paymaster
PayMaster provides payroll processing, time & labor, and human resources to the cannabis industry. Our services include payroll tax service, employee direct deposit, employee self-service, paperless on-boarding and much more. Serving Florida for 25 years. Give us a call and see why PayMaster is “A Better Way To Pay.” Contact Rhonda at rtunker@paymaster.net or (954) 735-9969, or visit our website at mygreenpayroll.com for more information.

PHYSICIANS

Cannabis Card Orlando
Also providing Concierge Medicine program. Immigration Exams, Emotional Support Animal Certifications http://www.cannabiscardorlando.com info@cannabiscardorlando.com

DOC MJ
DocMJ was started in August 2016 as a small group of physicians saw the need for affordable, direct patient access to medical cannabis recommendations under the Amendment 2 guidelines. Check out our Pricing page for our current options.

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
Continued from back cover

Having completed over 75+ retail dispensaries, offering 60-day fast track construction turn time options and finishing numerous indoor and outdoor cultivation facilities, SRCS clearly understands the challenges that medical cannabis cultivation, processing, distribution and retail present. The SRCS culture of ‘communication’ and ‘transparency’ provides synergy and balance to our client relationships, according to Ryan Seddon, Principal of SRCS.

Scalable Support and Resources
“Whether working with the new 2nd round of Florida MMTC licenses (which will be entering the FL market in 2023) or the current 22 existing Florida license holders, our knowledge of state-wide permitting, codes and total market compliance - from pre-planning through construction to final DOH inspection - enables us to sit at the table as a scalable 3rd party extension of your organization,” Seddon explained.

Early and consistent collaboration among the design and architectural team, contractor, and equipment vendors is key to avoid costly and time-consuming design alterations during construction. The SRCS team offers clients scalable support in all facets of design, compliance, permitting, estimating, supply chain and construction to support the critical speed to market priorities.

An OG Player with an Eye on Future Trends
“Our investment of time and resources in technology, continuing education along with participation in both national and local industry associations help keep SRCS at the forefront of the ever-changing and fast paced cannabis market,” Seddon explained.

Business Development Manager Eric Rogers added “We have been active in the Florida Canna Construction space since medical purpose legalization. This experience has resulted in our unique time-tested set of systems and controls focused on customer expectations and proven logistics planning for both industrial cultivation facilities and retail dispensaries. This practice mitigates supply chain delays, capex budget overruns and expedites speed to market.”

CRB Bankable
Furthermore, as a CRB bankable firm, SRCS market leadership offers a potent asset for clients facing enormous capital expenditures. Conflicting views of legality between federal and state regulations create critical yet often overlooked financial challenges for contractors in the medical cannabis industry.

The current conundrum of federal classification of marijuana sales and use as non-legal makes it difficult for companies conducting legitimate operations (in states where it is legal like Florida) to have secure financial interactions.

“As a CRB bankable partner we submit to stringent quarterly audits, record keeping and documentation of financials to avoid delays and costly fees or penalties while executing our plan and working through this challenge currently under debate and review while Congress considers the Secure and Fair Enforcement (SAFE) Banking act,” Seddon said. “In an industry that is still evolving, we see this as a necessary customer service in relationship building,” he explained.

Building Relationships
“Our most valuable asset is the talented and experienced SRCS staff who contribute - both as individuals and team members - to the ultimate goal of a job well done,” he explained, “and that’s what brings our customers back,” Seddon said.

SR Construction Services (SRCS) is a turnkey, division 1, vertically integrated, multi-licensed Florida contractor with years of active experience in the commercial retail and industrial cannabis market.

Their diverse business model is focused on Industrial, Hospitality, Retail tenant improvement, Medical (including health facilities and dispensaries) and large-scale Commercial construction and renovations.

Whether new to the market or existing license holders, SRCS proven professionals with a reputation for safety and compliance are eager to partner on your next project. Contact us for a free consultation.

For more information, visit www.s-r-construction.com/industrial, call (561) 290-0402 or email info@s-r-construction.com.

Shifting the Script: Transitioning Patients to Natural Treatments for Pain and Inflammation

Do your patients suffer from chronic joint pain or mobility issues? Are you looking for a natural way to help them reduce inflammation and get relief without pharmaceuticals or NSAIDS? Are you looking for a high-quality product to offer at your practice for an additional, turn-key, income stream?

PührWell medically focused products are custom formulated to help alleviate specific symptoms. This is nothing like any of the CBD products you see on Amazon or at your local gas station.

A prime example is PührRelief. PührRelief is an all-natural cannabinoid supplement (CBD + CBG + Delta-8 THC) that has been shown to reduce pain and aid mobility; even for stubborn, persistent conditions. Patients can finally receive all the relief that medical marijuana patients enjoy, without the need for a medical card.

What makes PührRelief stand out from the crowd?
- Medical grade formula that is safe for daily use
- USDA certified organic and pesticide free
- No artificial colors, flavors, or sweeteners
- Non-GMO
- Alkaline Free
- Gluten free
- Vegan
- Kosher
- Powerful anti-inflammatory and antioxidant Flavonoids (Baicalin + Catechin)
- Boswellia and Turmeric for additional anti-inflammatory support

Would you like to learn more about PührRelief? Contact one of PührWell’s expert CBD Consultants to find out how your patients can start living with less pain and anxiety, the natural way. For more information, please visit www.purwell.com or call 844-PUR-WELL (787-9355).

E-mail your Cannabis news to: carol@cannabisnewsflorida.com

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Back Cover Story: Cannabis Spotlight

What field are you in within the cannabis space?
I’m in the marketing and creative field within cannabis, I call it “the fun stuff”. At Fluent, I’m in charge of the branding, all the marketing initiatives, and all the creative strategy and development that comes with it. I’m really passionate about cannabis branding. I believe the industry is very young and there’s a lot of work to do on the branding and marketing side. Because the industry is so new, I’ve seen cannabis companies miss the mark with compelling branding and just recently we are starting to see strong and well-developed brands hitting the market. This trend is not going to stop anytime soon.

How can people in Florida benefit from the company you represent?
We are proud of being a patient-minded cannabis company that goes above and beyond to make cannabis patients feel supported and taken care of. We offer a wide range of high-quality cannabis products, but we take it up a notch by providing an outstanding customer experience too. Our dispensary team is the best and our online experience is just an extension of the quality service patients expect to get when they visit Fluent.

Getfluent.com is the place to go to start your cannabis journey with Fluent.

How did you get started within the cannabis industry?
Before joining the cannabis industry I worked as a creative developer for Legacy and Digital Media. A production company in Miami reached out to me to develop a Documentary Series about the cannabis industry in Florida. This was during 2017 and the MMTC that I was assigned to follow was Knox Medical, which later became Fluent Cannabis. I fell in love with the industry during the production of the pilot episode. I started to advise the CEO on some ideas for marketing the company and, four years later, here I am as the Creative Director of Fluent.

Are you personally a MJ card holder?
Yes, I am.

Do you see Florida moving forward with recreational Marijuana/cannabis and how will that affect your business?
The simple answer is yes. I believe it’s not a matter of “if” anymore—it’s a matter of “when” and “how”. Whenever recreational cannabis laws are put in place, every player in the industry will be affected. In general, I think it will be great for the industry and patients/consumers, but I’m sure there will be winners and losers while this transition happens. I’m looking forward to continuing along the journey of adult-use policies in Florida. From a marketing and creative standpoint, I think the best is yet to come.

Medical Marijuana Use Registry Update – 35 Day Rolling Period

Beginning Monday, March 1, 2022, the Medical Marijuana Use Registry (Registry) was updated to comply with section 381.566(8)(e)16.b., Florida Statutes (F.S.), which states, in part, medical marijuana treatment centers (MMTCs) “may not dispense more than one 35-day supply of marijuana in a form for smoking within any 35-day period to a qualified patient or caregiver.” As such, a 35-day rolling limit will now be used to calculate dispensation limits for marijuana in a form for smoking. This means the amount of marijuana in a form for smoking a patient may purchase on any given day is calculated as the difference between the amount permitted by the patient’s current order and the patient’s total dispensation history over the past 35 days. The 35-day cycle is based not on the calendar month or certification-issued date. All patients will be given a 35-day transitional period from March 1, 2022 to April 4, 2022. During this time, only dispensations made on or after March 1, 2022, for marijuana in a form for smoking, will be used to calculate the amount available to be dispensed to the patient. Beginning April 5, 2022, all patients will start their own 35-day rolling limit, and MMTCs will not be permitted to dispense an amount in excess of a patient’s 35-day rolling limit. As part of this Registry update, patients and caregivers will see a new “Dispensable Amount” value on their orders. The “Dispensable Amount” value is the total available amount of marijuana in a form for smoking that a qualified patient or caregiver may receive at any given time due to the patient’s 35-day rolling limit.

For more details about a patient’s dispensation history and the date additional amounts will become available to the patient, you can access the new “Dispensation History” dashboard. This dashboard tracks all smoking dispensations used to calculate the patient’s “Dispensable Amount.” To view this new dashboard, expand your active Smoking Order in the Registry, and click the “See Calculation” link next to the “Dispensable Amount.” It is important to note that “Date Expires” means that the respective amount of marijuana in a form for smoking will become available the day following the date listed (i.e., the amount dispensed becomes available to the patient at midnight of the day following the date listed on “Date Expires”).

The Office of Medical Marijuana Use (OMMU) has published an instructional guide on how to understand the Amount Available Calculation Page. This guide can also be found on the OMMU’s website, here: https://knowthefactsmmj.com/registry/#instructional-guides.
Senate Majority Leader Provides Timeline for Introducing Long-Awaited Marijuana Descheduling Plan

U.S. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer announced that he intends to formally introduce the Cannabis Administration and Opportunity Act (CAOA) in April. The forthcoming legislation, which was released in draft form last July, repeals federal marijuana prohibition by removing cannabis from the U.S. Controlled Substances Act.

Speaking at the event, Sen. Schumer said: “In the coming weeks, we’re ramping up our outreach and we expect to introduce final legislation. Our goal is to do it in April. Then we begin the nationwide push, spearheaded by New York, to get the law done. As the majority leader, I can set priorities. This is a priority for me.”

NORML’s Political Director Morgan Fox responded: “We are enthusiastic that the Senator is moving forward on his promise to prioritize marijuana policy reform in the 117th Congress. It is our hope that the official introduction of CAOA jumpstarts hearings and debates in the Upper Chamber — debates that are long overdue.”

In past months, Senate leadership has received criticism for both the slow roll-out of the CAOA and for failing to support efforts to enact more incremental federal legislation, such as the SAFE Banking Act, which has been passed multiple times by the U.S. House of Representatives.

NORML was among numerous groups that submitted comments in response to CAOA draft. Specifically, NORML called for:

- Strengthening civic protections, including record relief, to provide justice to those previously wronged by federal marijuana criminalization;
- Revising outdated employment policies regarding non-scientific testing for trace metabolic elements of THC;
- Ensuring that small and local businesses can compete with large corporations and the unregulated market by reducing regulatory and tax burdens;
- Narrowing the scope of the proposed excise tax to exempt medical cannabis consumer markets;
- Balancing the roles of the FDA, TTB, ATF, and antitrust regulators in a manner that is consistent with other adult-use substances, such as alcohol or tobacco, to ensure non-disruption of currently operational state programs and promoting increased local ownership in the future iterations of the marketplace.

As initially drafted, the Cannabis Administration and Opportunity Act directs the U.S. Attorney General to remove marijuana from the federal Controlled Substances Act — thereby allowing states to either maintain or establish their own cannabis regulatory policies free from undue federal interference. Under this scheme, state governments – if they choose to do so – can continue to impose criminal penalties for marijuana possession offenses. However, states would not be permitted to prohibit the interstate commerce of legal cannabis products transported through their borders.

The proposal also mandates for the expungement of the records of anyone convicted of a federal, non-violent marijuana offense. The expungements must take place within one year of the law’s enactment.

The Act also forbids federal officials from taking discriminatory actions against those who legally use cannabis. It prohibits “individuals from being denied any federal public benefit … on the basis of [the] use or possession of cannabis.” It also, for the first time, permits physicians associated with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to make recommendations to their patients to access medical cannabis.

The proposal transfers primary agency jurisdiction over cannabis regulation from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration to the Food and Drug Administration and to the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau in a manner similar to the ways in which these agencies already oversee alcohol and tobacco products. A federal excise tax of 10 percent would be imposed within the first year of the law’s enactment. Medical cannabis access programs, which are operational in the majority of U.S. states, would not be disrupted under this federal plan.

The proposed Senate plan is competing against two other House bills, The MORE Act and The States Reform Act, both of which also seek to deschedule cannabis at the federal level. The MORE Act previously was advanced by the U.S. House of Representatives in the 116th Congress and is expected to be taken up again by House lawmakers in the coming weeks.
Back Cover Story: The Top 10 Cannabis Myths to Dispel in 2022

Continued from back cover

ing “all things cannabis” together under one umbrella. It may or may not be too much to expect laypersons to understand terms like Delta-8 versus Delta-9 but explaining the fact that THC-based products are the psychoactive components is not difficult to convey.

4. CBD and THC can be taken in any dosage regardless of what other medications one uses. While there may be many benefits to the various cannabinoids, it is critical to emphasize that appropriate dosing is key. Explaining the fact that THC-based products are the psychoactive components is not difficult to convey.

6. CBD will show up in a drug test. This may be one of the biggest fears that individuals have – the possibility of what they use to be found in a drug test. While there are no absolutes, and certainly there is inaccurate labeling or no labeling with some products, this is an area that needs further factual clarification and may in fact be specific to one’s occupation and what form of cannabis they are using. CBD products are not allowed to market their benefit for any medical condition.

7. Cannabis can cure any condition. It can’t? Really? How about the irony that states can approve the use of medical marijuana for certain conditions, but over-the-counter CBD products are not allowed to market their benefit for any medical condition? The fact is that by the very nature of having receptors throughout the body leads to the claims of symptomatic relief for many. An explanation of how this works can be helpful without getting too technical, with a disclaimer that cannabis is not a cure all for everything.

8. Medicinal and recreational marijuana are the same thing. This is an area where we as educators, healthcare providers, and clinicians can play a major role in explaining the importance of professional oversight, advice and guidance for using cannabis to obtain optimal results. The difference here lies in one’s purpose and goals.

9. It is not possible that the body has a new system. Very few of us who have migrated to the cannabis space went to school during a time when we were formally educated about the endocannabinoid system. How is it possible that just 30 some years ago someone found a system in the body that we never knew about? Teaching an old dog new tricks is possible. New body system charts in all of our offices need to include the ECS alongside nervous, cardiovascular, digestive, etc.

10. Cannabis is illegal. No not all cannabis is illegal all of the time. Educating here involves more than Florida laws. A good number of individuals flock here during the winter, vacation here and many of us from here travel elsewhere. Despite frequent changes in legislation, providing simple methods for people to understand is legal or not, where it is legal, how it impacts travel, work and even possession are important.

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.

CANNABIS IN SPORTS CONFERENCE

This conference is designed to foster education on the use of cannabis in sports!

July 29-31, 2022
Rosen Centre Hotel
Orlando, Florida

The Inaugural Cannabis in Sports Conference (CIS 2022)

Scientific Based Presentations for the Use of Cannabis in Sports.

For more info view this link:
cannabisinsportsconference.org
Trulieve Opens Riverview, FL Dispensary

Trulieve Cannabis Corp. announced the opening of a new medical cannabis dispensary in Riverview, Florida. This is Trulieve's 112th dispensary in Florida and its 161st nationwide. "Trulieve is excited to expand access to medical cannabis in Riverview and build 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."

Sunnyside Cannabis Dispensary Opens in North Miami

Cresco Labs Inc. is pleased to announce the opening of a new Sunnyside dispensary located at 505 NE 125th St. in North Miami. Sunnyside North Miami is Cresco Labs’ first location in Miami-Dade County, 15th store in the state and 49th dispensary nationwide. “We’re pleased to continue expanding our retail presence in south Florida with the opening of Sunnyside North Miami,” said Chris Rivera, Florida Regional President at Cresco Labs. “We aim to normalize the cannabis buying experience and ensure that every patient feels comfortable buying cannabis products through our bright, open, welcoming stores and knowledgeable wellness advisors. Following the opening of Sunnyside Clearwater last week, or North Miami store will offer the same approachable and welcoming store experience and provide a wide selection of premium branded products and convenient next-day delivery service.”

Trulieve Announces Exclusive Partnership with Khalifa Kush

Trulieve Cannabis Corp. announced an exclusive partnership with multi-platinum-selling, GRAMMY® Award and Golden Globe® Award-nominated recording artist Wiz Khalifa’s brand, Khalifa Kush. Through the agreement, Trulieve becomes the exclusive producer, processor and retailer of Khalifa Kush branded products in Florida and other northeast markets, beginning this summer. “We’re excited to partner with the undisputed leader in the Florida market,” said Wiz Khalifa. “Trulieve’s dedication to working with the community and creating an amazing customer experience perfectly lines up with our brand values, making them a great fit for our first expansion to the East Coast.”

Valda Coryat, Chief Marketing Officer of Trulieve, said, “Trulieve is committed to delivering a broad selection of the highest-quality cannabis brands to better serve our patient communities. Khalifa Kush is a respected brand known for top-tier genetics among cannabis connoisseurs. We look forward to becoming the exclusive home of the brand’s premium products in Florida and eventually in other markets.”
Back Cover Story: Benzinga’s Unparalleled Cannabis Investing Event in Miami, April 20 and 21

Continued from back cover

keynotes, panel discussions, fireside chats, networking, company presentations and investor and celebrity appearances. And then there’s the venue, which has a huge exhibit floor providing enhanced industry networking opportunities.

“Adding an expo floor is extremely exciting for us. We were waiting for the right time to do this; now that we’ve had many years to curate the best of the best companies in the cannabis space, we feel confident that the offering will be like no other. This, on top of the already impressive speaker lineup and investment opportunities Benzinga always brings to the table,” said Patrick Lane, executive vice president of Partnerships at Benzinga.

Deals discussed and valuable information gleaned while hobnobbing with like-minded people in a large conference hall often prove to be game changers, say scores of attendees at Benzinga events.

“We’ve seen cannabis businesses raise tens of millions of dollars at our events and this year’s meeting will be even larger, with a record level of investment capital and top-notch operators,” said Chief Zinger Jason Raznick.

In addition to the roomy expo floor to give more visibility to the brands that are shaping the cannabis space, attendees can also peel off to private meeting areas, or hunker down in the comfortable chairs and listen to an interview or fireside chat. And then there’s the food, premium food options on hand for both days.

Benzinga Conferences: A Proven Model

After 13 extremely successful editions in Toronto, Chicago, Detroit, New York and Miami, the Benzinga Cannabis Capital Conference has grown by leaps and bounds - not just in attendance or venue size but in terms of guests, CEOs and influencers in the industry, whom you don’t want to miss meeting in person.

Looking forward to you joining us in Miami in April. Register at www.bzcannabis.com for the Benzinga Cannabis Capital Conference.
MedMen Announces Sale of Florida Assets, New Trademark Licensing Agreement

MedMen Enterprises Inc., a premier cannabis retailer with operations across the United States, announced plans to sell its Florida assets to Florida-based private company Green Sentry Holdings LLC for $83 million. The cash deal includes the sale of substantially all of MedMen’s Florida-based assets, including its license, dispensaries, inventory and cultivation operations. Additionally, the Company agreed to license its trademarks in the state for a two-year period, subject to termination rights, for a quarterly revenue-based fee. The transaction is subject to customary closing conditions, including applicable regulatory approvals. The deal is expected to close in late April or early May 2022, pending the receipt of all required contractual consents and governmental approvals including the requisite change of ownership approval from the Florida Office of Medical Marijuana Use.

“As MedMen continues to transform its business model and position itself for future growth, our go-forward strategy is going to include an asset-light model that enables us to leverage the power and strength of the MedMen brand,” said Michael Serruya, MedMen’s Chairman and Interim CEO. “We feel confident this model will deliver strong financial results and opportunities for growth across many states and will continue to identify trademark licensing opportunities that will introduce the MedMen brand and retail experience to other markets across the United States and internationally.”
**S.R. Construction: Florida Partner With Cannabis Clients**

Knowledge and Experience Deliver Homefield Advantage

**BY BARBARA R. FALLOON**

Yes, Florida cannabis construction is different and many of the initial license holders learned this truth the expensive way. Due to the diverse and intricate set of codes, Florida compliance regulations, and existing property conditions, it takes more than a tool belt to design and construct successful cannabis infrastructure in the unique Florida market.

Partnering with a Florida-based, statewide cannabis-experienced general contractor, such as S.R. Construction Service (SRC), brings familiarity with all phases of large-scale indoor cultivation, processing, retail construction and a keen awareness of the many Department of Health (DOH) requirements. This knowledge and experience is vital to ensure your infrastructure plan is successfully executed delivering market share and ROI.

**Cannabis Spotlight**

**Oswaldo Graziani**

Director of Marketing & Creative Fluid

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

Cannabis is medicine, and it’s all about providing communities with choices. Medical cannabis patients have the opportunity to choose between a variety of healthcare options beyond big pharma. Medical cannabis is positively changing people’s lives every day.

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

There are a combination of factors that motivated me to join the industry. For starters, I’m a true believer in the powers of the plant—it has changed my life for the better and I want others to feel the benefits and positive influences too.

Secondly, the cannabis industry is new and exciting, and it’s really inspiring for a creative and marketing professional to tap into such an evolving space. Lastly, I truly believe Florida has enormous potential to become one of the most important cannabis states in the United States. We have it all: the population, the weather, and the demographics.