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

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THE REGION'S MONTHLY NEWSPAPER FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS & PHYSICIANS  
OUR 20TH YEAR SERVING THE HEALTHCARE COMMUNITY!

## Advances in Technology



Shane Strum

### The Legacy Continues: Broward Health Continues Investment in Medical Technology

BY LINETH FERNANDEZ

Broward Health has been committed to providing advanced healthcare to the South Florida community for the past 85 years. Its ongoing investment in innovative medical technology is a cornerstone of its strategy to continue that legacy.

"The pace at which medical technology is advancing is just incredible," said Shane Strum, President & CEO of Broward Health. "We're excited to be a leader in bringing innovative devices and equipment to Broward County, helping us provide the best possible care to our patients."

#### Custom Care for Every Heart

As part of its commitment to providing advanced cardiac care, Broward Health Medical Center, the system's flagship hospital, launched a robotic electrophysiology lab to treat heart rhythm disorders. This lab is the first in Florida and the fifth in the nation to be equipped with the latest robotic technology for cardiac ablation

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## Healthcare Education

### LECOM School of Health Services Administration: Preparing Future Healthcare Industry Leaders

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

The need for skilled leaders and administrators has never been greater in the ever-evolving healthcare landscape. The LECOM School of Health Services Administration in Bradenton, Florida, stands at the forefront of healthcare education, equipping its students with the indispensable knowledge and leadership skills necessary to navigate the complexities of the modern healthcare industry.

"The School of Health Services Administration is nestled in the largest medical college in the United States, so we're uniquely positioned to teach the business of healthcare," explains Dr. Tim Novak, the Dean of the LECOM School of Health Services Administration, when asked what sets LECOM apart from traditional healthcare administration degrees.

#### Preparing Leaders for Healthcare Organizations

Dr. Novak emphasizes that the School of Health Services Administration (SHSA) offers five graduate degree programs that empower students with the expertise to lead and man-



Dr. Tim Novak

Continued on page 12

### Empowering Communities Through Research: Health Choice Network's Holistic Approach to Addressing Food Insecurity and Advancing Health Equity with Their FoodCom Initiative

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

Health Choice Network (HCN) has embarked on a transformative journey to mitigate food insecurity in underserved communities thanks to multi-year funding recently awarded by the NIH Common Fund Community Partnerships to Advance Science for Society (ComPASS).

HCN is the first funded health center-controlled network, a successful nationwide collaboration among health centers, health center-controlled networks, and partners.



Annie Neasman



Dr. Katherine Chung-Bridges

Continued on page 32

## Hospice



Diane Deese

### Diane Deese: The Importance of Hospice Care in Underserved Communities

BY LOIS THOMSON

Diane Deese has had a heart for hospice care for diverse and underserved communities since she began her career in hospice more than 25 years ago. Deese is the vice president of community affairs for VITAS Healthcare, the nation's leading provider of end-of-life care and a valuable community partner in Miami for 45 years. She said the company has been dedicated to improving access to quality hospice care in underserved communities for more than two decades.

In her position, Deese works to educate both clinicians and the community about benefits, accessibility, and access to end-of-life care and palliative care services. "I work internally with our leadership and teams throughout the country, helping and supporting them as they continue to build their community access, awareness, and presence."

Deese said that VITAS has particularly been working with medical organizations, like the National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) and the National Medical Association (NMA), that focus on wanting to do better for underserved communities. She said VITAS has been partnering with NBNA for 20 years and with NMA for more than 22 years. A notable outcome of the

Continued on page 20

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# Publisher's Note

## Not Everything That Falls From the Sky Is a Meteorite ...

Sometimes it's little old me. Just ask Carol — even I couldn't find a good excuse for the sheetrock and insulation cascading onto her desk (and head). And then, when she saw my grey Skechers hanging over her head, I was definitely busted!



We were told we had "sweaty" aged air ducts which were dripping in the attic and staining our home office ceiling. After their replacement, I felt compelled to ensure that the leaks had, indeed, been mitigated. So, with Carol's stern warning echoing that I wasn't to actually go into the attic but just assess the situation from the attic ladder, I nevertheless decided an attic crawl was crucial.

And according to Carol (who forgets nothing I've ever uttered and usually word for word), my next words to her were, "As long as I walk on the wooden beams, it'll be fine." Well, guess what, even my comparatively small size 8 feet were a bit too big to fit on the beams and down I went. Well, almost. Luckily, my elbows caught on the trusses, and I was able to slow my descent by about 5 seconds, giving Carol and her laptop time to escape being crushed as I landed feet first on the office floor.

I scraped up my leg pretty good, (at least I was wearing jeans and not shorts!) and my arm as well. But Carol silently tended my wounds and made me sit still for a while. Then when she was convinced I wasn't going to keel over in shock, proceeded to blister my ears about textbook cases of old men and ladders!

Needless to say, Cirque du Soleil won't be calling me anytime soon.

Charles Felix

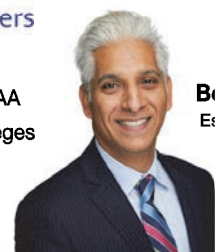


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## Breakthroughs in Cancer Treatment and Detection

Over the past two decades, remarkable advancements in cancer treatment have dramatically improved survival rates for patients battling the disease. Breakthroughs in personalized medicine, targeted therapies, immunotherapy, and innovative detection techniques are at the forefront of this progress.

**Personalized Medicine:** One of the most significant advancements in oncology is the concept of personalized medicine. This approach tailors cancer treatments to an individual's unique genetic and molecular profile. By analyzing a patient's DNA, RNA, and protein profiles, healthcare professionals can identify specific genetic mutations or biomarkers driving cancer development. This "molecular fingerprint" guides clinicians in optimizing treatments for each patient, aiming to maximize treatment effectiveness while minimizing side effects commonly associated with one-size-fits-all approaches.

**Targeted Therapies:** Targeted therapy and precision medicine have revolutionized the way we treat cancer. Unlike traditional broad-spectrum treatments like chemotherapy, targeted therapies focus on disrupting specific molecules or pathways responsible for cancer growth. Drugs such as Osimertinib, for example, target the downstream processing of the EGFR gene to disrupt tumor cell function. Antibody-drug conjugates (ADCs) like trastuzumab emtansine and trastuzumab deruxtecan, along with bispecific antibodies like blinatumomab, represent innovative therapeutic strategies. ADCs deliver cytotoxic drugs directly to cancer cells using antibodies as Trojan horses, minimizing off-target effects. Bispecific antibodies engage immune cells to precisely attack cancer, improving immune-mediated targeting and reducing harm to normal cells.

**Immunotherapy Breakthroughs:** Immunotherapy has emerged as a revolutionary pillar in contemporary cancer treatment. Notable immunotherapies include immune checkpoint inhibitors like pembrolizumab and nivolumab, CAR-T cell therapy, and cancer vaccines. These approaches have shown remarkable effectiveness in various cancers, capitalizing on the intricate interplay between the immune system and tumorigenesis. Immune checkpoint inhibitors have particularly transformed melanoma treatment. They work by releasing the immune system's brakes, allowing it to unleash its natural defenses against cancer cells. This has led to prolonged survival for advanced melanoma patients, previously thought to be unattainable.

**Other Treatment Breakthroughs:** Additionally, advancements in therapies like CAR-T cell therapy, which involves genetically modifying a patient's T cells to target specific cancer antigens, have shown remarkable success in treating certain leukemias and lymphomas.



BY MANMEET  
AHLUWALIA, MD,  
MBA, FASCO

Therapeutic cancer vaccines, such as sipuleucel-T, stimulate the immune system to recognize and attack prostate cancer cells. Another groundbreaking development is SurVaxM, a patented peptide mimicking an immunotherapeutic vaccine that targets survivin, a cell-survival protein present in many cancers, including glioblastomas. SurVaxM has shown great promise in treating glioblastoma, one of the deadliest forms of brain cancer.

**Cancer Detection Advancements:** Emerging cancer screening techniques represent the cutting edge of early cancer detection. These methods include advanced imaging modalities like three-dimensional mammography, molecular profiling of tumors, and liquid biopsies. They aim to enhance the sensitivity and specificity of cancer detection, offering patients the opportunity for earlier diagnosis. Early detection can lead to more favorable outcomes and potentially curative treatment options.

**Clinical Trials and the Future:** The ongoing quest for new therapies, including gene therapies, novel drug combinations, and personalized immunotherapies tailored to specific cancer types or genetic profiles, brings hope to cancer patients. Clinical trials, such as those underway at Baptist Health Miami Cancer Institute, provide access to these advanced treatments, potentially altering the course of their disease. As science and clinical trials continue to progress, the future of cancer care holds the promise of better outcomes for patients.

In summary, the last decade has witnessed transformative advancements in cancer treatment, improving the landscape of oncology care. These innovations not only enhance survival rates but also prioritize the patient experience by reducing side effects. Hospital executives must stay informed about these breakthroughs, as they are essential for providing state-of-the-art treatments and offering new hope to patients fighting cancer.

*Dr. Manmeet Ahluwalia is the chief scientific officer, chief of medical oncology, deputy director and Fernandez Family Endowed Chair in Cancer Research at Baptist Health Miami Cancer Institute.*



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# Tampa General Hospital Digestive Health Center Offers Updated Screenings for Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease

According to the American Association of Clinical Endocrinology (AACE), individuals with risk factors such as type 2 diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol or metabolic syndrome should be screened for nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD).

It is estimated that about 25 percent of the U.S. population has NAFLD and as many as 55 percent of patients with diabetes have NAFLD. The vast majority of patients with NAFLD, nearly 96 percent, are unaware they have the chronic disease. When left untreated, NAFLD can result in hepatic fibrosis, cirrhosis, liver cancer or even death.

The AACE recently released new guidelines for the early screening and diagnosis of NAFLD, hoping to mitigate its progression and raise awareness of NAFLD with primary care physicians, endocrinologists and other health professionals, and to allow for earlier identification, disease management and referrals to specialists. If NAFLD is detected and managed early, it is possible to prevent it from progressing and could reduce the amount of damage and fat in the liver.

Dr. Sonja K. Olsen, a board-certified gastroenterologist and hepatologist, is familiar with the AACE's updated screening for NAFLD. She offers a comprehensive assessment at Tampa General Hospital (TGH) Digestive Health Center, formerly TGH Gastro Group of the Palm Beaches. The pain-free screening consists of a



**Dr. Sonja K. Olsen with a patient**

FibroScan, a noninvasive diagnostic device used to measure the fat content of the liver, and liver stiffness, which is a marker for scarring.

"This new, advanced preventative measure available through TGH Digestive Health Center offers patients a greater opportunity to detect and treat nonalcoholic fatty liver disease as soon as possible," said Dr. Olsen. "Our goal is to provide the most up-to-date and comprehensive information to our patients, and to give them the greatest level of comfort and reassurance."

Dr. Olsen's vast expertise in treating all stages of liver disease and her unique credentials are why more and more local primary doctors and endocrinologists refer their patients with NAFLD to her care. She

is Palm Beach County's only transplant hepatologist and brings more than a decade of experience in providing world-class digestive and liver care, and specializes in liver disease and disorders, including those related to NAFLD. Dr. Olsen is the only physician in the Palm Beach County region with specialized expertise in the management of patients with end-stage liver disease, both before and after liver transplantation. She treats patients with colon, liver and bile duct cancer; gallbladder disease; alcohol-related and non-alcohol-related liver disease; drug-related liver injury; and all forms of hepatitis.

Dr. Olsen is a member of the American Gastroenterological Association, the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy and the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases. She was the chief resident at NewYork-Presbyterian Weill Cornell Medical Center, and previously served as an assistant professor in the Department of Medicine at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, assistant professor in the Department of Medicine at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City, and assistant professor in the Department of Medicine at NYU. Dr. Olsen has also served as co-director of the Medicine Sub-Internship clerkship at Weill Cornell, and as the program director for Advanced Fellowship in Transplant Hepatology at NYU.

TGH is creating a framework of state-of-the-art services for patients in the Palm

Beach County and Treasure Coast areas. For nearly two decades, TGH has been named one of the Nation's Best hospitals by U.S. News & World Report, and TGH is ranked #1 in Florida and among the top 20 in the nation for Gastroenterology & GI Surgery. As Florida's leading academic health system for more than 50 years, TGH is the primary teaching affiliate of the USF Health Morsani College of Medicine.

Today, more than 700 medical school residents and fellows at the USF Health Morsani College of Medicine receive specialty training at TGH, one of the largest academic health systems in the state, in areas ranging from general internal medicine to neurosurgery. In addition, medical, nursing, pharmacy and physical therapy students all receive part of their training at TGH. Faculty admit and care for patients at TGH, as do private practice physicians, many of whom also serve as adjunct clinical faculty.

A doctor's order is needed for the NAFLD screening, and patients with high-risk factors are encouraged to contact their primary care provider or endocrinologist to determine if a screening is appropriate.

*TGH Digestive Health Center, formerly TGH Gastro Group of the Palm Beaches, has offices at 2001 N. Flagler Drive, West Palm Beach, FL 33407, and 3401 PGA Blvd., Suite 500, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410. Both offices can be reached by calling (561) 659-6543.*

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## When It Comes to Patient Care, Make It Personal

If you read this column on a regular basis, you know I travel a ton for business. It is funny how people who don't travel for work vs. those who do, have a completely different perspective on the activity. Those who don't, generally think it's awesome. "Wow, it must be neat to visit and explore all those cities." Those who do, know it is typically a mundane combination of airports, hotels, rental car centers, and business meetings. Recently I was on business in Kentucky at all places. I flew in on Monday. Two airports, check. Got my vehicle. Rent-a-car center, check. Arrived at the hotel, check. After I put my clothes away and settled in my room, I started making some phone calls. After four calls in, there was a knock on my door. I looked through the peephole to see an employee of the hotel. When I opened the door, I was greeted with a simple, "Mr. Juffre? The general manager wanted to welcome you and give you this" and handed me an envelope. I opened the envelope expecting to find a simple card or something unremarkable, but they did better than that. Instead, inside were two things. First, a personalized, handwritten note, thanking me for staying and for my loyalty to the chain. Secondly, was a coupon for a free breakfast (which included tip). Mind you, this was not at their hotel or their breakfast, but across the street at an even nicer venue. I was impressed. The same is true of patient care. Look for you and your teams to somehow make it personal. Too often, going to the doctor is like business travel: mundane and repetitive. Organizations that look for simple ways to go above and beyond are the ones that are winning. You would be surprised how little things mean a ton and can go a long way!



BY JAY JUFFRE

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

## Health Benefits Designed to Help Small Businesses Engage Employees and Manage Costs

BY CAROL NEWMAN

As health insurance costs rise, small businesses often scramble to find quality coverage options that are affordable for them and their employees.

Although slightly more than half (56%) of small businesses offer health insurance, 98% of those worry health care costs will become unsustainable for them within the next five to 10 years, according to the most recent Small Business Health Insurance Survey by the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) Research Center.

Furthermore, 94% of small employers find it challenging to manage the cost of offering employer-sponsored health insurance, according to the survey, and 65% of small businesses that do not offer it say it is too expensive to provide.

"Inflation and rising health care costs are making it more difficult to find coverage that is affordable for employers and employees," said Rachel Bechtel, vice president, commercial business strategy and market solutions with Florida Blue, Florida's Blue Cross and Blue Shield health plan. "But employees are still looking to their employers to provide health care options for them and their families."

U.S. employers expect total health benefit cost per employee to rise 5.4% on average in 2024, according to preliminary results from Mercer's National Survey of Employer-Sponsored Health Plans 2023. While many employers do not plan to increase employees' share of the cost coverage in 2024, about two-thirds of businesses say strategies to improve health care affordability will be important over the next few years.

Small businesses sometimes struggle to find affordable health insurance because they don't know or understand all of their options. "Insurance isn't one-size-fits-all and there are ways to drive down costs," Bechtel said.

Florida Blue offers a range of health and wellness services to help small businesses engage their employees and manage costs. "We have a comprehensive portfolio designed to meet the price points and coverage options employers are looking for," Bechtel said. "We proudly serve the insurance needs of more than half of Florida's small businesses which gives us an incredible opportunity to hear from these employers and better understand their unique challenges and how we can help solve them."

Florida Blue's small group health insurance plans vary from lower-cost options with narrower networks of providers (like SimplyBlue and Truli for Health) to plans with an expansive network (like BlueOptions).

This fall, Florida Blue is reintroducing its Small Group Balanced Funding solution. Available for coverage effective Jan. 1, the level-funding arrangement combines elements of fully insured and self-funding plans for a fixed premium. "While it provides the advantages of self-funding, which larger groups tend to use, there's peace of mind associated with the stable monthly payment. With this level-funding solution, small businesses are able to budget without surprises. They can also earn money back if their claim costs are lower than they anticipated," Bechtel said.

This enhanced level-funding solution on fully insured health insurance plans for small businesses includes increased group eligibility, simplified quoting, plus better claims and stop-loss reporting — visibility that helps employers know sooner about high-dollar employee medical bills and claims impacting their insurance plans. "This brings forward a more affordable premium as well," Bechtel said.

Wellness programs are another popular way for a business to help manage costs. Florida Blue, for example, offers value-added health and wellness services like health advice from registered nurses and enrollment in personalized care programs through the local Florida Blue Centers across the state — all at no extra cost to the employee or their employer. Such services can help reduce health care costs, thereby saving money for both the business and its workers.

For small business owners, it can make a big difference when they work with an agent and insurer who can help them pick the best health insurance solutions for their business. Established insurers offer a high degree of stability. With a history of serving Florida for almost 80 years, Florida Blue partners with agents across the state to help businesses find coverage they can depend on.

Health care costs may be rising, but small businesses can find affordable coverage when they know where to look and how to find the options available.

*Driven by its mission of helping people and communities achieve better health, Florida Blue serves more than 6 million members across the state. Headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida, Florida Blue, a trade name of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida, Inc., is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. For additional information about Florida Blue, please visit [floridablue.com](http://floridablue.com) or call (877) 352-5830.*



Small businesses sometimes struggle to find affordable health insurance because they don't know or understand all of their options.

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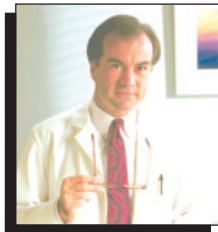


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# The Orange Bowl Committee: More Than Just Football



BY EMILY PUJA

When you think about the Orange Bowl, the first thing that comes to mind is a legendary football game that features some of college football's top-tier teams. But the Orange Bowl Committee is about so much more than just football.

Established in 1935 with the primary objective of boosting tourism in South Florida through its annual football game, the organization has grown into a vital regional institution with a broad spectrum of community initiatives and events. Over the course of nine decades, the Orange Bowl Committee has made an enduring impact on South Florida, touching the lives of countless individuals, from young athletes, to students, and local communities.

## Youth Sports

One of the most impactful aspects of the Orange Bowl Committee's mission is its unwavering commitment to youth sports programs. Over the years, the organization has provided opportunities for 16,500 young athletes to engage in sports. These programs extend across a wide range of sports, from football and golf to basketball and tennis, ensuring that the youth in our community have access to various athletic opportunities.

In 2017, Orange Bowl launched the Orange Bowl Florida High School Football Showcase presented by Baptist Health, and the Orange Bowl Florida High School Basketball Showcase presented by American Airlines in 2021. Both events offer hundreds of student-athletes a unique opportunity to showcase their talents for Division II, III, NAIA and JUCO educational institutions with the goal of playing at the next level while earning a college degree.

## Education

The Orange Bowl Committee understands that excellence in sports should go hand-in-hand with academic success. Therefore, the organization places a significant emphasis on supporting students through scholarship funds and academic program such as the Orange Bowl Leadership Academy (OBLA), an after-school mentoring program for middle school students in Miami-Dade and Broward counties.

In the past year alone, the Orange Bowl has raised \$75,000 to support scholarship funds that have major impact on the academic development of countless young individuals including the Orange Bowl Beigel-Hixon Valor Award, which honors the Marjory

Stoneman Douglas coaches who lost their lives protecting their colleagues and students in the senseless tragedy that occurred at the Parkland school.

## Community Engagement

Beyond youth sports and education, the Orange Bowl Committee is deeply involved in community engagement. With more than 400 volunteer committee members, 30 full-time staff, and approximately 1,000 ambassadors, the organization has a vast support network dedicated to making South Florida a better place. They host events like the Sunshine Health Orange Bowl Family Fun & Fit Day, presented by PNC Bank, volunteering with organizations at food and supply distributions, and participating in toy drives.

Through fundraising events, the Orange Bowl Committee has raised \$150,000 in the 2022-2023 season alone. These funds support their numerous initiatives, from scholarships to community engagement events, ensuring that the organization's mission continues to thrive.

## Legacy Programs

One of the most visible signs of the Orange Bowl Committee's impact is the transformation and renovation of local parks throughout the tri-county area. Thanks to the dedication of the organization and its partners, six parks have undergone renovations. These renovations include brand new football fields, state-of-the-art facilities, locker rooms, concessions, scoreboards, and track & field areas.

The organization has also renovated more than 30 school media centers in the South Florida area with the collaboration with College Football Playoff Foundation. These renovations provided new modernized classrooms furniture and equipment to encourage a more creative environment. These spaces benefit approximately 30,000 students and teachers in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties each year.

"The Orange Bowl Committee is a testament to the power of community engagement and the positive impact of sports. What started as an annual football game has grown into an organization that touches thousands of lives," said Orange Bowl Committee President, Yvonne Johnson-Phillips, M.D. "It's an honor to be a part of this organization that leaves a lasting legacy of positive change in our community."

From youth sports programs and scholarships to education and community engagement, the Orange Bowl Committee continues to be way more than just football.

# Talking to Your Kids About World Conflicts

*A pediatric psychologist offers advice for parents on how to address international conflicts with their kids, and when it might be appropriate to limit social media.*

With so much going on overseas right now, it can be easy to get overwhelmed by all of the coverage – especially on social media where a lot of graphic videos and photos are being shared. And it's not just adults seeing those troubling images, but kids too.

So, what can parents do to help limit their exposure?

"I know there can be recommendations to limit social media. The challenge can be that we want to keep the communication open and if parents are trying to limit social media, especially for adolescents, it can create sort of an area of conflict or just a problem with honesty," said Amy Lee, PhD, pediatric psychologist for Cleveland Clinic Children's.

She suggests parents instead have a conversation with their adolescent about why it can be important to take breaks from social media and what kind of content they should be avoiding.

They can also ask them about whether they've seen anything on their feeds that could be upsetting.

Dr. Lee said for younger kids, there should be more parental control over social media.

However, if a child does see something they shouldn't, it's best to have open communication.

She recommends talking to them about it in an age-appropriate way.

"Younger kids are going to be more concerned with their own safety or changes that may happen in their own smaller world," she said. "And so parents can offer reassurance, or they can offer simple explanations of how situations may be different in different places."

Dr. Lee said parents also need to be mindful of what they're watching when their children are around.

They could accidentally see or hear something that way too.



Dr. Amy Lee

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# Mental Health Parity Compliance

In the U.S., it's estimated that more than one in five adults live with a mental illness — that's about 57.8 million people as of 2021. In response to the growing awareness of the importance of treatment for mental health and substance use disorders (MHSUD), the Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services (CMS) enacted the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) of 2008.



BY ALFREDO CEPERO

employers addressing any nonquantitative treatment limitations (NQTLs) in their health plans so as to not conflict with the MHPAEA standards regarding composition of provider networks. The agencies have requested comments on the technical release.

• An updating of the current 2013 final MHPAEA regulations that would be effective as of 2025 that add additional layers of compliance from the agencies resulting in higher costs for employers.

The legislation expands on the Mental Health Parity Act of 1996 and requires health insurers and group health plans that offer MHSUD benefits to provide the same level of benefits for mental and/or substance use treatment and services that they do for medical or surgical care. The legislation also ensures that plans offered on the Health Insurance Marketplace under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) cover many behavioral health treatments and services while requiring some plans to cover MHSUD services as an essential health benefit.

Compliance enforcement related to MHPAEA is likely to increase as time goes on. That means it's more important now than ever before for organizations to comply with both federal and state parity law requirements.

As an example, the following legislative actions indicate immediate consideration:

• The DOL and the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) have issued a brief summarizing their MHPAEA enforcement efforts in fiscal year 2022.

• The U.S. Department of the Treasury, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) published a technical release setting forth a potential approach that the agencies may take to determining the types of compiled data required of

ance from the agencies resulting in higher costs for employers.

• A congressional report authored by these three agencies detailing recent enforcement efforts and citing multiple employee benefit plans that have violated the MHPAEA.

BDO's Mental Health Parity Compliance team can help you address common challenges like:

• Determining whether your organization is obligated to offer MHSUD services as a plan sponsor under MHPAEA

• Assessing whether your current or prospective benefits offerings are compliant with MHPAEA requirements

• Acquiring a certification of compliance for MHPAEA

• Adding procedures to your current corporate compliance policies and procedures to include mental health parity alignment

If you're experiencing any of these challenges, our Mental Health Parity Compliance team may be able to help.

Contact:  
Alfredo Cepero, Principal, Assurance  
Market Leader  
(305) 420-8006 / acepero@bdo.com

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# Weighing the Cost of Expanding Non-Economic Damage Rewards in Wrongful Death Cases Versus Access to Health Care

Legislation has been filed in Tallahassee that will once again seek to expand the ability of adult children to recover non-economic damages in Wrongful Death cases in Florida. As an organization that represents physicians in our community, I recognize that our opposition to this legislation may seem self-serving. However, I would ask our elected officials and the public at large to consider



BY CARMEL J. BARRAU, MD

the potential cost of this expanded ability to recover unlimited pain and suffering, versus the ability of the health care system to continue to treat the pain and suffering of those sick and injured in our community.

While that statement may seem over dramatic, the reality facing Florida's physicians is very real. Florida's physicians already pay the highest medical malpractice premiums in the Country. The cost of insurance is so high that many physicians locally continue to practice without malpractice insurance. For those that do purchase malpractice insurance, the coverage limits are typically much lower than physicians in other states (\$250K versus \$1 million+).

Florida also has the second highest number of Medicare beneficiaries of any state in the nation, with over 4.8 million patients. The vast majority of these beneficiaries will have adult children whose ability to recover unlimited pain and suffering damages in Wrongful Death cases will significantly increase litigation exposure for our physicians. While Medicare is supposed to consider malpractice insurance costs in physician reimbursement, due to budget neutrality, the physician fee schedule has failed to increase in relation to inflation for the past 20 years.

In a speech delivered to the National Press Club last week, the President of the American Medical Association, Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH, noted that "In an era of record-high physician burnout and a projected physician shortage up to 124,000 over the next decade, America's health care system is near its breaking point as tens of millions of Baby Boomers soon will become eligible for Medicare and our nation's chronic disease burden surges." Florida will be at the epicenter in this surge of patient demand and is

already feeling the impacts of workforce shortages, burnout, and an aging physician population.

According to Robert E. White, Jr., President of The Doctors Company and TDC Group, "When Florida's Wrongful Death Act was expanded years ago to allow adult children to recover noneconomic damages for the death of a parent and parents to recover noneconomic damages for the death of an adult child,

healthcare professionals were exempted. The exemption was because tort reforms were enacted to help curb high premiums for Florida doctors, and this change would have negated the benefits of tort reform. We know that doctors face a higher percentage of death cases when sued than any other class of defendants."

He continued, "According to the Florida Office of Insurance Regulation's Medical Malpractice Financial Information, Closed Claim Database and Rule Filings Annual Report dated October 1, 2023, 3,026 claims involving Florida healthcare professionals were closed in 2022, and 1,007 (33 percent) of those were wrongful death cases. Any change in the law that can potentially increase the number of wrongful death cases against healthcare professionals will put upward pressure on rates that are already the highest in the nation."

As physicians, we strongly support the ability of patients and dependents to recover all of their economic losses in medical liability and Wrongful Death cases where malpractice is proven. We have long advocated for a balance between the needs of individual patients and their dependents to be able to recover unlimited noneconomic damages to make sure that health care remains accessible in the community. We implore state leaders to continue to seek that same balance as they consider a significant expansion of those eligible to recover noneconomic damages in Wrongful Death cases. As physicians and colleagues, we need to come together to educate our leaders on the potential ramifications of pursuing this liability expansion.

Dr. Carmel Barrau is President, Dade County Medical Association, Inc.

## Correction

October's article *Understanding Headaches Should Not be a Headache* by Oron Fiksel was over-edited in the submission process. It originally correctly stated the following:

"The three types of headaches most seen in outpatient clinics are: cervicogenic (CHA), tension-type (TTH) and migraine headaches. Often these HAS present with overlapping symptoms, which makes the treatment challenging."



## The Evolving Landscape of Healthcare Education in 2023

BY DR. KAROLINE MORTENSEN AND  
DR. DANIELLE ELLERBE

The University of Miami is approaching its 100th anniversary in 2025, marking a century of academic excellence and active community involvement. The university's mascot, the Hurricane, is a symbol tied to the Great Miami Hurricane of 1926, which caused significant campus damage, necessitating resilience and innovation to maintain and rebuild. This same resilience and adaptability remain critical as the healthcare system contends with disruptions from artificial intelligence, the pandemic, the shift toward value-based care, and other complex challenges. Our Health Executive Master of Business Administration (HEMBA) program, celebrating its 45th anniversary this year, alongside the Master of Health Administration (MHA), MD/MBA, and undergraduate Health Management and Policy (HMP) programs, equip our students and alumni with the vital skills needed to steer organizations through these turbulent times.

The Miami Herbert Business School has achieved a rare "triple crown status," making it the third business school in the country to be accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), EFMD Quality Improvement System (EQUIS), and the Association of MBAs (AMBA).



Dr. Karoline Mortensen



Dr. Danielle Ellerbe

Additionally, our health care programs hold accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME). The department maintains active engagement with the Business School Alliance for Health Management (BAHM), fostering valuable national and global resources.

Notably, the department's 12th annual conference, "The Business of Health Care: Managing Through Uncertainty," hosted executives from leading professional organizations, offering insightful strategies for navigating the post-pandemic healthcare landscape. The HMP department is eagerly planning the 13th conference to occur on February 16, 2024, "AI, Elections and the Economy". Moreover, our students, alumni, and faculty have achieved notable successes, securing first place in the South Florida

Chapter of the American College of Health Executives (ACHE) case competition and attaining semi-finalist status in the National Association of Health Service Executives (NAHSE) case competition in Atlanta.

The HMP department hosted a career fair in conjunction with ACHE that was teeming with students and attended by 16 healthcare organizations across the state of Florida. Drs.

Mortensen and French co-hosted the 20th annual Southeastern Health Economics Study Group (SHESG) conference this year at Miami Herbert, welcoming some of the leading health economists and health services researchers from U.S. universities. The fall semester at University of Miami kicked off with an advisory board meeting and HMP student and alumni reception, filled with a time of great connection, networking, and celebration.

Our distinguished faculty members continue to contribute significantly to the healthcare field, with recent highlights including Dr. Danielle Ellerbe joining as the academic director of the MHA program and Dr. Emma Dean presenting her research at the International Health Economics Association conference in Cape Town, South Africa. Dr. Michael

French was recently recognized by Stanford as one of the world's top 2% scientists. Faculty members hold various leadership positions within the department, school, and university, continually enriching the academic experience including Dr. Karoline Mortensen who serves as associate dean of business programs while continuing to bring her expertise to the classroom.

Dr. Stephen Ullmann received a Lifetime Achievement Award by the South Florida Hospital and Healthcare Organization. Our department prides itself on fostering interdisciplinary, experiential learning, exemplified by the co-teaching of the HEMBA public health policy class by former United States Health and Human Services Secretaries, Donna Shalala and Alex Azar.

In addition, our monthly distinguished speaker series and involvement of industry leaders in the classroom further enrich our students' learning experiences.

As we navigate this era of disruption and artificial intelligence, the Miami Herbert Business School remains dedicated to cultivating transformative scholarship and nurturing principled leaders, especially in the realm of healthcare, for a brighter future.

For more information, visit [www.bus.miami.edu](http://www.bus.miami.edu).

## Broward Health Is Betting on Re-Envisioned Nurse Residency Program

In light of today's nurse shortage, ensuring that novice nurses have a strong start is not only important for their personal success but critical to patient outcomes. That's why Broward Health, which has offered a comprehensive 12-month nurse residency program since 2016, is poised to launch a re-envisioned program to include gamification and interactive activities that will deliver effective learning with a touch of fun.

"Our team is committed to finding innovative strategies to address the challenges nurse residents face," said Sylvia Sloane Jones, APRN, who manages Broward Health's nurse residency program. "With our new program, we're responding to changing needs as well as changes we've observed in the style of learning preferred by today's nurse residents."

Gaming is one solution identified to capture and hold people's attention, which some experts report may be as little as seven minutes. An example of gamification is the redesign of 10 traditional class lecture discussions into clinical scenario escape rooms with rhymed clues, puzzles, locked boxes and invisible ink pen messages. These escape rooms make team building, skill acquisition, and learning policy, procedures, and stan-



Sylvia Sloane Jones

dards more appealing and engaging.

"Engagement is key," explained JeBony Parris, R.N., clinical education specialist. "As nursing educators, we often see nurses who are proficient in a topic become bored and unengaged when it is presented in a traditional classroom lecture. Nurses who are less proficient can get lost. As they fall

behind, they too become unengaged."

While teaching methods are changing, the need for continued learning in an organized, safe, and engaging manner remains the same and Broward Health's nurse residency program team recognizes that it's critical to continue to meet the requirements and regulations for standardized programs. This includes providing committed nursing leadership support, core educational classes with clinical debriefing, professional development seminars with clinical reflections, mentoring experiences and data collection for monitoring confidence, assessment and evaluation, clinical practice, interprofessional communication, professional role focus and residency support specialist to provide on the unit support during individualized preceptor orientation.

"We're using a lot of nontraditional

methodologies to bring the curriculum to life, but it is the same quality curriculum," said Jones. "Our goal with this update is to make learning as fun, interactive and memorable as possible through hands-on, scenario-based teaching that will not only drive home the curriculum but enable nurse residents to build important soft skills like active listening, working with others and accountability."

"Transitioning into the nursing profession is a challenge," Jones added. "New nurses are expected to jump into difficult roles and expand their ability to manage complex issues quickly. We believe our new approach will be a game changer."

Broward Health plans to officially launch this updated version of its program in early 2024.

The updated program will continue providing novice nurses with the necessary knowledge base, skill set and structured support to help them transition from student to competent and confident registered nurse. With new cohorts starting monthly, the program currently welcomes 250 graduates annually.

For more information, including program requirements, the application process and launch dates, interested parties can visit [www.BrowardHealth.org/Pages/Nurse-Residency-Program](http://www.BrowardHealth.org/Pages/Nurse-Residency-Program) or email [sjones@browardhealth.org](mailto:sjones@browardhealth.org).

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**Miami Dade College-Medical Campus:  
Endoscopy Technician Program Meeting  
the Educational Needs of Our Community**

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment for Endoscopy Technicians is projected to grow 11% from 2020 to 2030. Likewise, employment projections from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunities, Workforce Development Area 23, Miami-Dade, and Monroe Counties indicates that there will be projected 9% growth from 2022 to 2030. Many of the openings are expected because of the need to replace workers who transfer to different occupations, exit the workforce, or move out of state. The aging of the large baby-boom generation is expected to increase the demand for allied health care workers due to the need for more medical procedures. To meet this demand, Miami Dade College, a leader in addressing the workforce needs of our community, is dedicated to preparing students for the ever-changing field of health care.



BY DR. RON  
WINSTON

Miami Dade College's School of Health Sciences developed a 24-Credit College Credit Certificate (CCC) in Endoscopy Technician to meet the needs of our community. This College Credit Certificate is designed to educate and prepare graduates with the transferable skills required for entry-level employment as a member of the Surgical Services health care team. Endoscopy Technicians are responsible for preparing the operating room and the equipment and for providing support to physicians and nurses while procedures are underway. They also gather patient data and are responsible for troubleshooting any issues pertaining to endoscopes, an instrument with a camera attached to its end. Endoscopy Technicians communicate with appropriate health care providers regarding findings, maintain a breadth of knowledge regarding the various endoscopic procedures, and provide patients with physical and emotional sup-

port during their procedures. Similarly, Endoscopy Technicians play an important role among the gastroenterology team throughout the endoscopy procedure by helping to prepare materials, obtain specimens, and maintain a sterile field during the procedure. Additionally, these technicians ensure that all equipment is functioning properly before use.

By developing the CCC in Endoscopy Technician to address the workforce needs in Miami Dade County, Miami Dade College's School of Health Sciences is preparing students to become highly skilled healthcare professionals, while improving their quality of life and allowing them to become an integral part of healthcare team. The School of Health Sciences turns health care career dreams into reality for thousands of students every year.

*Dr. Ron Winston is Chairperson, School of Health Sciences at Miami Dade College.*

*For more information, visit [www.mdc.edu/medical/](http://www.mdc.edu/medical/) or call (305) 237-4103.*

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**BE IN DEMAND**

# Shaping Tomorrow's Nurses: FAU's Innovative Accelerated BSN Program at Davie Campus

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

In the dynamic realm of healthcare, nursing education must evolve to equip students with the skills and knowledge required to excel in the ever-changing landscape. Florida Atlantic University's Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing is at the forefront of this evolution with its comprehensive Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) track. The ABSN track will be offered for the first time at FAU's Davie campus starting in fall 2024. The application cycle for fall admissions is now open for both the Davie and Boca Raton campus.

Dr. Michelle Broadbent, Interim Assistant Dean for the Undergraduate Program at the college, shared insights into how this program integrates innovative teaching methods, addresses healthcare disparities, and prepares graduates for the challenges of the nursing profession.

### Active Learning and Simulation: A Transformative Approach

Engaging students actively in both classroom and clinical settings is a cornerstone of FAU's ABSN track. Dr. Broadbent explains that they employ innovative techniques like flipped classrooms and active learning strategies, turning students into active participants in the learning process.

She emphasizes, "The student becomes part of the teaching process. It's a more active learning cycle."

Additionally, the track utilizes nursing situations—integrative case studies based on clinical scenarios—to deepen students' understanding of patient care.

Simulation and laboratory experiences are integral to the teaching environment. Dr. Broadbent notes that these experiences offer students "real-world situations on high-fidelity mannequins that have significant responses." This allows students to practice in a controlled environment, gaining invaluable real-time instructor feedback.



Dr. Michelle Broadbent

### Addressing Healthcare Disparities and Fostering Cultural Competency

Recognizing the importance of cultural competence and addressing healthcare disparities, FAU's program extends education beyond the classroom. According to Dr. Broadbent, students are exposed to community settings to gain insights into social determinants of health.

A population health course, for instance, provides hands-on experience in community healthcare centers, helping students assess community needs and enhance access to care.

### Clinical Experiences: The Bridge Between Theory and Practice

Clinical experiences form a critical component of the ABSN track. These rotations allow students to apply classroom knowledge in real-world healthcare settings.

"The students get to translate the information they're getting in didactic courses into a patient care setting," she says.

Dr. Broadbent adds that the track offers diverse clinical rotations, covering med-surge, pediatrics, maternity, psychiatric, and population health, ensuring graduates are well-prepared for various nursing roles.

### Interdisciplinary Learning and Collaboration

Collaboration across healthcare disciplines is vital for success in real-world healthcare settings. Dr. Broadbent pointed out that FAU fosters interdisciplinary learning through its interprofessional education program.

"This program brings together students from nursing, medicine, social work, and other fields for team-based scenarios," says Dr. Broadbent. "It enhances their ability to work in an interdisciplinary setting."

In healthcare, adaptation is key. Dr. Broadbent also highlighted that FAU's ABSN track regularly evaluates its curriculum to ensure alignment with the evolving healthcare landscape.

"Our faculty took our entire BSN curricula, and we ended up revising the curriculum," she explains. These revisions are guided by core competencies outlined by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, keeping graduates up-to-date with industry requirements.

### Transitioning Graduates into Nursing Careers

Recognizing the intensity of the ABSN track, Dr. Broadbent emphasizes the importance of support systems. "It's very

high-paced," she acknowledges. FAU offers counseling and psychological services, peer tutoring, supplemental instruction, and peer mentoring programs to assist students. These resources ensure that students have the support they need to succeed.

As students approach graduation, the program provides opportunities to ease the transition into nursing careers.

"Our final course in the curriculum is called our nursing immersion," Dr. Broadbent says. "It's a preceptive practical experience with a nurse in one of our clinical partner facilities."

Graduates also benefit from alumni mentoring programs and workforce development initiatives, facilitating a smooth transition into the nursing workforce.

In conclusion, FAU's Accelerated BSN track is dedicated to producing well-rounded, highly skilled, and culturally competent nurses. With a curriculum that adapts to changing times, innovative teaching methods, and strong support systems, FAU prepares graduates to excel in the dynamic and challenging nursing field.

For more information, please visit [health.fau.edu](http://health.fau.edu).



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**Cover Story: LECOM School of Health Services Administration: Preparing Future Healthcare Industry Leaders**

Continued from page 1

age diverse health service organizations. These organizations span hospitals, healthcare facilities, public health agencies, pharmacies, private practice multi-specialty groups, and senior living centers.

"We're preparing the healthcare leaders of tomorrow, today," says Dr. Novak. "Our programs are flexible, essential, and affordable. The knowledge gained from these programs is vital to understanding today's interprofessional healthcare systems, planning, and implementation of sound fiscal policy, strategic planning, industry compliance, ethics, diversity, and responsible governance."

According to Dr. Novak, what also sets SHSA apart is its scholar-practitioner approach.

"One of the things we say to our students is that it's not just what you know, it's what you can do," he says. "Some individuals possess extensive knowledge but struggle to apply it. Alongside the academic rigor we provide, we also equip our students with the practical skills needed to excel as healthcare administrators in today's vastly different landscape from when I began my career decades ago."

**Whole-Person Wellness at the Core**

Integral to SHSA's philosophy is the concept of whole-person wellness. This holistic approach aligns with osteopathic principles, which prioritize the well-being of the Mind, Body, and Spirit.

Dr. Novak explains that this philosophy is deeply ingrained in the school's mission. "Honoring osteopathic principles, educational excellence is maintained through an outcome-focused, case-based curriculum with experiential discovery and action research taught through a flexible online learning platform."

Just as one must assess the comprehensive needs of an individual, SHSA takes an interprofessional approach in healthcare, breaking down traditional silos that have hindered collaboration in the field.

"We emphasize the importance of collective effort for community wellness, whether partnering with rural health departments, private hospitals, not-for-profit institutions, or for-profit organizations," says Dr. Novak. "We're dedicated to promoting integration and collaboration across various healthcare sectors, including dentistry, pharmacy, mental health services, and substance prevention."

**Flexibility for Working Professionals**

Recognizing the demands of today's healthcare sector, SHSA offers online course delivery designed to accommodate the schedules of busy working professionals. Dr. Novak underscores the importance of this flexibility, as it allows talented individuals to pursue advanced degrees while continuing to work full-time.

As the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projected, this approach is essential in meeting the growing demand for healthcare services.

**Unique Specializations**

SHSA sets itself apart from traditional healthcare administration programs by offering a range of unique specializations. Dr. Novak notes, "A one-size-fits-all approach in graduate education does not meet the needs of our complex societies."

The programs include Biomedical Ethics, Public Health, and Medical Cannabinoid Therapeutics, each addressing critical healthcare specialty areas.

• Biomedical Ethics delves into key ethical issues in healthcare, such as beginning and end-of-life care, access to care, AI, disparities, patient autonomy,

and dignity.

• Public Health equips students to handle various public health challenges, including pandemics, poverty's impact, nutrition, mental health services, disaster planning, health education, preventive services, and addiction prevention.

• Medical Cannabinoid Therapeutics focuses on understanding the medicinal potential of cannabis and its derivatives, addressing the rapidly evolving and multi-billion dollar cannabis industry.

**Promising Career Prospects and Embracing Emerging Technologies**

Given the dynamic nature of the healthcare industry, career prospects for LECOM graduates are promising.

Dr. Novak emphasizes that the programs are designed to produce healthcare industry leaders who can adapt to rapidly changing requirements and provide exceptional support to healthcare organizations.

SHSA's Doctor of Healthcare Administration (D.H.A.) program is at the forefront of preparing scholar-practitioners to address the challenges and opportunities presented by emerging healthcare technologies. Dr. Novak highlights that the program equips professionals to become innovative leaders and complex problem solvers who can bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Graduates gain a deep understanding of artificial intelligence and machine learning. This enables them to conduct rigorous research and apply findings to real-world decision-making in healthcare organizations and government bodies.

**Conclusion**

The LECOM School of Health Services Administration is a beacon of excellence in healthcare education, equipping future leaders with the knowledge, skills, and adaptability required to excel in a rapidly changing industry. With a commitment to whole-person wellness, flexibility for working professionals, unique specializations, and a focus on emerging technologies, LECOM is shaping the healthcare leaders of tomorrow.

As healthcare continues to evolve, institutions like LECOM play a vital role in ensuring that healthcare organizations are led by individuals who can navigate the complexities of the modern healthcare landscape with competence and compassion.

For more information, visit <https://lecom.edu/school-of-health-services-administration>.

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## LECOM MHSA Students Open Doors with Executive Interviews

BY DON HENDERSON, DHA

The Master's in Health Services Administration (MHSA) degree program based at the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine's Bradenton, FL campus will celebrate its 10th year beginning in January, 2024. Professor Terri Runo, who has led the program since its inception, recently highlighted some of the unique features of the two-year program, which is offered through an online learning platform.



Jacob Crilley



Haley Sorenson

"In the second year of the program, we require all students to conduct a series of executive interviews with leaders at their own local healthcare facilities", Runo noted. "This helps them gain real-world experience very quickly and also a better understanding of what it is like to serve in a leadership role".

Jacob Crilley, who is a dual enrollee of both the LECOM pharmacy and MHSA programs stated that "The ability to sit down with leaders in the industry and learn from their experiences first-hand has been invaluable. The executive interview series has been greatly advantageous for the start of both my pharmacy and healthcare administration careers."

Haley Sorenson, who is also a dual enrollee of the LECOM medical school and MHSA programs added "The executive interview process provides a unique opportunity for students to immerse themselves in understanding the roles of hospital leaders at every level. Being able to view the process of decision-making from a first-person perspective has given me great insight about the daily workings of healthcare organizations".

Professor Runo noted that "Executive interviews are held in two phases. The first is to gain a general understanding of how healthcare leaders function through multiple levels of healthcare delivery systems. The second is to then use this knowledge to address a real-world problem discovered in the course of the interviews with practical recommendations using the student's accumulated knowledge. This approach is consistent with the LECOM philosophy of developing scholar-practitioners who are well-equipped to lead in the challenging environment which is healthcare today".

As the LECOM MHSA program enters its second decade, Runo also commented that "Since the program began, we have seen a lot of changes in healthcare that we never anticipated. As we go forward, we predict that more change will occur, including the arrival of artificial intelligence and machine learning. Our goal at LECOM to continue to adapt the MHSA program to face these new realities".

For more information, visit <https://lecom.edu/school-of-health-services-administration/>

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## South University's Physical Therapy Assistant Program

BY CAROL NEWMAN

The Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program at South University, West Palm Beach has been accredited since 1997 and is designed to prepare students for a rewarding career in the healthcare industry. Physical Therapist Assistants work under the supervision of licensed physical therapists to help patients recover from injuries, surgeries, or illnesses and improve their overall mobility and pain management.

The PTA program at South University is an accelerated program where students, once accepted to the profession phase of the program, can complete their degree in 18 months. This program is delivered in an evening class format so students can maintain employment while completing their degree. The PTA program comprises a comprehensive curriculum with classroom lectures, laboratory sessions, and clinical experiences. Students are expected to gain a strong foundation in anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, and other relevant sciences. They also acquire knowledge on therapeutic exercises, manual therapy techniques, and the use of specialized equipment to assist patients in rehabilitation. Hands-on clinical experience is a vital component of any PTA program and relies on partnerships within various healthcare settings, such as hospitals, rehabilitation centers, outpatient clinics, and nursing homes. During these clinical rotations, students can apply their knowledge and skills in real-world scenarios under the guidance of experienced Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist Assistants.

Students earn an Associate of Science Degree in Physical Therapist Assistant upon completion of the program. Graduates who subsequently pass the licensure exam elect to pursue career opportunities in a myriad of settings, such as hospitals, private practices, sports and fitness facilities, schools, and home healthcare agencies. PTAs work closely with physical therapists to optimize the patient experience, helping them to regain their independence and enhance their quality of life.

The South University West Palm Beach faculty includes experienced physical therapists and educators dedicated to providing high-quality education to all students. The PTA program leadership includes the Program Director, Larry Jaffe, PT, DPT, SCS, ATC, and Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education, Jermaine Bell, PT, DPT.




Larry Jaffe



Jermaine Bell

Lawrence "Larry" Jaffe has been a practicing Physical Therapist and Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC) for over 23 years. He is a Board-Certified Sports Clinical Specialist (SCS) through the American Physical Therapy Association and specializes in the field of sports physical therapy. Larry graduated with his Bachelor of Science in Physical Therapy from the University of Hartford, Master of Science in Physical Therapy at Rocky Mountain University, and his Doctorate of Physical Therapy. Additionally, Larry is Functional Movement Screen (FMS) Select Functional Movement Assessment (SFMA) and Y-Balance Test (YBT), Dry Needling, and Blood Flow Restriction (BFR) Certified. Larry completed his Sports Clinical Specialists (SCS) at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, where he later was hired to spearhead their pediatric Sports Physical Therapy Program. Since moving to Florida in 2005, he has held the position of rehab director in multiple facilities. Larry's clinical areas of expertise include sports medicine, orthopedics, aqua therapy, and injury prevention. He is a member of the American Physical Therapy Association, the National Athletic Training Association, and the USA Swimming Sports Medicine Network. Larry has been an instructor for clinical education courses across the United States and the Philippines. As supported by the university to maintain the current trends in Physical Therapy, Larry serves part-time at the Inter Miami CF Academy as an Academy Athletic Trainer providing sports medicine support to youth soccer players in South Florida.

Jermaine Bell has a storied history as a school-based Physical Therapist with experience in various settings such as outpatient orthopedics, acute care, sub-acute, and home-based therapy. He has prior utilization management experience with health insurance managers while serving as an orthopedic care manager. Before becoming a Physical Therapist, he served in the U.S. Marine Corps for 4 years. Post-military, Jermaine attended the University of Michigan and obtained his Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences, then later a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from the University of St. Augustine. Jermaine has always held an affinity towards academia with a passion in sharing his knowledge obtained through educational and clinical experiences. Throughout his career, he has maintained that education is often the most vital part of the clinical process, and overall success in the Physical Therapy profession plays a vital role in patient compliance and understanding. Jermaine's educational goals aim to tailor the delivery of academic material to meet the learner's needs to increase the ability to understand, retain, and implement the material.



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# Why Hospice Benefits the Patient, Family, and Continuum of Care

Quality End-of-Life Care That Improves Clinical Outcomes  
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As a patient-and-family-centered care model, hospice enhances quality of life for those with a prognosis of 6 months or less, if the disease runs its normal course.

Instead of frequent 30-day readmissions to the hospital, these patients can spend their last months, weeks, and days at home, in their location of choice. They receive 24/7 clinical care at home to help manage their pain and symptoms while also gaining access to psychosocial support, reducing both physical and emotional distress.

During National Hospice Month, VITAS® Healthcare salutes hospice care teams for their commitment and dedication while focusing on the tangible benefits and proven value of hospice to patients, families, and the healthcare system.

## NORC Research Outlines the Value of Hospice

A recent report from NORC at the University of Chicago (NORC) highlighted the significant value hospice provides<sup>1</sup>:

- Increased patient and family satisfaction and quality of life
- Improved symptom control
- Hospice spending for all-disease groups who received hospice for 6 months was 11% lower compared to non-hospice users, with savings persisting up to a year
- Hospice care saved Medicare approximately \$3.5 billion for patients in their last year of life



## Care Coordination Support for Hospital Clinicians

As your hospice partner, VITAS transitions patients directly from the hospital to an appropriate secondary site of care.

VITAS brings multi-level care--including high acuity care that manages symptom exacerbations--to a patient's private residence, assisted living community or nursing home. We provide 24-hour access to VITAS clinicians who can manage symptoms and crises via phone or a telehealth visit, in place of or in addition to dispatching a VITAS team member for an in-person visit. By remaining home in comfort, hospice helps patients and families achieve their care goals.

<sup>1</sup>NORC at the University of Chicago (2023). Value of Hospice in Medicare. Available at: [https://www.nhpco.org/wp-content/uploads/Value\\_Hospice\\_in\\_Medicare.pdf](https://www.nhpco.org/wp-content/uploads/Value_Hospice_in_Medicare.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>MedPac March 2023 Report to the Congress: Medicare Payment Policy, Figure 10-2. Available at: <https://www.medpac.gov/document/march-2023-report-to-the-congress-medicare-payment-policy/>

<sup>3</sup>Kleinpell, et al. (2019). Exploring the association of hospice care on patient experience and outcomes of care. *BMJ Supportive & Palliative Care*, 9(1), e13-e13.

<sup>4</sup>Harrison, et al. (2022). Hospice Improves Care Quality For Older Adults With Dementia In Their Last Month Of Life: Study examines hospice care quality for older adults with dementia in their last month of life. *Health Affairs*, 41(6), 821-830.

<sup>5</sup>Wright, et al. (2010). Place of death: correlations with quality of life of patients with cancer and predictors of bereaved caregivers' mental health. *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, 28(29), 4457.

<sup>6</sup>Kumar, et al. (2017). Family perspectives on hospice care experiences of patients with cancer. *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, 35(4), 432.





With VITAS initiating complex interventions to control symptoms and avoid burdensome transitions, your hospital can expect reduced:

- In-hospital morbidity and mortality, including ED visits from terminal patients
- Lost DRG days
- 30-day hospital readmissions
- Critical care unit utilization

Help managing care utilization for patients who are hospice-eligible also results in improved patient and family satisfaction.

### **Earlier Referrals: Longer Hospice Stays Improve Patient Outcomes**

When is it time to refer a patient to hospice? To ensure hospice-eligible patients and family caregivers receive the maximum benefits of hospice, earlier referral is better. Longer lengths of stay enable patients and families to reap the full advantages offered by the Medicare Hospice Benefit.

However, of the 47% of eligible Medicare beneficiaries who elected their hospice benefit in 2021, the median length of stay was only 17 days. More than one-quarter of those beneficiaries received hospice care only in the last week of life.<sup>2</sup>

Research shows that hospice admissions in the last six months of life correlate not just with increased patient and family satisfaction, but with better pain control, fewer hospital days, and fewer deaths in the hospital.<sup>3-6</sup>

Former President Jimmy Carter’s hospice journey is a testament to the value of longer hospice stays. His example is one of a patient who is living out the remainder of his life with dignity, surrounded by loved ones, with the support of hospice services at home.

### **The First Step: Having “The Conversation”**

Timely referrals begin by understanding what is important to patients and their care goals, given their progressive illness.

Initiating these compassionate conversations and discussing different approaches to achieve their care goals can help empower patients and families to shape the kind of care they receive at end of life. VITAS can help facilitate these important conversations, or provide tailored education for physicians, nurses, and case managers, so seriously ill patients and their families can access hospice, where their goals and wishes are prioritized in the care plan.

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## How Palliative Care Advances Quality of Life While Cutting Costs

In recent years, we have witnessed tremendous growth in the subspecialty of Palliative Care with its holistic approach to patient-centered care addressing vast physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs. Through ongoing efforts to educate healthcare providers and the general community about early palliative interventions, the field is broadening its utilization of services from traditional associations with end-of-life care to a comprehensive approach enhancing quality of life for patients facing serious illness at any age, stage and alongside life-prolonging treatments. While the paramount focus of palliative care is maximizing quality of life beyond mere disease management, secondary benefits of cost savings are realized, such as by reducing hospital readmissions, by minimizing unnecessary and burdensome treatments, and by allocating resources more efficiently.

CAPC, the Center to Advance Palliative Care, a national organization that in 2018 shared "The Case for Hospital Palliative Care- Improving Quality, Reducing Cost"



BY TRACY ROMANELLO, DO

found that on average palliative care consultation is associated with reductions of \$3,237 per hospital admission, (\$4,251 for cancer patients, \$4,865 for those with > 4 diagnosis). CAPC also reports that for a mid-sized hospital conducting 500 palliative care consultations per year, this may represent savings of over \$1.6 million per year.

Fragmented healthcare can lead to hospital readmissions that take a toll not only on patients and families, but also on healthcare systems. When root causes of readmissions are met by palliative providers devoting time to intensive patient and family meetings, then risks of readmissions are reduced. Also, in having meticulous attention to symptom management as a strong emphasis of palliative care, distressing symptoms, (i.e., breathlessness, pain, nausea) are optimally managed, thus reducing the likelihood of readmission for unresolved symptoms. Challenges that exist around psychosocial dynamics, unmet spiritual needs, poorly coordinated care, and non-adherence with

treatment plans that lead to repeated hospital readmissions are addressed by palliative interdisciplinary team members contributing to a more streamlined, cost-effective healthcare experience.

Defining goals, values, and preferences for patients is another hallmark feature of palliative medicine. Open, honest communication is the cornerstone of patient-centered care, particularly when people are having a range of strong emotions such as sadness, fear, and anxiety during periods of complex medical decision making. Through facilitating discussions that respect dignity, autonomy, and informed choices, shared decision-making ensures medical interventions are aligned with realistic goals of care. This can help to avoid unnecessary or overly aggressive medical interventions that are not aligned with a patient's wishes. A palliative approach supports emotional well-being and promotes quality, while reducing costs associated with unnecessary or unwanted treatments.

Efficiently allocating healthcare resources is crucial for enhancing population health. Palliative specialists often conduct communication under upsetting circumstances for patients and families, many times requiring lengthy, repeated

discussions utilizing unique training and skills fundamental to their role. Tailoring treatment plans with patient-centered decision-making helps to ensure that resources are well allocated. Palliative care teams can guide appropriate Emergency Department and Intensive Care Unit utilization and assist with timely discharge to an appropriate care setting.

Palliative care is continuing to grow as a medical discipline, with more people having an interest in the field. Optimizing patient care in a supportive and nurturing healthcare environment is fulfilling and can promote overall well-being for providers who are tasked to deliver services under stressful, high-pressure situations common to today's medical practice. Awareness of the many benefits of palliative care is emerging in literature, research, and data. This palliative-minded focus will continue to improve the quality of life for patients and families, while also offering cost-effective solutions and sustainability for healthcare systems.

*Dr. Tracy Romanello is Medical Director, Catholic Palliative Care Services and Catholic Hospice. For more information, call 877-CHS-4ALL.*

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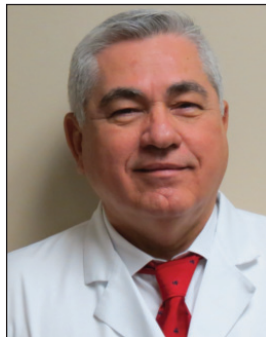


# HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE

## CATHOLIC HOSPICE

### Juan Bereao, MD

Juan Bereao, M.D., specializes in Internal Medicine and Hospice and Palliative Medicine in Miami-Dade, FL. He attended and graduated from School of Medicine of Villa Clara in Cuba, having over 40 years of diverse experience. Dr. Bereao joined Catholic Hospice in December 2007 as a Team Physician and has since then been an intricate part of our team of physicians. Dr. Bereao has a certificate in Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates and is part of the American Medical Association as well as the Cuban Society of Surgery Association. He was recognized as one of the Hospice Heroes in 2018 and 2019 at the Annual Physician Recognition Ceremony for caring for patients in the St. Catherine's and St. Anne's Inpatient Care Centers.



"Providing outstanding care to our hospice patients and their families is so important, and Dr. Bereao and all of our incredible physicians deserve special recognition for their wholehearted commitment to our hospice mission", said Dian Backoff, Executive Director.

We are proud of and salute Dr. Bereao for his many years of tremendous service and excellence.

### Benjamin Villalba, MD

Dr. Benjamin Villalba is a Hospice Physician for Catholic Hospice, Inc. Dr. Villalba, having joined the organization in 2002, has been caring for others during perhaps the most fragile time of life for nearly two decades. Beyond providing health care services, Dr. Villalba embodies the mission in minimizing suffering, assisting others to wholeness, and nurturing an awareness of the relationship to God. Dr. Villalba received his medical degree from National University, School of Medicine in Asuncion, Paraguay and completed residency in Internal Medicine at the Hospital de Clinicas, Asuncion, Paraguay and his residency in Psychiatry at Buffalo State Hospital, Buffalo, NY. He completed a fellowship in gastroenterology at Nassau County Medical Center in East Meadow, NY. He is part of the American College of Physicians, American Society of Internal Medicine, Asociacion Paraguay de Medicos, and New York Society of Internal Medicine.



### Beatriz Hernandez

Beatriz Hernandez has been with Catholic Hospice Inc. for 28 years and is the behind the scenes driving force that allows for staff to deliver excellent bedside care. She handles vendor relationships and all business responsibilities in the accounts payable department. She strongly believes in the importance of customer service within the company, with vendors and those who rely on her services. Hernandez has an accounting degree from South Mountain Community College in Phoenix, AZ and started her career in hospice there before moving to Miami. She loves spending time with her family and dog Yuki on her free time.



## MORSELIFE HEALTH SYSTEM

### Susan Perez, RN

A healthcare veteran with 35 years of experience in the field, Susan Perez has served as a case manager for MorseLife Hospice & Palliative Care for the past three years. She is part of an interdisciplinary team that includes a medical director, social workers, clinical managers, hospice aids and a volunteer coordinator. Her duties include arranging for the safety and comfort of her patients and educating families on how a patient's illness is progressing as well as the services hospice provides to families. Immediately before to joining MorseLife, she served at Florida Good Shepard Hospice in Winter Haven in a career that has also included being part of a family practice, a school nurse and working in the specialties of dialysis and orthopedics. Lisa received her associate degree in nursing from Polk Community College.



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## Cover Story: Diane Deese: The Importance of Hospice Care in Underserved Communities

*Continued from page 1*

collaboration between VITAS and NMA is the creation of a toolkit facilitating better communication to help bridge the gap between medical and spiritual communities to support patients facing end-of-life challenges.

In 2003, VITAS was asked to speak at one of NBNA's national conferences, sparking a partnership that endures today. "We were so amazed at their commitment that we have been working with them ever since." This partnership led to the NBNA's 2017 endorsement of an end-of-life care resolution, emphasizing the importance of clinicians understanding and promoting the benefits of hospice care.

In 2020, NBNA established a national end-of-life committee, highlighting the significant progress achieved during VITAS' 20-year partnership. "Together, we've made great strides toward enhancing end-of-life care for underserved communities and promoting a more compassionate and inclusive healthcare approach."

Deese explained why reaching out to underserved communities and communities of color is so important: "People of color have equal or higher incidents of all hospice-appropriate illnesses, but in hospice benefit utilization, the numbers are disproportionate." Deese said that of the 1.7 million people who receive hospice care in the United States, less than 10 percent are African American, Hispanics less than 8 percent, and Asians less than 5 percent. Clearly there is much to do to support all communities to improve access to hospice care.

Deese said early in her hospice career, she was approached by what is now the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO), and they had a diversity committee that tried to understand why underserved communities or

communities of color weren't accessing hospice more. Through much study and research at the time, they designated three areas where they believed hospice providers could make a difference: (1) educate underserved communities about the benefits of hospice care; (2) improve diversity among the people in leadership positions; and (3) encourage clinicians, including physicians and nurses, to be more involved in hospice care for their patients. "Since we understood those findings, VITAS has been working at this for more than two decades. We knew that's where we really needed to focus our efforts."

She pointed out, however, that the work is for more than just patients of color, saying no matter a person's ZIP code or economic status, whether they are veterans, regardless of their gender or religion, everyone should have and receive the same care. "No patient should be turned away. Patients should be able to access the care when they need it the most."

One factor that is so important in this, according to Deese, is education. "It's empowerment. If you're educated about any type of services available to you, imagine how much more of an informed decision you can make." Deese revealed that a family experience played a large role in her career choice to work in hospice care. "We had a family member who should have gotten hospice care, but it was never offered to us; we didn't know anything about it, and I saw what it put my family through, both physically and emotionally."

She said when she started her career in hospice care, her goal was to hopefully be able to make a difference for one family. However, that has changed. "The goal now is all families. At VITAS, we want all families to be able to receive the care and help they need at the appropriate time, the care that can make a difference."



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## ACHE of South Florida Member Spotlight: Arianna Urquia

BY LOIS THOMSON

Arianna Urquia knew from a very young age that she wanted a career in business, but she didn't know healthcare was also going to be part of the equation. Currently Vice President/CFO of Nicklaus Children's Hospital, Urquia provides executive oversight over all revenue cycle functions of the hospital, which include Patient Access, Health Information Management, Billing and Collections. She also supports the executive leadership team in strategic planning and profitability analysis, and manages budget performance.



**Arianna Urquia**

Additionally, Urquia talked about the current challenges healthcare leaders face today – managing price compression together with unprecedented cost inflation, all while providing high-quality, best-in-class healthcare. Urquia said labor shortages and supply chain disruptions are just a few of the contributing factors to increased costs in the delivery of healthcare.

As to how Urquia got her start, she explained that she began as a patient access representative in the emergency department of her local hospital while in college pursuing a finance degree. "I needed a job that was flexible enough to accommodate school hours, and the emergency department being a 24/7 operation provided just that." As she was finishing her degree, she began to explore opportunities within her field of study, she said. "During my search, an opportunity became available in the accounting department of that same hospital. I transitioned there, not thinking it would be a permanent move. I thought I was simply getting my foot in the door."

However, growth and promotions came quickly in those areas, and she started to think more intently about her choices. "I found myself enjoying the work I was doing." At some point it went from just being a job, to "I am going to be a hospital CFO one day."

That was almost two decades ago, and Urquia continues to combine the dual areas of her work. Two years ago, she took an additional step and became a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE), because she felt it provided healthcare executive leaders with an opportunity to network with other healthcare leaders and learn from each other.

To further that, her intent was to become an ACHE fellow. "I wanted to attain fellowship status as a recognition of positive leadership and competency in all aspects of healthcare management." To become a fellow, one must be a member of ACHE for 12 months, must attain 36 continuing education credits, provide community service, be in an executive leadership position, and pass the Board of Governors exam. Becoming an ACHE fellow is considered to be the gold standard for board certification in health management, and Urquia said, "I felt that it provided a distinction among healthcare leaders, and I definitely wanted to pursue it." She attained that distinction this past summer.

In addition, she believes membership provides relevant content within the healthcare community on an array of topics, whether finance, clinical, IT, etc. – "it brings content that is relevant and that impacts us all."

For these reasons, Urquia said she absolutely would encourage others to join ACHE. "It provides an opportunity for networking with like-minded individuals; it allows you to connect with those in your field to discuss relevant topics and gain insight into different perspectives on those topics."

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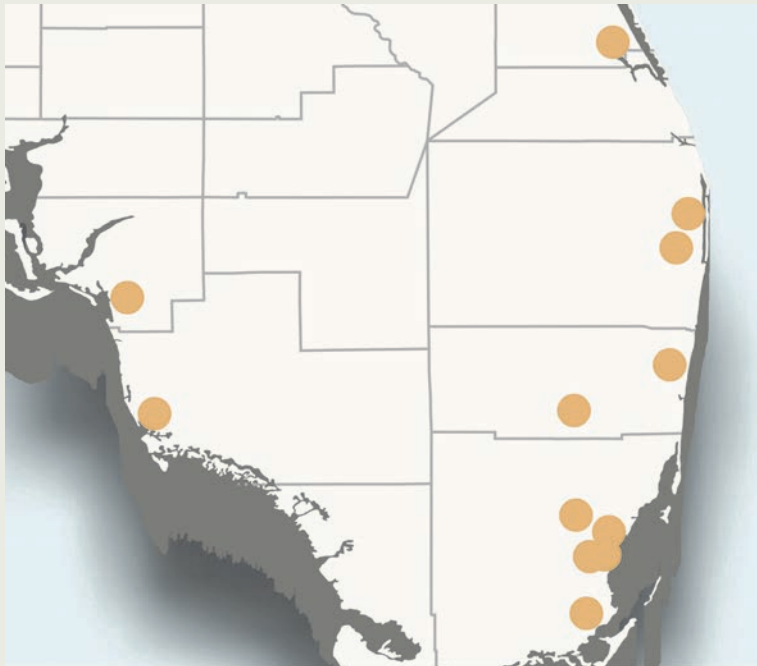
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That is why I'm grateful to work at Conviva, where I find caring for senior patients extremely rewarding, particularly when treating senior veterans. Because of our value-based, care team approach, I have a lower patient panel and extended time with them – up to 40 minutes a visit.

That's enough time to build strong patient relationships and understand their day-to-day needs, which enables the delivery of exceptional support to individuals who often have complex health needs and seek a more personalized approach to their well-being.

At Conviva, the holistic care team approach allows me to work seamlessly with social workers, pharmacists, nurses, care coordinators and behavioral health specialists to improve patient outcomes and their quality of life. With this expanded team support, we can address the many factors impacting our patients' health – from connecting them with food, housing, transportation and prescription drug assistance to providing mental health assessments and referrals.

One example of the impact of this approach is my patient who has diabetes, congestive heart failure, chronic kidney disease and recurring strokes. By dedicating extended time to this patient – which was made possible because of the smaller number of patients I treat – and coordinating with other specialists on our team, we have effectively managed the patient's condition, minimizing his emergency room visits and hospitalizations. There's nothing more fulfilling than playing a vital role in my patient's well-being by delivering this type of comprehensive care.

Conviva's approach also promotes a better work-life balance. There are reduced administrative burdens, minimal on-call duties and generous PTO packages so physicians have more time for themselves. There is a commitment at Conviva to



BY ROMEO REYES LEGASPI, MD

improve continuously, not just the patient experience, but also the provider experience – a rarity in our field.

There are so many benefits to working at Conviva, but these factors stand out to me:

- **Mission-Driven Care:** Conviva believes in the importance of senior-focused primary care and going beyond the basics to help seniors stay as healthy as possible and thrive as they age.

- **Relationships:** The most rewarding part of my job is

working with seniors whose complex health and life issues require more attention and care. I have the opportunity to connect with these patients, hear their stories and, with the care team's assistance, provide needed support beyond medical treatment.

- **Care:** Because of the extended time I have with my patients and the trust that develops between us, they openly share their concerns, allowing me to gain critical insights into their values and challenges which helps me provide comprehensive, personalized care to address the entirety of their health concerns.

- **Growth:** Conviva Care Center, along with CenterWell Senior Primary Care, is part of the nation's largest senior-focused primary care network, with nearly 260 centers across 15 states with ongoing expansion. This growth provides me opportunities to consider working in different locations and for my fellow physicians to experience the benefits of working for an organization that supports a care team model.

I would encourage anyone looking for a change and who would like to practice truly effective and rewarding medicine to take a tour of our centers and talk with our providers to get a better understanding of how we deliver primary care. You'll find that Conviva does a great job of caring for patients while offering physicians the time and support we need.

*To learn more about careers at Conviva, please visit [ConvivaCareers.com](http://ConvivaCareers.com).*

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# Metastatic Breast Cancer: New Treatments Making Headway

New drug therapies for metastatic, or advanced, breast cancer (MBC) are offering renewed hope for patients, having a significant impact on both lifespan and quality of life. Physicians at Miami Cancer Institute involved in the investigation of several of these new targeted and tailored treatment options are already seeing improvements in outcomes and are optimistic that these advances will not only slow progression, but in some cases decrease the risk of recurrence and progression.



BY RESHMA MAHTANI,  
DO

HER2-low, there is a large patient population that could benefit from this new treatment.

Trastuzumab deruxtecan is given intravenously every three weeks. While it is generally well tolerated, physicians must closely monitor patients for the rare yet serious side effect, interstitial lung disease/pneumonitis. To date, many patients have received the drug and their breast cancer is being controlled for a longer period and they are experiencing an overall good quality of life.

Because of their precision in attacking cancer cells, other ADCs are also proving to be much more effective than previously used chemotherapies. Another such therapy, called sacituzumab govitecan (trade name Trodelvy) has also been approved for both triple negative breast cancer (TNBC) and hormone receptor-positive, HER2-negative breast cancer. This therapy also represents an important new treatment option for a significant number of metastatic breast cancer patients.

Physician-investigators at the Institute are conducting cutting-edge clinical research with additional novel ADCs, recently opening a first-line, metastatic triple-negative breast cancer trial with an ADC called datopotumab deruxtecan. They are also studying why some tumors

become resistant to ADCs in another trial in collaboration with other institutions.

Physicians at Miami Cancer Institute are also participating in trials investigating a particularly aggressive subtype of breast cancer, TNBC. This subtype accounts for 10 to 15 percent of all breast cancers and is defined by a lack of estrogen and progesterone receptors necessary for targeted therapies. They also don't overexpress the HER2 protein. This makes treatment options more limited for this type of breast cancer that typically grows and spreads faster.

Patients diagnosed with TNBC at an early stage often still require intensive treatments prior to surgery, including chemotherapy and immunotherapy. Studies which aim to decrease the risk of recurrence for these patients are available

at the Institute, including a vaccine study, as well as another trial, which evaluates the genomic make-up of the individual's cancer to pave the way for developing a personalized and precise treatment strategy. These trials have the potential to change how breast cancer is treated going forward.

As research evolves and novel treatments become available, we will find more avenues to lower the likelihood that cancer will return, slow its spread and continue to see death rates from metastatic breast cancer fall.

*Dr. Reshma Mahtani is chief of breast oncology, Baptist Health Miami Cancer Institute. For more information, visit [cancer.baptisthealth.net/miami-cancer-institute/](http://cancer.baptisthealth.net/miami-cancer-institute/)*

## INSURANCE

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- **Portable, and you own your policy.** You can take this policy with you even if you change your specialty or career. (Your policy follows you with the same benefits)
- **No lab (blood, urine) is required.** Exceptions may apply.
- **You ARE covered for mental/nervous/stress-related disorders.** (most have limitations)

These policies are available for sole practitioners, physician networks, and hospital and group-based surgeons. Discounts and guarantee issues are available on a case-by-case basis.

**The effective rollout date was July 1, 2023.**

Look for more information exclusively showcased at South Florida Hospital & Healthcare News.

For more information, email [howard@lifeinsureassure.com](mailto:howard@lifeinsureassure.com)

## ACHE November Events

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### EDUCATION EVENT

1.5 Hours of  
Face-to-Face  
Education  
Credits

**Topic.....** Implementing Successful  
Organizational Change in  
Hospitals and Healthcare  
Organizations

**Date.....** Thursday, November 9

**Time.....** 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm  
Registration and Networking  
6:30 pm – 8:00 pm  
Face-to-Face Credit

**Location....** Memorial Regional Hospital  
Conference Center  
3501 Johnson Street  
Hollywood, Florida 33021

### NETWORKING EVENT

**Date.....** Wednesday, November 15

**Time.....** 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

**Location....** Rosa Sky  
115 SW 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
22<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Miami, Florida 33130

To learn more about ACHE and ACHE of South Florida, please visit  
[www.ACHEofsouthflorida.org](http://www.ACHEofsouthflorida.org)

## Cover Story: The Legacy Continues: Broward Health Continues Investment in Medical Technology

Continued from page 1

procedures using Genesis Robotic Magnetic Navigation by Stereotaxis.

In addition, the cardiac catheterization lab at Broward Health North also adopted a new technique called Shockwave Intravascular Lithotripsy to address the challenges of treating calcium build-up while minimizing the risk of complications. This innovative procedure helps modify calcium to make it more efficient, significantly reducing the risk of complications.

As part of its multi-million-dollar investment, Broward Health Coral Springs opened a second cardiac catheterization lab. The new biplane cath lab spans more than 4,100 square feet and is capable of taking two sets of images simultaneously with just one injection of contrast.

### Advance Robotic Surgery

Broward Health Medical Center unveiled the Intuitive Surgical da Vinci single-port robotic surgical system, which allows surgeons to perform complex procedures across multiple specialties with enhanced precision and maneuverability through a single incision. Broward Health Medical Center was the first in Broward County to be equipped with a single port.

One of the latest technological advancements at Broward Health Coral Springs is the da Vinci Xi. This tool significantly enhances minimally invasive Whipple surgery, also known as pancreaticoduodenectomy.

In October, the 250-bed hospital also acquired the AquaBEAM robotic system used to perform Aquablation therapy. This advanced and minimally invasive treatment uses the precision of robotics to deliver water for ablation and provide long-lasting relief from benign prostrate hyperplasia without compromise.

### Innovations in Women's Health Tech

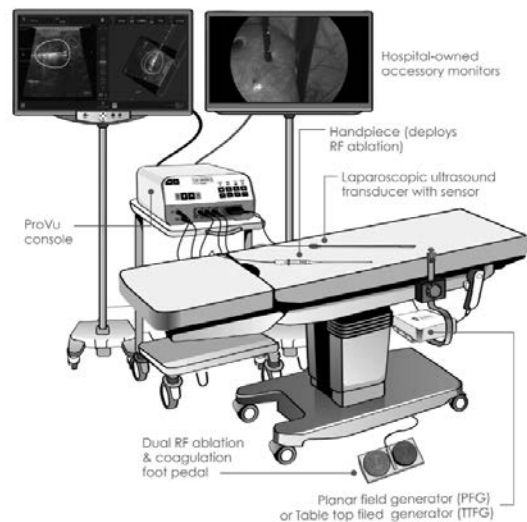
In an effort to further advance women's health, Broward Health Medical Center is now offering Accessa@ProVu, a minimally invasive procedure to treat uterine fibroids. Utilizing radiofrequency ablation, laparoscopic ultrasound and guidance-mapping, Accessa is the first and only system of its kind to treat uterine fibroids. This revolutionary procedure allows doctors to identify and treat fibroids in nearly all locations, including those outside the uterine walls.

Additionally, Broward Health Medical Center was the first to use the Veraform marker for breast cancer surgery, providing an enhanced target for radiographic planning and treatment after a lesion is removed.

### The Promising Future of Broward Health and Medical Technology

As Broward Health looks to the future and anticipates the needs of our growing and changing community, many of these technological advancements are made possible through donations to the Broward Health Foundation. Last year, Marvin H. Weiner and Jacqueline J. Bernstein made a generous donation of \$5.5 million to Broward Health Imperial Point. This donation came after Weiner experienced exceptional care at the facility. The funds will create a state-of-the-art imaging technology and the creation of the Jacqueline J. Bernstein & Marvin H. Weiner Imaging Center.

Additional naming opportunities exist for the new Sunrise freestanding emergency department, investments in technology and future developments. For more information, visit [BrowardHealthFoundation.org](http://BrowardHealthFoundation.org).



Intuitive Surgical da Vinci single-port robotic surgical system

## An Epic Level of Patient Care

Broward Health continues to make multi-million-dollar investments in health information technology that enhances operations and the level of care we offer to our patients.

Our latest initiative is a \$250 million investment in Epic's electronic health record (EHR) system. Broward Health is implementing Epic's Foundation EHR system, which contains healthcare industry best practices, optimized clinical workflows, and is functionally designed from evidence-based medicine guidelines. The Foundation system is governed by several of its healthcare provider clients—many of whom rank at the top of U.S. News and World Report's Best Hospitals annual recognition list. We have started implementation and expect to be ready for patients to connect with us in late 2024.

Those familiar with Epic know the several benefits of this advanced EHR for clinical care teams, such as sharing medical information between health systems, real-time updates sent to the care team, and access to Epic's customer community to copy great functions from other organizations who share their medical content. Our patients are going to love Epic's MyChart patient smartphone app which gives them access to their medical data (labs, medications, past diagnoses, and treatment plans), book appointments, and text messages to their provider or their staff.

Our physicians and nurses, as well, have mobile apps. Physicians can access Epic anywhere they have an internet connection on their smartphones and tablets. Our nurses will use their Epic mobile app at our facilities, assisting them as they provide excellent patient care at the bedside.

In South Florida, we have lots of seasonal residents and tourists who can have health problems while they are here. Should they have health issues here, they can rest assured their healthcare information is available to our clinical staff through Epic's ability to collect healthcare information at registration. This is great for our patients and the community, encouraging them to continue visiting wonderful South Florida.

This transition will continue our focus on improving patient, provider, and employee experiences by streamlining daily workflows, removing barriers to patient care coordination, and leveraging EHR best practices across our organization. It is the next exciting step into the future for our entire Broward Health team and the community we serve and another example of our commitment to continuously improve and advance the experiences of our patients, physicians, and healthcare teams.

Steven Travers is chief information officer of the Broward Health system. For more information on Broward Health, visit [www.BrowardHealth.org](http://www.BrowardHealth.org).



BY STEVEN TRAVERS, PHD, CHCIO, CDH-E

## Advancing Breast Health: Innovative Technology for West Palm Beach Women Veterans

The West Palm Beach VA Healthcare System (WPBVAHCS) is proud to announce a new milestone for Women Veteran care with the introduction of Stereotactic Breast Biopsy.

Stereotactic breast biopsy uses mammography – a specific type of breast imaging that uses low-dose x-rays — to help locate a breast abnormality and remove a tissue sample for examination under a microscope. It is less invasive than surgical biopsy, leaves little to no scarring and can be an excellent way to evaluate calcium deposits or tiny masses that are not visible on ultrasound.

"This is another example of our commitment to expand programs and services to meet the needs of all Veterans," said WPBVAHCS Chief of Staff Dr. Ronald Williams. "Women Veterans are our fastest growing patient population, which is why we must continue to evolve and adapt."



Chief of Imaging Service Dr. David Mullin with the Stereotactic Breast Biopsy Machine



# ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY

## Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center Expands Robotic Surgical Capabilities with Acquisition of ROSA Robot

Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center announces an advancement in its surgical technology with the acquisition of the ROSA® Robotics Knee System, manufactured by Zimmer Biomet. This latest addition to the hospital's robot fleet further solidifies its commitment to providing patients with minimally invasive surgical options.

The ROSA® Robotics Knee System is a medical device designed to enhance the precision and efficiency for knee replacement. It combines advanced robotics and artificial intelligence to assist surgeons accurately during surgeries. With its capabilities, the ROSA® Robotics Knee System has the ability to improve patient outcomes, reduce recovery times, and minimize the risk of complications. It also does not require CT scans potentially saving money for the patient and radiation exposure.

This acquisition represents a significant milestone for Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center, as it expands its robot fleet. The ROSA® Robotics Knee System will join the hospital's existing robotic surgical team, including a CORI™ and two Mako SmartRobotics™, which have been instrumental in delivering exceptional care to patients.

Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center continues to invest in technology and highly skilled medical professionals to ensure that patients receive quality care close to home. The ROSA® Robotic Knee System arrival is expected to bring positive changes to the hospital's surgical capabilities and elevate the standard of healthcare in the region.



## Tampa General Hospital Named a Newsweek Best Smart Hospital for 2024

Tampa General Hospital (TGH) has been recognized as one of the World's Best Smart Hospitals for 2024 by Newsweek and Statista. This prestigious global accolade is a testament to Tampa General's commitment to harnessing cutting-edge technology to enable world-class patient care, improve care coordination, and streamline hospital operations.

Tampa General's journey to world-class care is guided by its vision of technology as a crucial element in delivering excellence. In the past year, the academic health system has implemented predictive analytics and artificial intelligence.

One standout example of Tampa General's success in this realm is its partnership with GE Healthcare and the utilization of the CareComm command center. Similar to air traffic control, CareComm functions as a command center for patient care consistently gathering thousands of data points to provide insights, identify trends, and drive decisions.

In 2022, Tampa General partnered with Palantir, a leading analytics platform to employ artificial intelligence capabilities to augment critical decision-making on the front lines. Both GE and Palantir have been instrumental in the development and execution of Tampa General's early warning system for the prevention and treatment of sepsis, a potentially life-threatening response to an infection in the body that can move with lightning speed.

Clinical data was aggregated to predict the onset of sepsis and prioritize the activation of a rapid-response team intervention. The predictive analytics algorithm monitors real-time information from Tampa General's electronic health record (EHR) and uses weighted rules-based logic to flag patients at high risk for sepsis.

As a result of this effort, the academic health system has seen a dramatic reduction in mortality from sepsis in patients admitted to the hospital. The mortality rate due to sepsis was reduced by 3%, which accounts for close to 200 lives saved since implementation.

### RECOGNIZING THE BEST OF THE BEST IN THE HEALTH CARE COMMUNITY



The Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce is now accepting nominations for the 2024 Health Care Heroes® Awards Program; deadline is December 15. The 25th Annual Health Care Heroes® Awards Luncheon will take place May 15, 2024.

#### WHO IS A HEALTH CARE HERO?

An individual, organization, professional, student, volunteer or program, who, through their individual or collective actions have made an extraordinary impact in the South Florida health care community. Their acts of heroism represent a display of dedication to excellence in their area of expertise beyond the scope of their jobs. Through their commitment to their profession and community, they serve as an inspiration to others in an effort to improve the quality of health care and discover new ways to assist those in need.

#### NOMINATION CATEGORIES:

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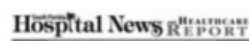
#### Award Presenting Sponsors



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## Jackson Health System Hires New Leader of Heart Surgery Programs

Hari Mallidi, MD, FRCSC, FACS, is joining Jackson Health System as the leader of heart surgery programs system wide. In this new role, Dr. Mallidi will serve as system chief of cardiac surgery, program director of heart transplantation and mechanical circulatory support at the Miami Transplant Institute, and director of the Jackson Heart Institute. Dr. Mallidi, who begins mid-November, will also be a member of the faculty at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine.

Dr. Mallidi has worked at some of the nation's leading health systems, most recently Brigham and Women's Hospital, a renowned teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School in Boston. There, Dr. Mallidi served as the clinical director of the Cardiac Surgery Service, as well as section chief for Heart Failure Surgery, Advanced Lung Disease and Transplantation. Dr. Mallidi was a senior surgeon in the Collaborative Center for Advanced Heart Disease, and executive director for ECMO at the Brigham and Women's Hospital, where he has worked since 2015.

Prior to his role at Harvard, Dr. Mallidi held the Lester and Sue Smith Chair of Surgery, and he was Chief of the Division of Transplant and Assist Devices at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. His roles there included serving as director of adult heart transplantation and co-director of the Advanced Heart Disease Center of Excellence at Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center, and director of the Center for Cardiac Support at the Texas Heart Institute.



**Dr. Hari Mallidi**

## Michael Cohn, MD, Joins Baptist Health as an Orthopedic Surgeon

Michael Cohn, M.D., is a board-certified and fellowship-trained orthopedic surgeon at Baptist Health, specializing in the nonsurgical and surgical treatment of hand, wrist, elbow and shoulder disorders.

Prior to joining Baptist Health, Dr. Cohn served as an orthopedic surgeon specializing in hand, wrist, elbow and shoulder surgery at the Orthopedic Center of Palm Beach County.

Dr. Cohn earned his medical degree from University of Miami Miller School of Medicine and completed his orthopedic surgery residency at NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases. He remained at NYU to complete a fellowship in surgery of the hand and upper extremity, where he was elected chief fellow.



**Dr. Michael Cohn**

## Lee Health Taps Dr. Kevin Cao Joining Both the Cardiology and Oncology Teams

Dr. Kevin Cao has joined Lee Health on both their Cardiology and Oncology teams bringing an important and specialized perspective to patient care.

Dr. Cao focuses on chemotherapy induced cardiovascular dysfunction, preventive cardiology, and heart failure. He was previously a physician fellow at the University of Kentucky College of Medicine.

Dr. Cao received his Doctorate of Medicine from the University of Florida, completed his residency in internal medicine at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center and his fellowship in cardiovascular medicine at the University of Kentucky College of Medicine. He is also a Gold Humanism Honor Society member.



**Dr. Kevin Cao**

## HCA Florida Kendall Hospital Announces the Appointment of Dr. Mark G. McKenney to the Board of Trustees

HCA Florida Kendall Hospital is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Mark G. McKenney to the Board of Trustees.

Dr. McKenney joined HCA Florida Kendall Hospital in 2011 as the Chief of Trauma and in 2014 was the founding Program Director of the General Surgery Residency Program. He's currently the Chief of Trauma Surgery and the Program Director for the General Surgery Program. Dr. McKenney also served as the President and Chief of Medical Staff at HCA Florida Kendall Hospital from January 2020, to December 2022. Since 2018, Dr. McKenney has been on the Florida Trauma Systems Advisory Council for the Florida Department of Health.



**Dr. Mark G. McKenney**

## Dr. Toba N. Niazi Appointed Chief of the Section of Neurosurgery and Co-Director of Nicklaus Children's Brain Institute

Dr. Toba N. Niazi has been appointed Chief of the Section of Neurosurgery for Nicklaus Children's Pediatric Specialists (NCPS) and assumes a leadership position within the Nicklaus Children's Brain Institute as Director of the hospital's Division of Neurosurgery. She will lead the Brain Institute in collaboration with Dr. Paula Schleifer, Director of the Division of Neurology.

Prior to joining the team in 2013, Dr. Niazi was with Inova Fairfax Children's Hospital in Falls Church, VA, as a pediatric neurosurgeon. She received her medical degree from the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore. Dr. Niazi completed her internship and residency at the Department of Neurological Surgery at the University of Utah School of Medicine, and a fellowship in pediatric neurosurgery at the University of Washington/Seattle Children's Medical Center.



**Dr. Toba N. Niazi**

## Holy Cross Medical Group Welcomes Two New Primary Care Physicians

Primary care physicians Peach Supupramai, D.O., and Ezra Fox, D.O., have joined Holy Cross Medical Group.

Board-certified by the American Board of Family Medicine, Dr. Peach Supupramai is a primary care physician who, prior to joining Holy Cross Health, was chief resident at Broward Health Medical Center where she completed her family medicine residency.

Prior to joining Holy Cross Health, Dr. Ezra Fox completed of his family medicine residency with an osteopathic recognition tract at Spectrum Health Lakeland in St. Joseph, MI. While in Michigan, Dr. Fox was also a member of the clinical faculty at Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Lansing, taught human growth and development classes to middle school students and volunteered as a member of the medical staff at the KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship.



**Dr. Peach Supupramai**



**Dr. Ezra Fox**

## Dulce Blanco, DO, Joins Baptist Health as an Internal Medicine Physician

Board-certified internal medicine physician Dulce Blanco, D.O., recently joined Baptist Health. Prior to accepting her current position as an internal medicine physician at Baptist Health, Dr. Blanco served as a hospitalist for 13 years at Baptist Health Medical Group. Dr. Blanco earned her medical degree from the New York College of Osteopathic Medicine in Old Westbury, NY. She then completed her internal medicine residency at Maimonides Medical Center.



**Dr. Dulce Blanco**

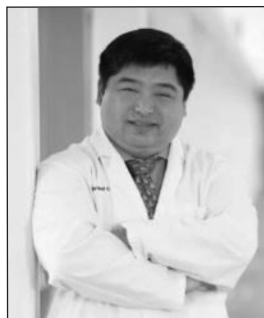
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## Cleveland Clinic's Timothy Chan, MD, PhD, Elected to National Academy of Medicine

Timothy Chan, M.D., Ph.D., chair of Cleveland Clinic's Global Center for Immunotherapy and Precision Immunology and Sheikhha Fatima Bint Mubarak Endowed Chair in Immunotherapy and Precision Immunology, has been elected to the National Academy of Medicine (NAM), one of the highest honors in the fields of health and medicine. A renowned immuno-oncology and cancer genomics expert, Dr. Chan joined Cleveland Clinic in 2020 to found and lead the Global Center for Immunotherapy and Precision Immunology, which brings together multidisciplinary experts from across the global health system to advance research and treatment related to the rapidly growing field of immuno-oncology.

Dr. Chan is a staff member in the Department of Radiation Oncology of the Cleveland Clinic Taussig Cancer Institute. He is also professor of medicine, co-director of the National Center for Regenerative Medicine of Case Western Reserve University and co-leader of the Immune Oncology Program, Case Comprehensive Cancer Center.



**Dr. Timothy Chan**

## Holy Cross Health Welcomes Orthopedic Surgeon Razvan Nicolescu, MD, MBA

Orthopedic Surgeon Razvan Nicolescu, M.D., MBA, has joined the Holy Cross Health Medical Group.

A specialist in hand, wrist, elbow and microvascular surgery, Dr. Nicolescu is certified by the American Board of Orthopedic Surgery. After completing a fellowship in hand and microvascular surgery at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Dr. Nicolescu was an orthopedic surgeon at Avera Health in Sioux Falls, SD and Essentia Health in Fargo, ND.

Dr. Nicolescu graduated magna cum laude from the University of Miami with a Bachelor of Science in neurobiology and minor in chemistry. He continued on to the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine on an academic scholarship, graduating in the top 10% of his class with a Doctor of Medicine and Master of Business Administration and inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha medical honor society. He completed his internship and residency at Jackson Memorial Hospital / University of Miami Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, where he also conducted research in the division of oncology. He also conducted research and gained work experience at the Max Biedermann Institute for Biomechanics / University of Miami Department of Orthopaedics and Biomedical Engineering.



**Dr. Razvan Nicolescu**

## Richard Morgan, DO, Joins Baptist Health as a Spine Care Physician

Spine care physician Richard Morgan, D.O., recently joined Baptist Health Miami Neuroscience Institute as a specialist in physical medicine and rehabilitation.

As a physiatrist, Dr. Morgan focuses on providing physical medicine and rehabilitation interventions that help patients regain function and mobility. His clinical and research interests include diagnostic and interventional neuromuscular ultrasound, spasticity management and regenerative medicine.

After earning his osteopathic medicine degree from Nova Southeastern University, Dr. Morgan completed his physical medicine and rehabilitation medicine residency at Larkin Community Hospital in Miami.



**Dr. Richard Morgan**

## Stephen Nimer, MD, Named 'Researcher of Year' by BioFlorida

Stephen D. Nimer, M.D., director of Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, has been named Researcher of the Year by BioFlorida. The award recognizes distinguished researchers whose achievements have significantly advanced scientific knowledge while making an impact on innovation and public health. Nimer, who also is professor of medicine, biochemistry and molecular biology and the Oscar de La Renta Endowed Chair in Cancer Research, has focused his research on adult leukemia. During the past decade, his laboratory has strived to identify novel ways to target leukemia and other blood cancers or make them more susceptible to existing therapies. He and his lab colleagues are currently collaborating with renowned investigators from Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute on a second, five-year grant from the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society that supports a broad range of basic and clinical research into blood cancers.

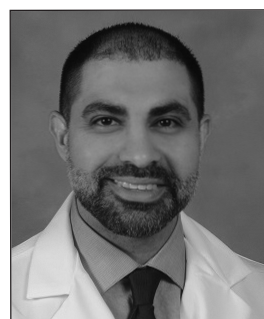


**Dr. Stephen D. Nimer**

## Holy Cross Health Welcomes Neurocritical Care Intensivist Iman Dabiri, MD

Iman Dabiri, M.D. has joined the Holy Cross Health Medical Group. A neurocritical care intensivist, Dr. Dabiri joins the Neuro Surgical Critical Care Unit (NSCCU) at Holy Cross Health.

Prior to joining Holy Cross, Dr. Dabiri was with Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital in Roanoke, VA and TeleSpecialist, LLC, a telehealth consultation service based in Ft. Myers, FL. He earned his Doctor of Medicine degree at American University of Antigua College of Medicine and performed four clinical rotations at the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine at Florida International University in Miami. Following graduation, he completed his neurology residency at Virginia Tech Carilion in Roanoke, Virginia and a neuro critical care fellowship at the University of Miami School of Medicine/Jackson Health System. He graduated from FIU with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science.



**Dr. Iman Dabiri**

## Jonathan Weltz, DO, Joins Baptist Health as Hematologic Oncologist

Board-certified hematologic oncologist Jonathan Weltz, D.O., joins Lynn Cancer Institute, part of Baptist Health, at Boca Raton Regional Hospital.

Prior to joining Lynn Cancer Institute, Dr. Weltz completed a clinical fellowship in hematology-oncology at New York University Langone Long Island School of Medicine.

Dr. Weltz earned his osteopathic medicine degree from the New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine and completed his internal medicine residency at Maimonides Medical Center. He is a fellow of the American College of Physicians and a member of the American Society of Hematology, American Society of Clinical Oncology and American Osteopathic Association.



**Dr. Jonathan Weltz**



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## CEO of HCA Florida Westside Hospital Retires: Barbara Simmons, RN, Retires After 48 Years of Service

After an illustrious career spanning 48 years, Barbara Simmons, CEO of HCA Florida Westside Hospital, has announced her retirement. Barbara's journey from a candy striper in high school to the Chief Executive Officer of one of Broward County's premier healthcare institutions is a testament to her unwavering commitment to the medical field and her community.

Barbara's roots in Broward County run deep, having moved here from Philadelphia at the age of four. Her dedication to the healthcare profession began as a candy striper at Broward Health, inspired by the medical shows she watched on TV. She pursued her passion by earning her nursing degree from Broward Junior College and embarked on her career as a med/surg registered nurse at Plantation General Hospital.

Over the years, Barbara's dedication and leadership abilities shone brightly as she progressed from a nurse to a nurse educator, nursing supervisor, and director of nursing operations. Eventually, she ascended to the role of Chief Executive Officer at Plantation General Hospital. Her journey continued as she became the CEO at HCA Florida Mercy Hospital before returning to Broward County to take the helm as the CEO at HCA Florida Westside Hospital.

Barbara has been a beloved figure among her staff, who regard her not only as their leader but also as a nurturing caregiver. Her dedication to patients and employees alike has earned her the admiration of her colleagues and the community.

Beyond her professional life, Barbara is a loving mother to two sons and a doting grandmother to five grandchildren. Her retirement plans include indulging in well-deserved rest, spending quality time with her family, and pursuing her love for travel. A self-proclaimed Disney World enthusiast and rollercoaster aficionado, Barbara looks forward to enjoying these adventures while she still can.

As Barbara Simmons embarks on this new chapter in her life, her legacy in the healthcare industry and her impact on the Broward County community will continue to be felt for years to come.



**Barbara Simmons**

## HCA Florida Northwest Hospital Introduces New Vice President of Operations

HCA Florida Northwest Hospital welcomes George Gilliam as the new Vice President of Operations at HCA Florida Northwest Hospital.

Before coming to Northwest Hospital, he was the Director of Rehabilitative Services at HCA Florida Kendall Hospital. Prior to joining HCA Healthcare, George has held leadership roles at several healthcare organizations. He spent a portion of his career working at the Department of Veteran Affairs where he had the opportunity to work in operations. After leaving the VA, he became a rehab administrator where he led building activations, process improvements, and other special projects.

He earned his Doctor of Physical Therapy from the University of St. Augustine; MHA and MBA from Baylor University. He is also a Fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives.



**George Gilliam**

## Phil A. Wright, II to Lead Memorial Regional Hospital South

Memorial Healthcare System has named Phil A. Wright, FACHE, chief executive officer at Memorial Regional Hospital South.

Wright brings more than 25 years healthcare experience to his new position, including most recent roles as chief business development officer and chief operating officer at AdventHealth Ocala (formerly Munroe Regional Medical Center). Additionally, he was CEO at Southampton Memorial Hospital in Franklin, Virginia. Wright is a graduate of both Florida A&M University and the Medical University of South Carolina, where he earned a master's degree in health administration.



**Phil A. Wright, II**

## Palm Beach County Fire-Rescue District Chief William Stansbury Joins Governing Board

Delray Medical Center welcomes Palm Beach County Fire-Rescue District Chief 42, William Stansbury, to the hospital's governing board.

Stansbury has worked at PBCFR in various positions since 2004. He was a strike team leader for the Holocaust survivor vaccine mission in 2021, and in that same year, he was a strike team leader following the Surfside building collapse.

"I am honored to join the governing board at Delray Medical Center. I was a patient at DMC for one month in 1999 after a horrible car accident. I know what it feels like to be a long-term patient requiring around-the-clock medical care," Chief Stansbury said. "As an Emergency Medical Services professional with Palm Beach County Fire Rescue, I have been transporting patients to DMC since 2004, working alongside the hospital's medical professionals. Therefore, I hope to provide a unique and broad perspective from several points of view – patient, paramedic, and co-professional."



**William Stansbury**

## Florida Hospital Association Announces 2023-24 Board of Trustees

The Florida Hospital Association (FHA) recently announced its 2023-2024 Board of Trustees. Gino Santorio, president and CEO of Mount Sinai Medical Center, was installed as Board Chair.

"It is a privilege to serve as board chair of FHA to advance the vision of a high-quality, accessible health care delivery system in the state of Florida," said Santorio. "Florida's hospitals continue to face natural disasters, workforce shortages and rising health care costs. Our association is dedicated to advocating for funding and policies that empower hospitals across the state to continue delivering world-class health care."



**Gino Santorio**

## HCA Florida Mercy Hospital Welcomes New Chief Financial Officer

HCA Florida Mercy Hospital is pleased to announce the appointment of chief financial officer (CFO) Joan G. Welch.

Welch brings more than 20 years of professional finance experience to Mercy Hospital and most recently served as the chief financial officer at Parkland Medical Center in New Hampshire, an HCA facility. Welch began her career at HCA in 2001 serving in numerous accounting and financial management roles at several hospitals across the state of Florida, including HCA Florida Osceola Hospital in Kissimmee, Florida, where she served as the hospital's controller.

Welch earned her bachelor's degree in accounting from Franklin Pierce College in Nashua New Hampshire. She was also a member of the HCA Executive Development Program Class of 2022.



**Joan G. Welch**

## Attorney Francisco J. Gonzalez Elected as Chairman of the Board of Governors of Wellington Regional Medical Center

Francisco "Frank" J. Gonzalez, Esq. of the Wellington based law firm of Gonzalez, Shenkman & Buckstein, P.L., was recently elected as the Chairman of the Board of Governors of Wellington Regional Medical Center. Gonzalez has served as a Director on the Board of Governors for the last 6 years.

With over 25 years of experience as a real estate and business attorney, Gonzalez assists small to large-sized businesses from a variety of industries in the purchase, sale and leasing of commercial properties and business structuring. He also advises clients in high-end and equestrian residential transactions.



**Francisco J. Gonzalez**

## A message from our President

### Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Cognitive Computing Systems > \$6.7 Billion

It is not a question of when, AI is here and it was estimated that in 2021, \$6.7 billion was spent on AI in healthcare versus only \$811 million in 2015. During these times of rapidly increasing costs (labor, prescriptions, and the cost of money) and not so rapidly increasing revenue, we must look to technology to help bridge the gap. Yes, there is uncertainty galore and the ride will, for sure, be bumpy.

It seems that every day you read about a new use of AI (let's include under this one heading machine learning, deep learning, and natural language processing). The questions for us are, "How are we going to react?" "Can our human interaction with AI lead to improvements in both the quality of care provided and longevity?," and "Will AI help us become more efficient (provide same or better care for less money) and help improve our traditional methods of billing and collections (revenue cycle)?" (Imagine, a patient is released after a three-day inpatient stay and the bill is ready to transmit (snail mail or other) 24-hours after discharge.)

Within the next five years I can see the majority of my care being managed by AI, I am hopeful. I can see AI coordinating my visits. I was going to say doctor visits, but I'm not sure. AI understands my insurance coverage (more than I can say about most policyholders/members and a lot of healthcare providers) and will act accordingly.

Based on AI's understanding of my medical history, demographics, and family history, a medical schedule is created (interfaced with my personal calendar) [Predictive Diagnostics] that sets appointments with the right blood labs, testing centers, it enrolls me in a program that my insurer offers that rebates me premium dollars if I agree to submit



**Jaime Caldwell**

monthly health data, sets appointments with physicians, if the analysis of my data indicates that the physician is the right caregiver, and to a physician extender (maybe virtual) if the analysis indicates "routine visit". If AI sets a physician appointment, it sends "findings" to the physician to alert him/her that specific items are of concern." [Enhanced Diagnostics.]

The physician, or in some cases the physician extender, in cooperation with AI, will develop personalized treatment plans tailored to my unique genetics and circumstances, thereby optimizing outcomes (all in favor of that).

AI becomes that self-driving Tesla, optimizing resource allocation, managing patient flow, predicting patient demands, and even reducing wait times (because it knows based on the model, about how long my visit should take).

I have talked about my fairytale future of healthcare before and with each writing the future becomes clearer. Truthfully, this world still has its detractors. And, rightfully so because we still need to work on the answers to the questions about data confidentiality (you read above where I have AI communicating with my health plan), what feels like the depersonalization of medicine with AI playing a larger role in that conversation, integration with current systems on both the provider and payer sides, regulatory hurdles, and the old "trust" equation (can I really trust something that I can't touch).

My fairytale world is coming and I would like to talk about it now rather than looking at AI's taillights as we race to the new healthcare paradigm that answers some of the questions that our current paradigm no longer does. It is up to us to start having those educational conversations about how AI will fit into the future and how AI will augment human capabilities rather than replacing them. As a community, we also need to talk about collaboration and sharing (AI model developed in a hospital setting could potentially benefit a nursing home or rehabilitation facility if shared and adapted accordingly). And, finally, we all need to become advocates for no one will be making this journey alone!

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

### Palm Health Foundation Appoints Heather DeStefano Director of Grants and Community Partnerships



**Heather DeStefano**

Palm Health Foundation, Palm Beach County's community foundation for health, has appointed Heather DeStefano as director of grants and community partnerships.

DeStefano brings 14 years of experience as a behavioral health clinician and administrator serving Palm Beach County's leading health and human services nonprofit agencies, including Community Partners of South Florida, Mental Health America of the Palm Beaches, and The Lord's Place, impacting thousands of residents during her career. In addition to her professional leadership, she shares her knowledge as an adjunct instructor of human services at Palm Beach State College.

DeStefano has received numerous accolades for her work and education. In Palm Beach County, she was honored as a Nonprofit Professional of the Year for the 2022 Hats Off Nonprofit Awards. As a master's degree student at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice, she was an Endowed Scholarship Recipient. And while an undergraduate student at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, she received the Toby Brown Award, for the top undergraduate social work student of the year in North Carolina.

DeStefano received her Doctor of Social Work in Advanced Clinical Practice degree from Florida Atlantic University and currently serves the university's Phyllis and Harvey Sandler School of Social Work as a professional advisory board member.

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# Accolades Accolades Accolades

## Wendi Goodson-Celerin of Tampa General Hospital Named a Hospital and Health System Chief Nursing Officer To Know

Tampa General Hospital (TGH) announced that Wendi Goodson-Celerin, DNP, APRN, NE-BC, senior vice president and chief nursing officer (CNO), has been named by Becker's Hospital Review to its list of "Hospital and Health System Chief Nursing Officers to Know" for 2023.

In her 35-year career with Tampa General, Goodson-Celerin has served in various leadership roles, most recently as interim chief nursing officer. As CNO, she leads all nursing services across the 1,040-bed academic health system, as well as spearheading the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Magnet Recognition Program, a prestigious designation Tampa General has achieved four times since 2005. Goodson-Celerin also oversees compliance with accrediting bodies and regulatory groups systemwide, including the implementation of strategies to achieve or exceed quality and patient safety goals.



Wendi Goodson-Celerin

## HCA Florida JFK North Hospital Emergency Room Nurse Donates Award Winnings to Guardian Ad Litem

HCA Florida JFK North Hospital is proud to recognize Shakira Robledo as a National Finalist for the Excellence in Nursing Award in Professional Mentoring as a part of the HCA Healthcare Awards of Distinction.

Shakira demonstrates the qualifications of a nurse who contributes to nursing's body of knowledge nursing education and supports and influences nurses' career development through mentoring.

As a part of the award, Shakira was awarded \$5,000 to donate to the charity of her choice. Shakira who is an Emergency Room Registered Nurse chose to provide her donation to the Guardian Ad Litem in West Palm Beach, FL. The Guardian Ad Litem provides the most vulnerable children in Florida with a representative from their community who will be a consistent, positive presence in the child's life as part of a multi-disciplinary team.



Shakira Robledo

## Jupiter Medical Center Recognized on National List as Leader in Oncology

Jupiter Medical Center is celebrating another recognition for its quality of care. Becker's Healthcare recently recognized the independent not-for-profit health care system as a "Great Oncology Program." The annual list features only 100 hospitals and health systems from across the country. Jupiter Medical Center was one of only five in Florida to achieve the standout recognition.

## West Palm Beach VA Ranks 5-Stars

The West Palm Beach VA Healthcare System (WPBVAHCS) is proud to announce the 5-star overall Community Living Center (CLC) Compare rating achieved at the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center campus.

The rating is determined based upon the outcomes within three domains which include the following: Unannounced Survey Performance; Staffing, and Quality Measures. The WPBVAHCS CLC achieved a five-star rating across all three domains, reflecting the highest level of performance possible.

## Cape Coral Hospital's Emergency Department Earns Prestigious National Award

The emergency department at Cape Coral Hospital has been recognized nationally for its exceptional and innovative performance in emergency care.

The Emergency Nurses Association awarded Cape Coral Hospital with the Lantern Award.

The Lantern Award recognizes emergency departments that go above and beyond in their efforts of leadership, practice, education, advocacy and research. It rewards emergency departments that use evidence-based practices and continually provide high-quality care in a safe environment.

## Tampa General Hospital Named Best in Class by WebMD Choice Awards

Tampa General Hospital (TGH) earned top honors in this year's WebMD Choice Awards. The academic health system is one of 26 health systems across the nation to receive the WebMD Elite Choice Award, which honors systems that patients and providers prefer 2:1 over competitors.

WebMD honored Tampa General in every specialty measured:

WebMD Elite Choice – Cardiology

WebMD Patient Choice – Gastroenterology,

Oncology, Orthopedics, Neurology

WebMD Provider Choice – Gastroenterology,

Oncology, Orthopedics, Neurology

## Nicklaus Children's Baby Steps Program Designated an American Academy of Nursing 'Edge Runner'

Nicklaus Children's Hospital and the University of Miami School of Nursing and Health Studies are pleased to announce that their collaborative Baby Steps transition-to-home program has been designated an Edge Runner by the American Academy of Nursing (Academy). Edge Runners are evidence-based, nurse-designed models that demonstrate significant clinical, financial, community, and policy outcomes with proven sustainability and replicability. Each of these programs highlights nurses' ingenuity and collaboration in developing new methods to provide care and promote health equity.

The Baby Steps program was developed to provide assistance with the transition of care, from Nicklaus Children's Hospital to home, for infants who received neonatal intensive care services and their caregivers. The overarching goal of the Baby Steps model is to provide holistic, nurse-led telehealth support to caregivers and infants during the difficult period of transition. With the development of culturally appropriate and language concordant care, the Baby Step model aims to limit any obstructions to receiving care with a comprehensive routine of infant care during and after the discharge process.

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

## Morgan Pressel Continues Her Generous Support for Breast Cancer Care at Boca Raton Regional Hospital

Philanthropist and Ladies Professional Golf Association champion Morgan Pressel has made a \$1.2 million gift to Boca Raton Regional Hospital, part of Baptist Health, with funds collected through the Morgan Pressel Foundation, Inc.

For more than 13 years, the Morgan Pressel Foundation has generously funded various research and education efforts as well as the mobile mammography vans at Christine E. Lynn Women's Health & Wellness Institute, part of Baptist Health, at Boca Raton Regional Hospital. The mobile unit has been traveling throughout South Florida for more than a decade, providing early breast cancer detection services and breast health education. This recent gift from Ms. Pressel and her foundation brings the total giving to nearly \$5.5 million for breast cancer efforts at Boca Raton Regional Hospital.

The initial gift launched the Kathryn Krickstein Pressel MammoVan, honoring Ms. Pressel's mom who died of breast cancer when Morgan was 15 years old. More than 200 sites are visited each year, ranging from corporate locations to communities of the underserved and uninsured that are without access to this type of care. It is the only hospital-based mammography van service from Port St. Lucie to the Florida Keys. The impact has been significant. More than

"I've been fortunate in my life to be able to direct this extraordinary assistance to women, and honor my mother at the same time," said Ms. Pressel. "My hope is people will see the benefit of testing, consider it a necessity, and routinely visit mammography testing sites proactively. I appreciate the work Boca Regional is doing in this area, and together we can make a difference."



**Morgan Pressel**

## Musicians On Call Kicks Off Programs Delivering the Healing Power of Music to HCA Florida Aventura Hospital with Launch Celebration

Musicians On Call (MOC), a nonprofit that brings live and recorded music to the bedsides of patients, families and caregivers in healthcare environments, is bringing the MOC Bedside and Virtual programs to South Florida to share the healing power of music in local facilities. Volunteers will begin visiting patients at HCA Florida Aventura Hospital on a regular basis, going room-to-room to perform directly at the bedsides of patients. The hospital will also be able to join MOC's ongoing virtual programs and enjoy 30-minute, interactive live broadcasts of volunteer performances.



**Photo credit: Dusty Barker**

In celebration of this expansion, Musicians On Call welcomed local artist and Volunteer Musician Bryant Del Toro to HCA Florida Aventura Hospital to launch these new programs and celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month. Representatives and leadership from the hospital and Musicians On Call were in attendance to mark the special occasion. MOC also presented the facility with a commemorative Epiphone guitar in celebration of the partnership. Following his public performance, Del Toro visited patient bedsides for one-on-one moments.

The expansion of MOC's programs is possible thanks to a collaboration with HCA Healthcare that included a \$1 million gift to fund the creation and launch of MOC's proprietary program platform. This new platform streamlines MOC's program delivery, making it more efficient and enabling the organization to reach more hospital patients and healthcare workers nationwide.

"HCA Florida Aventura Hospital is delighted to be the first HCA Healthcare hospital to launch the expansion of Musician On Call programs," shared David LeMonte, Chief Executive Officer. "We are delighted to enrich the patient experience further with live, bedside music programming at our Fortune/PINC AI ranked 100 Top Hospital. At HCA Florida Aventura Hospital we show up for our patients, and now through the healing power of music improving more lives in more ways."

## West Palm Beach VA Celebrates 28 Years of Fisher House Love

The West Palm Beach VA Healthcare System recently celebrated the 28th Anniversary of the West Palm Beach Fisher House.

Established in 1995, the Fisher House has been a beacon of hope, comfort, and support for families and caregivers of brave Veterans and active-duty military personnel.

Since its inception, the 'home away from home' has offered a warm and welcoming place to lay to over 20,000 families.

It stands as a testament to the commitment to serving those who have served us in partnership with Friends of Fisher House and their ongoing support, providing not only a place to rest but also meals and comfort to make their journey a little easier.

The home boasts eight private guest suites and multiple common areas, including a kitchen, living room, dining room, and a gazebo. These spaces are designed to create a sense of community, allowing guests to share experiences and find solace in one another's company.



## AmeriCorps Member Keeps P.A.C.E. with Seniors

The National Council on Aging celebrated National Senior Center Month in September highlighting how such venues improve the lives of older adults. With the help of AmeriCorps members like Delray Beach resident Elinor Goldman, MorseLife Health Systems offers seniors with chronic care needs social engagement through Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) which MorseLife's provides at PACE centers throughout Palm Beach County.

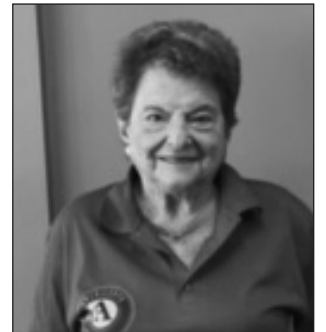
Prior to moving to Florida in 2011, Goldman served as the director of the RSVP program in Atlantic County, New Jersey where she oversaw 500 senior volunteers. Today, Elinor volunteers four days a week as a member of the AmeriCorps program.

In addition to conducting bingo and helping the program participants prepare for lunch and other activities at a PACE Center, Goldman provides companionship to seniors in their homes.

"One of the people I visit is interested in the theater and I kept all my Playbills from New York which I am sharing with her," Goldman said. "She's giving me recipes and teaching me how to knit."

MorseLife Health System and AmeriCorps, the federal agency for national service and volunteerism, recruit and train year-round Palm Beach County residents 55 years and older to provide support for homebound older adults. The volunteers encourage independence and alleviate feelings of isolation while providing respite for caregivers.

"I saw an ad in the paper for volunteers and I called them up," Goldman said. "I think it is wonderful for the volunteers and the people we serve. Everyone is so appreciative of everything you do and, in turn, that makes you feel good."



**Elinor Goldman**



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## Cover Story: Empowering Communities Through Research

*Continued from page 1*

The initiative, titled "Addressing Food Insecurity in Underserved Communities" or FoodCom, is poised to explore and implement community-led research and interventions to alleviate the structural factors that adversely impact health.

### **A New Era of Community-Led Research**

FoodCom, the first-of-its-kind community-led research program, heralds a new era, enabling HCN to spearhead research studies through collaboration with community organizations. Dr. Katherine Chung-Bridges, Director of Research at HCN, highlighted the significance of this shift.

"This initiative cuts across institutes with coalition partners, including the University of Miami's Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) and Feeding South Florida, to allow for greater collaboration and innovative research in high-priority areas," she explains.

This approach amplifies the capacity for health centers involved with FoodCom to be impacted by the research studies deeply embedded in the community's needs and aspirations.

Two Florida Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), Jessie Trice Community Health System (JTCHS) and Broward Community and Family Health Centers (BCOM), will be the champion FQHCs in initiating system-wide implementation of FoodCom.

### **Addressing Food Insecurity with FoodCom**

Through its robust and strategic framework, FoodCom aims to catalyze, deploy, and evaluate community-led structural interventions. Annie Neasman, CEO of JTCHS, expressed the critical nature of addressing food insecurity.

"At JTCHS, we have been addressing health inequities since our inception. When looking at factors that determine health inequity within the community, we realized food insecurity is a huge piece of that," she says.

Dr. Chung-Bridges addressed the collaborative spirit of the initiative, stating, "We're partnering proudly with JTCHS and BCOM to address the issue of social determinants of health while improving health outcomes and reducing food insecurity."

She adds that these collaborations serve as a model and guide other FQHCs, enhancing the initiative's reach and impact.

### **Strengthening Bonds Through Partnerships**

The partnerships with the University of Miami's CTSI and Feeding South Florida are set to initiate system-wide implementation of FoodCom.

These coalition partners will help in advising, guiding, and sustaining the community-led proposed interventions.

### **Policy Engagement and Structural Change**

Engaging with state and local policymakers, leaders, and health plans will help

to address the broader structural challenges related to food insecurity.

Dr. Chung-Bridges underscored the importance of leveraging relationships and data with policymakers. "Leveraging our established relationships is pivotal," she says. "We're not just aiming to get the message out but to substantiate our initiatives with compelling data that unequivocally showcases the impact we're making."

This strategic engagement is pivotal in navigating and influencing the social, economic, and political dimensions of food insecurity, ensuring that the initiative addresses and significantly influences the structural and policy aspects of community health.

### **Envisioning Health Equity and Sustainable Solutions**

The initiative, while focusing on impacting the social determinants of health, stands at the precipice of addressing and creating a ripple effect that could alter the landscape of community health, particularly about food insecurity.

Dr. Chung-Bridges reflected on the potential impact and the journey ahead. "It's a very exciting opportunity and we understand that the fundamental upstream structural factors are the social factors."

The long-term vision of FoodCom is to promote health equity through sustainable solutions, creating a model that can be replicated and adapted across various communities nationwide.

Neasman emphasized the importance of sustainable, long-term initiatives, stating, "To be a part of something so exciting is wonderful for JTCHS and will help us further our mission of helping our communities," she says. "This is not a one or two-year project. With the funding for multiple years, we can certainly demonstrate something through those years that will be sustainable in the years to come, which is super exciting to me."

### **Conclusion**

The FoodCom initiative will address food insecurity and stands as a testament to the power of community-led research, multisectoral partnerships, and policy engagement to create tangible, sustainable change in community health.

As HCN and its partners embark on this promising journey, the ripple effects of this initiative are anticipated to resonate across communities, influencing policies and shaping a future where health disparities are significantly reduced, thereby crafting a future of sustainable impact and community empowerment.

*For more information, read Health Choice Network's press release on FoodCom: <https://southfloridahospitalnews.com/the-national-institutes-of-health-nih-awards-health-choice-network-with-funding-for-community-led-research-program-addressing-food-insecurity-in-underserved-communities/>.*

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# ACHE – FHA Awards Luncheon

William P. Santulli, FACHE, Chair-Elect for ACHE and president, Advocate Health-Midwest Region, and Neil Mangus, MHA, FACHE, Florida Regent for ACHE, Senior Director, Business Development Ambulatory Surgery Centers for Orlando Health, recently presented awards at the annual luncheon held at the Ritz-Carlton, Orlando, Florida, on October 4, 2023.



**Matthew Garner, Broward Health North CEO (center), receives ACHE Senior Leadership Award from William Santulli (left) and Neil Mangus (right)**



**Carlos H. Ayllon, FACHE, Director, Neurosciences Service Line-Memorial Healthcare System (center), accepts the ACHE Mid-Level Leadership Award from William Santulli (left) and Neil Mangus (right)**



**Ashley Abbondano, MHA, Director, Business Development & Physician Relations, Memorial Regional Hospital (center), accepts the Early Careerist Award from William Santulli (left) and Neil Mangus (right)**

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## Broward Health Hosts Groundbreaking for Freestanding Emergency Department in Sunrise

Broward Health recently hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for a freestanding emergency department in Sunrise, the first to be opened by Broward Health. In a first-of-its-kind collaboration, Broward Health and Memorial Healthcare System will partner to ensure exceptional emergency care at the new freestanding emergency department.

“Sunrise has long been considered a medical desert, lacking necessary medical services for the residents who call that city home,” said Shane Strum, Broward Health President & CEO. “We explored a number of ways to mitigate the gap in healthcare and are proud to be teaming up with Joe DiMaggio Children’s Hospital to bring high-quality emergency care to adults and children who call Sunrise home.”

Broward Health anticipates that almost 15,000 emergency patients will be treated at the new facility annually.

The freestanding emergency department will be equipped to do everything a hospital-based emergency department can, with adult emergency care provided by Broward Health and pediatric emergency care provided by Memorial Healthcare System’s Joe DiMaggio’s Children’s Hospital. The freestanding emergency department is expected to be completed in early 2025.



**Shane Strum, Broward Health President & CEO, and Caitlin Stella, CEO Joe DiMaggio Children’s Hospital**

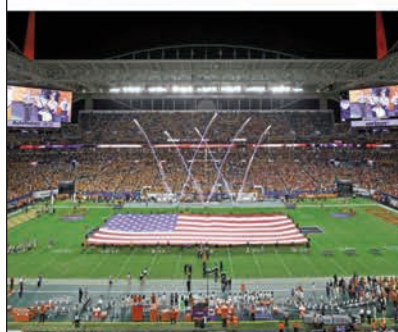
## Health Care District Holds Ribbon Cutting for New Delray Community Health Center

The Health Care District of Palm Beach County recently held a ribbon cutting ceremony at its Delray Community Health Center, one of the healthcare system’s 10 community health center locations across the county. The ribbon cutting officially marked the health center’s relocation this summer to a new larger, modern facility across the street from the previous location in the Florida Department of Health building. This location expands the Health Care District’s outpatient addiction treatment program and provides psychiatric care to adults struggling with mental health issues and substance use disorders. Florida Atlantic University’s Psychiatry Residency Program also serves patients at this location as a part of the residents’ training.

As a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), the Delray Community Health Center accepts all adult patients with or without insurance and regardless of ability to pay. Services include adult primary medical care, dental care, behavioral health care, outpatient addiction treatment, women’s health care, on-site pharmacy and referrals for labs, diagnostics and specialty care.



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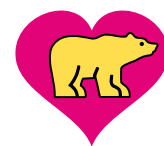
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Left to right: Dr. Toba Niazi with patient, Nicole, and Dr. Paula Schleifer



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