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Wayne Brackin

KIDZ Medical Executive Raises Flag On Declining Maternal Care in the U.S.

South Florida Hospital News & Healthcare Report sat down with Wayne Brackin, President & CEO of KIDZ Medical Services and longtime South Florida healthcare executive, to discuss what he refers to as “a disturbing trend” affecting maternal care in the United States.

Q: Wayne, you've been a healthcare leader for more than four decades, leading hospitals, centers of excellence, health systems, and private physician groups. What concerned you about trends in maternity care specifically, and why are you calling it “a silent crisis?”

Yes, you're right that I've been doing this longer than I care to remember, but it does allow me to provide some perspective. I started my healthcare administration career in the mid-80s, and I've worked with incredible teams that have built well-run programs and services that have directly impacted the health and well-being of our communities. Those of us who have stayed in healthcare all this time, we've survived and overcome a lot of challenges over the years—including payer reimbursement reductions, clinical staffing shortages,

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Healthcare Education

FAU Executive Master of Health Administration Designed for Working Professionals

BY VANESSA ORR

Going back to school while working full-time can be a challenge, but for those who pursue the Executive Master of Health Administration (EMHA) at Florida Atlantic University (FAU), it is well worth the effort. The 15-month program, which can be completed in-person or online, is designed to enhance the knowledge, skills, and critical thinking of future healthcare leaders.

Heather Woolf, MHA, BSN, RN, CLSSGB, decided to pursue an Executive MHA because she wanted to earn a degree in business to get closer to her lifelong dream of teaching when she is ready to retire from executive life.

She was able to continue working full-time and raising a family while attending classes in person on pre-scheduled weekends at the FAU Boca Raton campus.

“While it was demanding to work my regular job while attending classes, you just have to be thoughtful about schedules,” she said, noting that the length of the program was appealing to her in terms of balancing professional goals with family obligations. “But it is absolutely possible to achieve this degree while working full-time.”

Woolf chose to take in-person classes, which are held every three weeks on Saturday and Sunday, but students also have the option of attending a 100 percent fully remote program.



Heather Woolf

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Kyla Murphy

Should Physician Assistants Go Solo?

BY VANESSA ORR

The COVID-19 pandemic put a huge strain on healthcare, revealing numerous gaps in the healthcare system. One of these is the ongoing shortage of physicians—particularly primary care physicians—available to see patients, which meant that physician assistants (PAs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) stepped up to provide much-needed care.

As a result, many PAs now want to be able to practice solo without having to be supervised by a physician. While the state of Florida did update the role of PAs in 2021 allowing them more responsibilities, legislation is still in place that requires a physician to supervise their work.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, demand for physician assistants, who already provide primary care, pediatric care and mental health services, will grow by 28 percent by 2032. So why shouldn't they go solo?

One of the concerns for patients, according to Kyla Murphy, AVP National Healthcare Practice, Risk Strategies, is whether PAs have the training and knowledge required to provide certain care without physician supervision.

“PAs do go to school for certain specialties and work in different areas, just as physicians do,” she explained. “But their training is not the same; a physician goes through more schooling and post-graduate training including internships, residencies, and sometimes fellowships that provide them with more knowledge on more complicated medical issues. PAs go to school for six years and can receive great medical training but they do not receive

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Innovations

Innovating for 2025: ImageFIRST Expands Leadership and Enhances Healthcare Linen Services

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

ImageFIRST, the largest national provider of linen services specializing in the medical industry, has appointed Cesar Acevedo as Vice President of Sales. After nearly nine years with the company in roles ranging from account executive to general manager and group manager for Florida, Acevedo now steps into this new leadership position.

In this role, he will oversee sales strategies and team development as the company continues to innovate and expand its services in the healthcare industry. His unique background across various functions of ImageFIRST gives him a comprehensive understanding of both the internal culture and the external market, positioning him well for this exciting new challenge.

As the healthcare linen and laundry industry evolves, Acevedo discusses the innovations ImageFIRST has in the pipeline for 2025, the particular challenges of the Florida market, and the importance of fostering a strong company culture as the company grows.



Cesar Acevedo

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Publisher's Note

Exhausted Nation: A Post-Election Love Letter to My Couch

Dear Couch,

It's me. The one you haven't seen much of lately because I've been glued to my screen, swearing at political ads, doomscrolling polls, and trying to make sense of the chaos. But now, finally, the election is over, and I'm back. And

let me tell you, I've never been more ready to surrender to your comforting embrace. I don't even know what day it is anymore. Time has been measured in "days until the election," but now that's behind us, leaving a black hole where my mental calendar used to be. Wasn't it just August? Or was that 2019? I could've sworn I've aged a decade since last week.

Remember when I used to have hobbies? I don't. The only "hobby" I've had lately is obsessing over early voting stats and yelling at debate moderators. I used to visit Best Buy, roam around Walmart, and talk to people about things that weren't related to the fate of the Republic. How quaint that seems now.

But I'm here, Couch. I've come back to you broken and worn down by election fatigue, bearing nothing but a thousand-yard stare and a remote. Together, we will binge-watch meaningless content until I can no longer form coherent thoughts about voter turnout or battleground states. Maybe, just maybe, I'll even get a full night's sleep—without dreaming about electoral maps.

I'm not the only one, either. America is collectively exhausted. We're like marathon runners who didn't sign up for this race but somehow found ourselves sprinting, with no water breaks, toward some distant, elusive finish line. There were twists and turns, blisters, and emotional cramps along the way, but now we're here. We've collapsed at the finish line, drenched in sweat and surrounded by empty pizza boxes.

Let's talk about the election coverage, shall we? It was like being trapped in a casino. There were no windows, no clocks, just flashing numbers, constant updates, and endless speculation. By the end of it, I had the emotional stability of a broken slot machine. One minute I was convinced everything was fine; the next, I was ready to stockpile canned goods and start Googling "how to live off the grid."

Now that it's over, what are we supposed to do with ourselves? Go back to pretending we're normal functioning adults who didn't just spend months hyper-fixating on polling data? Awkwardly reintroduce ourselves to people we've ignored or alienated since the Fourth of July? "Oh hey, sorry I haven't returned your texts, I've been busy... saving democracy, or something."

But we've earned this. We've survived the chaos, the stress-eating, and the desperate caffeine-fueled rants on social media. The least we can do now is collapse into a Netflix-induced coma and not think about anything more controversial than whether to order takeout again.

So, Couch, I'm here. Let's spend some quality time together, preferably in silence. I've done my civic duty. Now it's time for you to do yours: support my weary body and don't let me move for at least 72 hours.

Yours in exhaustion,

Charles Felix, a Very Tired Voter



You can reach Charles Felix at
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Symposium Director:
Manmeet Ahluwalia,
M.D., MBA, FASCO

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Speakers

**Manmeet Ahluwalia, M.D.,
MBA, FASCO**
Miami Cancer Institute

Luis Diaz, M.D.
Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

John P. Diaz, M.D.
Miami Cancer Institute

Rohan Garje, M.D.
Miami Cancer Institute

**Julie R. Gralow, M.D.,
FACP, FASCO**
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Clinical Oncology

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Fred Hutch Cancer Center

Shilpa Gupta, M.D.
Cleveland Clinic

Kelly McCann, M.D., Ph.D.
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David O'Malley, M.D.
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Research Institute

Jameel Muzaffar, M.D.
Duke Cancer Institute

Shubham Pant, M.D., MBBS
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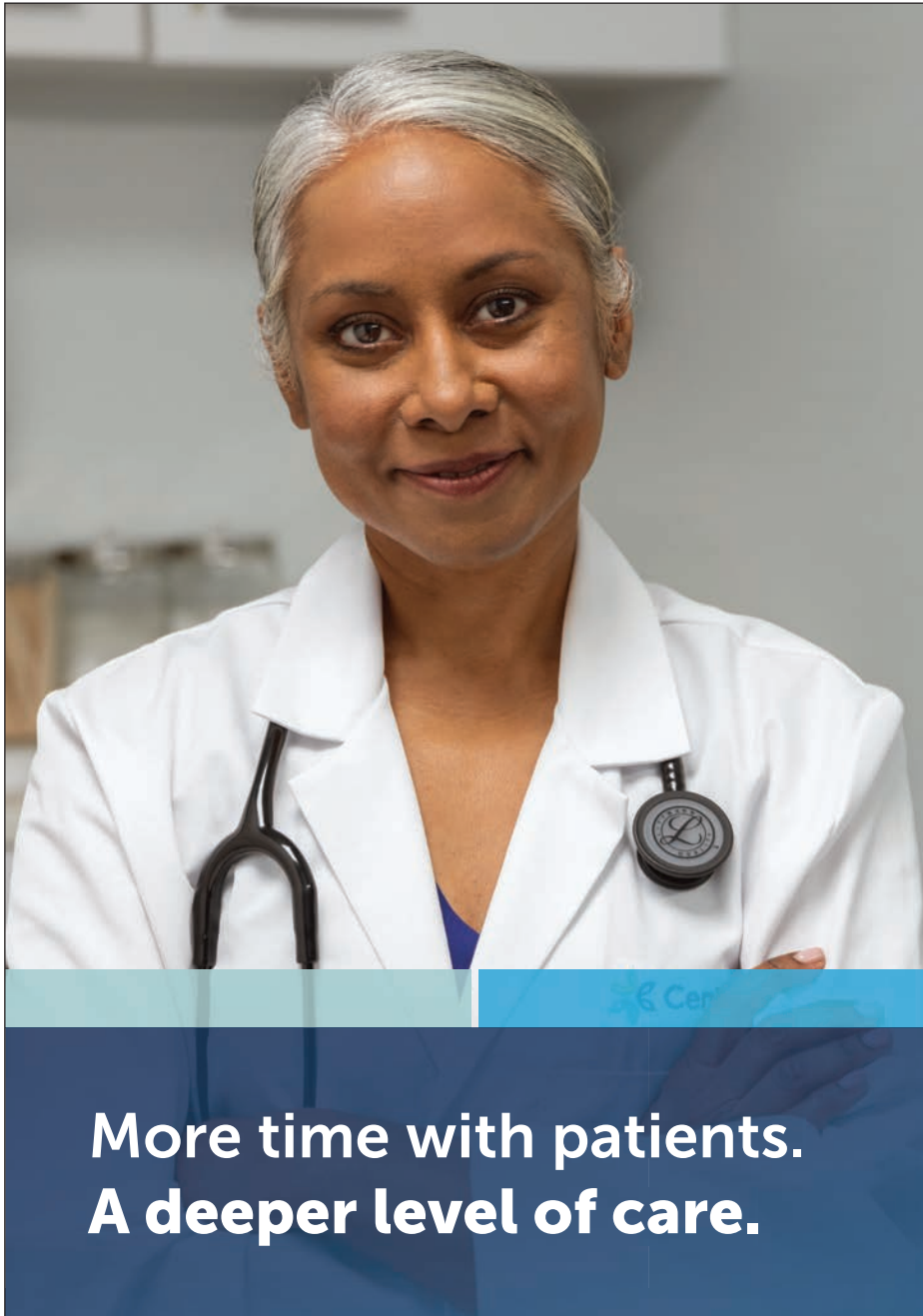
Vivek Subbiah, M.D.
Sarah Cannon Research
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**Vamsi Velcheti, M.D., MBA,
FASCO, FACP**
NYU Langone Health

Seth Wander, M.D., Ph.D.
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The Importance of Developing a Site of Care Transition Strategy



BY ALFREDO CEPERO

Site-of-care transitions are happening rapidly across healthcare. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) expanded reimbursement to cover a substantial number of procedures at Ambulatory Surgical Centers (ASCs), signaling a significant shift in service sites. This movement is fueled by a combination of factors that include regulatory changes, advancements in clinical practice and technology, patient preference, as well as financial and operational incentives.

Developing a proactive strategy for transitioning site of care to ASCs is becoming essential for healthcare providers. This strategy must be comprehensive, taking into account market demand, financial viability, quality of care, and regulatory compliance.

Historically, health systems and hospitals have taken a defensive posture towards ASCs. Now, the push towards value-based care, the need for better market positioning, and the drive for improved margins are prompting these organizations to invest in ASCs and explore new partnership and joint venture opportunities.

ASCs engage in various types of partnerships and joint ventures to optimize their operations, expand services, and improve financial performance. Some common types include:

1. **Physician-Hospital Joint Ventures:** Shared ownership and governance, or management services agreements.
2. **Physician-Only Partnerships:** Single-specialty or multi-specialty ASCs owned by physicians.
3. **Hospital-Only Ownership:** Hospitals independently own and operate ASCs, often to extend their outpatient services.
4. **Corporate Partnerships:** Management and operational support or equity investments from corporations.
5. **Private Equity Joint Ventures:** Capital and strategic guidance from private equity firms to enhance growth and profitability.
6. **Health System Partnerships:** Integration of ASCs into larger healthcare networks.
7. **Academic Collaborations:** Training and research opportunities with academic institutions.

These partnerships and joint ventures are designed to leverage the strengths of each party involved, improve patient care, and enhance financial sustainability.

The transition to ASCs represents more than a change in location; it signifies a strategic shift towards more cost-effective, patient-centered care models. This shift offers several benefits, including the potential for reduced healthcare costs, enhanced patient outcomes, and greater patient satisfaction due to the convenience and accessibility of ASCs.

Are you prepared to embrace the opportunities and navigate the challenges that come with site-of-care shifts? Our team is here to help your organization achieve long-term stability in the rapidly evolving healthcare environment.

Alfredo Cepero, Principal, Assurance Market Leader, BDO, can be reached at (305) 420-8006 or acepero@bdo.com.

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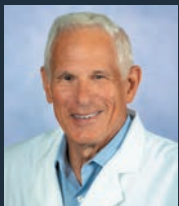
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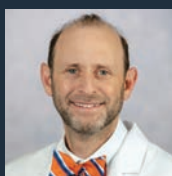
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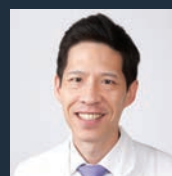
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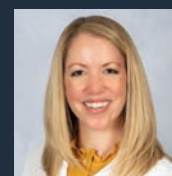
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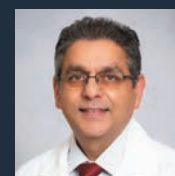
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Advancing Epilepsy Care at Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital



BY DR. BADIH ADADA,
MD

For individuals living with epilepsy, the challenges go far beyond managing seizures. Epilepsy is a complex neurological disorder that profoundly affects a person's daily life. Advances in medical technology and specialized care are providing new hope.

Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital is at the forefront of epilepsy care in Florida and the nation, offering cutting-edge treatments, personalized approaches, and access to top-tier specialists.

Consider the story of 31-year-old Jorge Rodriguez, a young artist with autism who struggled with seizures that once dominated his life. Jorge turned to Cleveland Clinic after years of being prescribed medications that failed to control his condition. After a thorough evaluation by our team of experts at Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital's epilepsy unit, we identified a lesion in Jorge's right frontal lobe and the source of his seizures: Focal Cortical Dysplasia (FCD), which describes a focal area of abnormal brain cell development. Following a successful surgery during which we removed the lesion, Jorge is now seizure-free, able to focus on his art and lead a life with fewer limitations. His story is just one of many that demonstrate the clinic's expertise in providing high-quality epilepsy care.

Epilepsy affects 3.4 million Americans, with many experiencing frequent seizures that don't respond to traditional medications. For these individuals, specialized care centers, like those at Cleveland Clinic, are crucial. Cleveland Clinic offers a multidisciplinary approach, where neurologists, neurosurgeons, and epileptologists collaborate to develop individualized treatment plans.

Comprehensive Care and Advanced Treatments

What sets Cleveland Clinic's epilepsy care apart is the range of services available to patients, from diagnostic testing to surgical interventions. For patients whose seizures can't be controlled with medication, a variety of surgical treatments are offered, including resection and neurostimulation. Such surgeries can dramatically improve a patient's quality of life.

Our neurologists and neurosurgeons are equipped with state-of-the-art technology, such as long-term video EEG monitoring, helping specialists accurately diagnose the



Jorge Rodriguez and family

type of epilepsy a patient has. In addition, patients have access to neuroimaging technologies, essential for identifying areas of the brain responsible for seizure activity.

A Patient-Centered Approach

Cleveland Clinic's commitment to epilepsy care goes beyond innovative treatments — it's about providing individualized attention. The care team ensures that treatment plans are tailored to each patient's needs, offering not just medical and surgical treatments but also counseling and support services to navigate the emotional and psychological challenges associated with epilepsy.

Dr. Claudia Vallin, D.O., an epilepsy specialist at Cleveland Clinic, notes, "We now have a wider range of treatment options, including newer medications, epilepsy surgery — where we remove abnormal brain tissue or perform minimally invasive laser ablation — and neuromodulation devices to reduce the seizure frequency. Our goal is to work closely with each patient to understand the impact of epilepsy on their daily lives and find the right combination of therapies."

For families like Jorge's, Cleveland Clinic's expertise has been life-changing. After years of unpredictable seizures, they found hope in the epilepsy team at Weston. With his condition now under control, Jorge is thriving and able to pursue his passion for art without fear of interruption. His mom, Airin, is also freer to live without the constant worry that her son's seizures might harm him.

The Future of Epilepsy Care

Cleveland Clinic specialists are transforming lives and leading the way in epilepsy care. Through a combination of cutting-edge technology, comprehensive treatment options, and personalized care, patients with epilepsy are finding hope. Whether through advanced surgery, medication, or compassionate support, Cleveland Clinic is making a tangible difference in the lives of those affected by epilepsy — one patient at a time.

Dr. Badih Adada is chair of the Neurological Institute at Cleveland Clinic in Florida and is the chair of the Department of Neurosurgery. He and his team see patients at Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital and at Palm Beach and Martin county locations. For more information, call (877) 463-2010.

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Navigating Volume-Managed Care Litigation: The Benefits of Contingency Fee Agreements for Healthcare Providers

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

In the complex world of healthcare, one of the most challenging aspects for providers and organizations is dealing with managed care disputes. These disputes often arise when health plans fail to reimburse healthcare providers for services rendered adequately. Whether it's a physician's practice, acute care facility, or outpatient center, the financial impact of underpayments and denials can be devastating.

Managed care litigation, particularly in high-volume scenarios, can significantly strain healthcare organizations' revenue cycles. Fortunately, contingency fee agreements offer a solution that allows providers to pursue their claims without shouldering the financial risk of litigation. Trevor Biglin, Esq. from Abril Law in Miami, discusses the intricacies of volume-managed care litigation and how healthcare providers can benefit from contingency fee arrangements.

Understanding Volume-Managed Care Litigation

Volume-managed care litigation refers to disputes between healthcare providers and payors, often involving hundreds or even thousands of claims. According to Biglin, "Managed care disputes typically arise when the payor (health plan) fails to reimburse for services rendered by healthcare providers adequately." These disputes can stem from ambiguous contracts, miscalculated reimbursement rates, or cases where there is no contractual relationship, leaving reimbursement governed by state statutes.

Healthcare providers face many claims, many of which involve underpayments or denials for similar reasons. This volume creates a challenge for healthcare organizations' revenue cycle departments. "Providers oftentimes lack the requisite experience and labor to



Trevor Biglin

effectively address and resolve each of these problem claims internally," Biglin explains. Without a streamlined process for resolving these claims in bulk, healthcare providers are left vulnerable to significant financial loss.

Common Challenges in Volume-Managed Care Litigation

Healthcare providers face several challenges when dealing with volume-managed care disputes. One of the most significant issues is the ambiguity of managed care contracts. "These contracts can be complex and difficult to understand for laypersons," Biglin notes. Misinterpretations can lead to disputes that snowball over time, making resolution even more challenging.

Another common issue is billing and reimbursement disputes. Providers must carefully navigate the terms of insurance policies and keep meticulous records to substantiate their claims. However, many healthcare organizations do not have the internal resources to tackle these disputes effectively, especially when faced with large volumes of claims. This is where legal expertise becomes invaluable.

"Seeking the expertise of legal counsel can be beneficial in crafting a strategy to quickly and effectively resolve disputes," Biglin stresses. An experienced healthcare reimbursement law firm, equipped with state-of-the-art technology, can analyze claims in the aggregate and implement solutions to address these disputes in bulk.

The Benefits of Contingency Fee Agreements

One of the key concerns for healthcare providers is the cost of pursuing legal action. Many are hesitant to engage legal representation due to the potential financial burden. This is where contingency fee agreements come into play. "In these

arrangements, attorneys are compensated only if they prevail on the provider's behalf," Biglin explains. This eliminates the upfront financial risk for healthcare providers, making it a practical option for pursuing disputes.

Contingency fee agreements align the interests of both the provider and the attorney. The law firm only gets paid if they successfully recover reimbursement on behalf of the provider. As a result, both parties are motivated to achieve the best possible outcome.

Why Contingency Fee Agreements Are Attractive for Healthcare Providers

Contingency fee agreements are particularly suited for reimbursement-related healthcare cases, especially those with significant financial stakes. "These agreements are attractive to providers as they are insulated from the uncertainty inherent in hourly fee agreements," Biglin says. Traditional billing structures, which involve hourly fees, can lead to exorbitant costs that may exceed the amount in dispute.

In contrast, contingency fee agreements provide a cost-effective solution, particularly for lower-balance claim denials or underpayments. Healthcare providers can pursue their claims without worrying about the financial burden of legal fees, and they benefit from the law firm's shared interest in maximizing the recovery.

How Healthcare Providers Can Protect Themselves

Biglin advises healthcare executives and practitioners to take proactive steps to protect themselves from potential legal risks in volume-managed care disputes. "It is important to regularly review networking agreements between the payors and providers to ensure the terms are clear, fair, and reflect current reimbursement trends," he says. Providers should also implement robust compliance programs to stay in line with regulatory requirements.

One of the most critical steps is main-

taining detailed records of all interactions and transactions with managed care organizations. "Keeping detailed records is essential in supporting your position in case of disputes down the line," Biglin explains.

Additionally, working with experienced legal counsel can help healthcare providers manage their accounts receivable and foresee problematic trends. "Relying on an experienced healthcare reimbursement law firm can assist in managing and controlling accounts receivable," he adds. By identifying issues early, providers can reduce revenue drain and protect their financial stability.

Choosing the Right Legal Representation

When selecting legal representation for managed care disputes, healthcare providers should prioritize attorneys with specific experience in this area. "It is crucial that your legal counsel has familiarity with the nuances of patient registration, coding, billing, and all phases of the revenue cycle," Biglin emphasizes.

Healthcare providers should also ensure that their legal representation is equipped to handle sensitive information securely, particularly regarding Protected Health Information (PHI). Clear communication about the scope of representation and the structure of contingency fee agreements is essential to ensure both parties have aligned expectations.

Volume-managed care litigation presents unique challenges for healthcare providers, but they can navigate these disputes effectively with the right legal support and contingency fee agreements. By understanding the benefits of these agreements and selecting experienced legal counsel, healthcare organizations can protect their financial interests and achieve favorable outcomes in their legal matters.

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ACHE of South Florida Member Spotlight: Ashley Abbondandolo

BY LOIS THOMSON

Ashley Abbondandolo is senior director of strategic growth and development for Memorial Healthcare System, but it's not a position she was seeking when she started her career. Instead, her progression wound through several other paths until she arrived at this point nearly five years ago. "I started in the healthcare system in 2020 as the administrative fellow, and rotated to all six of our facilities. During that year I gained a lot of experiences that as a young leader I otherwise may not have had. So I started as an administrative fellow, and shortly after, I became a project manager in our corporate finance department, which was definitely somewhere I never thought I'd end up."

For that reason, Abbondandolo states, "I always tell students when I talk with them, you never know what your path is going to be, just always be open to all sorts of opportunities that may arise. That's how I ended up in this path of business development and physician relations."

In describing her responsibilities, Abbondandolo said she leads the new centralized physician relations and business development structure for the Memorial Healthcare System, with her main role being to work with physicians affiliated with Memorial as well as those in the community. "Our team provides a way for physicians to make sure they have all of the resources in their toolkits to know what Memorial's services are, and how we can work together to better care for their patients and the community."

Her team accomplishes this by meeting with providers on a regular basis, listening to questions and learning about challenges they face. "We want them to be able to take care of their patients in the best possible way."

She said the best part of their roles in physician relations is making sure that they're working together across departments – with physicians and nursing, IT teams, imaging, etc. "There's a lot of cross-departmental collaboration in our roles, which is something I'm passionate about because we can't do this on our own. No one department can deliver healthcare on its own, so when I wake up every day, I know I'm going to work with so many different leaders and learn so much. There's never a day when I'm not learning."

In sharing her experiences with students, a considerable part of her interaction comes from mentoring young healthcare professionals within ACHE (American College of Healthcare Executives). "The best advice I can give is to always be open and say yes to opportunities that come along." Abbondandolo joined the West Florida Chapter of ACHE as an intern when she previously lived in the Tampa area, and acknowledged, "From there I knew I would always be a member and be involved in ACHE."

When Abbondandolo accepted the position with Memorial, and after joining the South Florida Chapter, she was invited to take a leadership role with Student Services on the Board; her response was "absolutely. I am very passionate about making sure the next generation of healthcare leaders has tools to be successful, and if I can help in any way, especially through this position on the board, I am all about it."

She said the chapter does a variety of things for students, including holding a career fair, and hosting an annual case competition, where students are given a healthcare case, and they devise a solution to the case and a proposal. "We want to make sure they are successful and can accomplish what they see for themselves in the future."

As with her position at Memorial, Abbondandolo appreciates the teamwork within ACHE. "Without ACHE I don't think we as healthcare leaders could be as successful as we are. We collaborate, even if we don't work in the same organization, we learn from each other. It's a great networking opportunity."



Ashley Abbondandolo

A New Era of Transplantation at Cleveland Clinic in Florida

BY CAROL NEWMAN

The Transplant Center at Cleveland Clinic in Florida builds upon the longstanding success of the world-renowned Cleveland Clinic in Ohio. A leading provider of heart, kidney and liver transplants in South Florida, the team has the expertise to perform complex multi-organ transplants.

Located at Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital, the Transplant Center is one of a select few medical centers in Florida performing kidney and liver living donor transplants. Living donors help patients get transplants faster, often while they're still relatively healthy.

Cleveland Clinic experts are pioneering organ transplant procedures, and their dedication to research and clinical trials is improving the transplant process for patients everywhere. They've helped advance the safe transplantation of imperfect organs, allowing more patients to get lifesaving transplants.

Since June 2022, the transplant team has performed more than 65 deceased donor liver transplants using machine perfusion, an advanced organ preservation technique that circulates oxygenated blood or other fluids through the donor organ before transplantation.

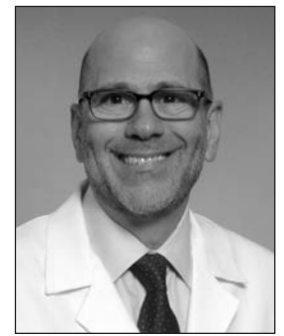
"The adoption of machine perfusion methods for dynamic preservation of donor organs is the most exciting development in the field of transplantation in over a decade," says David J. Reich, M.D., Surgical Director of the Liver Transplant Program and Chief of the Innovative Technology and Therapeutics Program for Cleveland Clinic in Florida. "These technologies are allowing for more transplants with better functioning organs while reducing wait times and improving outcomes."

The Transplant Center has experience with both normothermic and hypothermic oxygenated machine perfusion preservation for liver transplantation. Normothermic perfusion (NMP) maintains the organ at body temperature (around 37°C), allowing continuous metabolic activity within the organ prior to transplantation. Hypothermic perfusion involves cooling the organ to a lower temperature, usually below 12°C. This slows down cellular processes and reduces metabolic demand during re-oxygenation.

"Both techniques provide us the opportunity to test, treat and repair donated organs," says Dr. Reich. "Studies have demonstrated that machine perfusion can outperform static cold 'icebox' storage, the traditional preservation method, and results in safer outcomes and increased access to transplant."

Cleveland Clinic's outpatient centers throughout South Florida and the Treasure Coast make it easy to get disease care and post-transplant care closer to home. We also offer virtual visits and virtual second opinions.

Visit ClevelandClinicFlorida.org/Transplant to learn more.



Dr. David J. Reich

Cover Story: Should Physician Assistants Go Solo?

Continued from page 1

the same training as physicians."

Though PAs used to work as solo practitioners or worked in small groups of physician assistants, as times changed, so did the rules governing their ability to practice.

"Now physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants all work as a team because the rules and regulations determine who can practice solo," said Murphy. "If the laws change, one PA could work with another PA, which would certainly make a practice's job easier when putting teams together."

Solo PAs could help in areas with underserved populations where there are not enough physicians available. This could also be beneficial for physicians who can be required to provide coverage for the PAs through their liability insurance, as PAs working solo would need to provide their own coverage.

"When supervising PAs, a physician can supervise up to 10 individuals in Florida—imagine the liability that they take on," said Murphy. "If PAs go solo, doctors can reduce that liability unless they are directly involved in the case at hand."

"If legislation passes that allows PAs to work solo, these professionals would also be able to receive payments from Medicare and insurers directly, which they currently are not able to do," she added. "There is currently a very contentious matter between physicians and PAs and the robust debate will continue until the Florida legislature speaks."

While the issue of PAs going solo is brought up to the Florida Legislature every year, increased lobbying efforts by physician assistants are bringing even more attention to the matter.

"There appears to be both benefits and drawbacks to having PAs practice autonomously," said Murphy. "If PAs got to practice without physician supervision, this could provide some relief from the ongoing physician and nursing shortages and help all providers combat burnout. The argument against this is that it could create greater risk for patients and more exposure for not only the autonomous PAs but the physicians and entire team of care providers."

For more information, contact Kyla Murphy at Kyla.murphy@risk-strategies.com or call 800-966-2120.

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Senior Care Trends in South Florida: Fostering Health Care Connections

Older adults have greater needs than their younger counterparts when it comes to primary care, and Conviva Care Centers offer care tailored just for them. Focused on delivering goal-directed health care tailored specifically to seniors through a value-based model, Conviva consistently drives meaningful impact for the 65-and-older communities it serves.

Since opening our doors more than 50 years ago, Conviva has uniquely maintained a commitment to improved health outcomes, which we credit to the strong connections we establish with our patients. Compared to other providers with higher patient counts, Conviva Care Centers schedule appointments with up to 50% more time for our doctors and nurse practitioners to foster one-on-one relationships with patients, fully understand their personal needs and thoughtfully work toward necessary treatments and healthy lifestyle solutions.

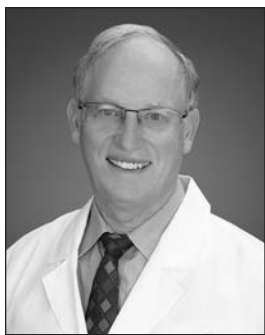
This approach results in a shared sense of unity, purpose and trust. Medical issues can become complicated with age. Our approach is designed to produce better outcomes, thanks to our network's convenient same-day access and the expertise our staff brings to primary care intervention.

Not Just Another Patient

To be successful, care must begin with a twofold question posed to each patient: What are your goals, and how can we help you achieve those goals along your specific health journey? At Conviva we prioritize health care goals built around each patient's specific needs.

Whereas younger patients focus on longevity, seniors turn to trustworthy medical professionals to help them maintain independence. Older individuals are often dealing with emotional, cognitive and nutritional issues, as well as physical limitations. The combination adds up to a complicated health picture requiring specialized medical care. These patients feel more comfortable with care delivered by doctors they know they can count on, and at Conviva our patients enjoy those vital connections with our professional medical teams.

Noted 20th Century Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung famously said, "The shoe that fits one person pinches another." Senior-focused care is the same, which is why our physician-patient relationships are the cornerstone of the care we provide. Our team takes pride in assessing each patient's emotional and social needs while connecting them to community resources to help them lead healthier lives. For example, a knee replacement may help a person continue to walk, but for some older adults that operation can mean long-term lifestyle changes. Some older



BY WILLIAM RUSSELL,
MD

patients may opt to remain independent and function at their own pace, and our physicians take that into consideration when setting care goals and delivering care and consultation.

Senior Care Trends in South Florida

Together with its sister brand, CenterWell Senior Primary Care, Conviva serves seniors at approximately 300 locations across

15 states, including many here in South Florida.

The University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research predicts that by 2030, Broward, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach counties combined will be home to more than 13 million seniors. These folks require senior-focused primary care. As such, Conviva maintains a presence in these key regions to reach populations of seniors in need of proper and personalized care. Seniors today are increasingly aging in place and maintaining their independence for longer than past generations. We offer activity centers where seniors have the opportunity to socialize with others and actively engage their minds. Educational sessions help them learn how to use new technology and video chat with family, while group exercises like yoga or tai chi and games like bingo reduce stress while keeping them active and having conversations with their peers.

A Benefit to Low-Income Patients

A recent study in Health Affairs from Humana and Harvard University shows that senior-focused primary care can improve access to health care among people of color and low-income families. Conviva makes every effort to provide the underserved with affordable, accessible care.

One of Conviva's many strengths is the wealth of knowledge and experience our physicians bring in treating underserved communities. We understand the fear and financial insecurities some seniors feel, and we are dedicated to serving them to the best of our abilities, and with kindness and commitment to quality care.

Using a care-team approach, spending more time with patients, and embracing the value-based health care model enables Conviva's physicians and nurse practitioners to practice medicine how they always imagined in medical school.

The proven approach establishes a meaningful connection between patients and their healthcare providers, resulting in trust and the care that benefits patients most.

Dr. William Russell is Division Chief Medical Officer at Conviva and CenterWell, Florida. To learn more about Conviva Care Center, visit www.convivacarecenters.com.

Why Physician Participation in General Elections Matters

As physicians, we are entrusted with safeguarding the health and well-being of our patients. But beyond the examination room, our advocacy extends to the broader policies that shape the practice of medicine. Every day, physicians across Miami-Dade County and beyond face complex regulatory and legislative challenges that affect the care we provide.

Prior authorization processes delay treatment, the expansion of scope of practice threatens patient safety, and retroactive denials from insurance companies can leave physicians unpaid for care already delivered.

These issues are compounded by broader concerns—wrongful damages in malpractice cases, inadequate Medicare and telehealth reimbursements, corporate influence in healthcare decisions, and an ever-growing shortage of physicians. These are not just political talking points. They are real issues that affect the way we practice and, ultimately, the care our patients receive.

This is why physician participation in the general elections is not just a civic duty—it is an imperative. As the Dade County Medical Association (DCMA), a physician-led organization, we are dedicated to advocating for physicians and the patients we serve on these critical issues. Founded in 1903, the DCMA has, for over a century, provided leadership and guidance for physicians as they navigate an evolving medical landscape. Our role as a convener, advocate, and influencer is essential in ensuring that the interests of South Florida's medical community are heard at the local and state levels.

But for our voice to resonate, we need every physician to exercise their right to vote. The power to elect leaders who understand and support the practice of medicine is in our hands. Healthcare policies that affect prior authorization, scope of practice, Medicare reimburse-



BY PATRICIA ARES-
ROMERO, MD, FASAM

ment, and telehealth reimbursement are shaped by the legislators we vote into office. It is our responsibility to ensure that those who represent us—whether in Tallahassee or Washington, D.C.—are aware of the unique challenges we face. This election cycle, I urge every physician to become informed, engaged, and proactive. Your participation in the democratic process not only impacts the practice

of medicine but also strengthens our collective ability to advocate for our patients. The DCMA continues to fight for policies that protect physicians' autonomy and ensure patients have access to quality care. From addressing retroactive denials and advocating for fair reimbursement to countering corporate medicine's growing influence, we are your voice. But we need your participation to ensure that voice remains strong.

For over a century, the DCMA has been at the forefront of protecting the integrity of our profession. We have navigated our members through pandemics and regulatory upheavals. Today, we face new challenges, but with the same spirit of leadership and resilience that has carried us through the decades.

I encourage all physicians to not only stay informed about the issues but also actively participate in shaping the future of our healthcare system. Voting is one of the most powerful tools we have to effect change. Let us use it wisely to ensure that our profession—and our patients—thrive.

Together, we can continue the great legacy of the Dade County Medical Association as an advocate and force of integration across South Florida. Let us continue to build on the strength of our collective voice and ensure that physicians remain central to the healthcare conversation.

Dr. Patricia Ares-Romero is President, Dade County Medical Association, Inc.

What's Next?

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A Grateful Journey: How Dr. David W. Moskowitz Helped a Patient Avoid Dialysis and Reclaim Her Life

Nearly two decades after her initial diagnosis of chronic kidney disease (CKD), Alice's journey has been one of resilience and hope. Now, at the age of 80, she shares her remarkable story of recovery under the care of Dr. David W. Moskowitz, MD, MA(Oxon.), FACP, a renowned nephrologist, internist, and CEO & Chief Medical Officer of GenoMed, Inc.

Diagnosed with kidney failure in 2005, Alice had endured years of ineffective treatments and worsening health. "For years, I searched for ways to avoid dialysis," she explains, knowing in her heart that she didn't want to rely on a machine. In 2017, she also faced bladder cancer, a harrowing experience where doctors recommended the removal of one of her kidneys. Her determination for an alternative to surgery saved her life.

It wasn't until 2018, after reading the book "How to Avoid Dialysis and Cure Kidney Disease" by one of Dr. Moskowitz's patients, that Alice reached out to him. With her kidney function severely impaired, Dr. Moskowitz hesitated to take her on, but Alice persisted. "He agreed to work with me and I'm so glad he did," she recalls. Under Dr. Moskowitz's care, her kidney function began to stabilize within months. By 2019, her condition had improved so much that Dr. Moskowitz suggested discontinuing their consultations. For the first time in years, Alice felt empowered to manage her health independently.

Dr. Moskowitz, a pioneer in the medical field, has helped numerous patients like Alice avoid dialysis through individualized care. His innovative approach focuses on adjusting medications based on real-time lab results, allowing patients to regain control over their lives. As the CEO & Chief Medical Officer of GenoMed, Inc., Dr. Moskowitz leads a company dedicated to discovering treatments that prevent and cure kidney disease and other chronic conditions.

Alice's story is not just one of medical recovery, but of personal triumph. Just shy of her 80th birthday, Alice won multiple dance competitions, including a Championship Medal at the Sapphire Dance Sport event in Round Rock, Texas. "I won the Championship Medal for Tango, Foxtrot, and Waltz, and also took first place in Cha-Cha, Rumba, and other styles," Alice says with pride. She attributes her ability to continue living a fulfilling life to Dr. Moskowitz's expertise and compassionate care.

"I owe Dr. Moskowitz my deepest gratitude," Alice says. "He didn't just give me medical care—he gave me my life back."

Dr. Moskowitz continues to dedicate his career to helping patients avoid dialysis and live healthier, fuller lives. His work at GenoMed, Inc. reflects his unwavering commitment to transforming the lives of those battling kidney disease and other life-threatening conditions.

Dr. David Moskowitz can be contacted at (305) 705-9922 (on WhatsApp), dwmoskowitz@hotmail.com or dwmoskowitz@genomed.com.



Dr. David W. Moskowitz



Alice

Thank You, Florida Hospitals and Health Care Heroes

Less than six weeks after Hurricanes Milton and Helene tore through Florida, almost all hospitals in every community in the state are open and operational.

This resiliency doesn't happen by chance. It happens because of commitment; planning and preparedness; and collaboration and coordination.

Florida's hospitals take their role as a 24/7, 365-days-a-year health care provider extremely seriously. Hospitals are infrastructure. They are just as essential as the electric grid and transportation and communications systems. Before, during, and after a significant weather event, hospitals are responsible for managing the continuous care of acutely ill patients already in their care, such as patients on ventilators, as well as being accessible during the storm for women in labor and those experiencing medical emergencies or injuries. They become literally ports in the storm for people needing dialysis; food, water, and shelter; and emergency medical care. The commitment is to maintain care and operations throughout the entire storm event without sacrificing the safety of patients and staff.

To fulfill this critical and unique role, hospitals invest millions of dollars in hardening their physical plants and buildings to resist wind and rain damage. They deploy flood barriers to guard against storm surge flooding. They retrofit building exteriors, including placing hurricane-resistant windows, to withstand hurricane-force winds and projectile objects. They build on-site wells and elevate parking lots. They invest in supplies, such as linens and potable water, medications, and equipment, including generators and satellite phones.

The guiding principle is safe, continuous patient care and access.

Importantly, this commitment is not solely financial or operational. It is also personal. To be functional, hospitals have to be staffed, and when other businesses are closing, entire communities are evacuating, and people are hunkering down in advance of storm landfall, hospital personnel – both clinical and operational – come to work. These individuals often leave their homes and families to shelter in place at the hospital, sometimes for days, to ensure that care continues safely and without interruption. These individuals are truly selfless, putting the needs of their patients and communities ahead of their own, and we owe them a debt of appreciation.

Second, hospitals plan, prepare, and practice. They have robust emergency preparedness and response plans that county emergency management officials review annually for comprehensiveness and accuracy, and they conduct at least two exercises a year to test, drill, and practice the plans to identify any areas of needed improvement and to ensure their teams understand how to operationalize the plan in an actual emergency.

When Hurricane Milton was churning in the Gulf, with landfall imminent, about 20 hospitals made the difficult decision to evacuate patients based on information about the storm's likely path and assessment of flood risk. These evacuations followed protocols outlined in emergency response plans.

In the aftermath of Helene and Milton, hospitals again will do a 360-degree assessment of how well their emergency response plans worked in the real world of two back-to-back hurricanes and make necessary adjustments so that next time, they will be even more prepared. Each time they are tested, hospitals come back even stronger and more prepared.

Lastly, resiliency results from collaboration and coordination. With each storm, the entire hospital community comes together to share information and resources and works hand-in-hand with state and local officials to coordinate patient transfers, get generators and other equipment to facilities that need them, and accelerate approval of regulatory waiver requests and needed flexibilities with health insurance plans. With daily phone calls with partners from the Florida Division of Emergency Management, Florida's State Meteorologists, the Agency for Health Care Administration, and the Florida Department of Health, hospitals quickly and strategically identify and address current and anticipated impacts on hospitals and health systems across the state. Only through partnership and collaboration can storms like these be weathered.

This hurricane season has been intense and unprecedented. The unwavering constant, however, is the commitment and resilience of Florida hospitals and their workforce to caring for our communities before, during, and after each storm. We thank you.

Mary C. Mayhew is President and CEO, Florida Hospital Association.



BY MARY C. MAYHEW



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When It Comes To Patient Care – Benchmark the Best. Part 7

Over the past six months, we have been looking at what the best of the best are doing to drive better patient care and outcomes. Today we are going to hit on Culturally Competent Care.

I work with a number of non-profit organizations and one role I have is as South Florida Regional Board Chair for a national cancer organization. We spend a ton of time, thinking, planning and acting on our DEI initiatives, because frankly cancer affects everyone. The top health-care providers also recognize the importance of cultural diversity and sensitivity in healthcare delivery. They are implementing procedures to ensure patients from diverse backgrounds receive equitable, respectful and culturally appropriate care that aligns with their beliefs, values, and preferences.

So why is this so important and why are so many leading providers focused on this? One reason they are focused on this is because they simply want to serve the entire community and not just part of it. At times this calls for slightly different approaches to different patients and their families. For example, South Florida is one of the most diverse populations in the country. There are questions to ask to assess how your approach stacks up. For example, how well does your organization serve that community? How well is your team trained to handle issues that may come up when dealing with people from different backgrounds? What type of community outreach or educational opportunities do you engage in? Does the diversity of your patients reflect the area you serve? Are there any populations being neglected?

In the day to day bustle of getting things done, this topic is often overlooked, but how much more successful could you be by casting a wider net and offering more care to more people. When it comes to high quality patient care, look to what the best are doing when it comes to culturally competent care, and see what opportunities your team may have to improve.

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



BY JAY JUFFRE

Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital: Future of Stroke Care Stroke and Cerebrovascular Disease Conference 2024 November 9-10

Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital is excited to host an innovative symposium dedicated to the advancements and future directions in stroke care. Titled "Future of Stroke Care," this symposium aims to bring together leading minds in neurology, neurosurgery, neuroradiology, rehabilitation and technology to foster an environment of learning, collaboration and innovation.

Through this symposium, we aspire to spotlight the latest updates in management of the entire array of cerebrovascular diseases and to improve patient outcomes through interdisciplinary collaboration and integrating innovative practices in clinical care. The symposium will highlight the transformative impact of artificial intelligence on the prevention and diagnosis of stroke. There will be seven sessions spanning over the course of two days, November 9-10. Each of the five sessions will include an interactive panel discussion with questions and answers, allowing for an interdisciplinary approach to optimize patient care.

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Recent Graduate Medical Education Highlights at Mount Sinai Medical Center

As South Florida’s oldest statutory teaching hospital, Mont Sinai is committed to expanding our educational offerings through a variety of initiatives and partnerships.

Below are a few recent program highlights:

- We recently named Gerald Rosen, M.D., as Mount Sinai Medical Center’s new Designated Institutional Official (DIO) for Graduate Medical Education. Dr. Rosen received his medical degree from the Ross University School of Medicine and has been practicing for over twenty years. A seasoned physician and educator, in addition to the DIO role, Dr. Rosen is also the program director for our anesthesiology residency program.
 - With over 400 medical students on clinical rotations at Mount Sinai, we’re proud to attract individuals on a local and national level, allowing us to have a diverse student population. This year, we matched all of our 217 residency program spots, with the following programs receiving matches from Nova Southeastern University and Florida International University: anesthesiology, emergency medicine, internal medicine, general surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, psychiatry, and radiology. Additionally, we have taken steps to establish a hematology oncology fellowship program at Mount Sinai.
 - We are proud to announce our newly formed academic affiliation with New York Medical College, located in Valhalla, New York. This partnership will augment our ability to educate the next generation of expert physicians in South Florida, and establishes clerkship rotations for medical students in internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, psychiatry, and surgery and electives in emergency medicine, anesthesiology, and urology.
 - Mount Sinai has recently received ACGME approval for the expansion of our existing ER residency complement, as well as ACCME re-accreditation for ongoing continued medical education programs. These accreditations allow our residents and fellows to develop their career holistically and engage in the broader medical community while at Mount Sinai.
- We are continually striving for educational excellence, expanding our offerings and deepening our fields of study. These recent developments further cement our position as an epicenter for knowledge and allow us to teach and train physicians that will provide world-class health care.

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Occupational Students Age Quickly in Simulation USAHS Miami teaches empathy through geriatric simulation



BY CAROL NEWMAN

Getting dressed can be exhausting when arthritis and age affect hand strength and fine motor skills. Occupational therapy students at the Miami campus of University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USAHS) say their immersive learning experiences was tiring, but worthwhile.

“I found it difficult to put on my vest and fasten many of the buttons on my clothing. I have never taken so many rest breaks in my life and was winded during the simulated activity,” said Andrea King, who is completing her master’s in occupational therapy at King and her classmates wore special gear including wrist weights, gloves, and vision impairment glasses, to experience the limitations of aging.

Assistant Professor Sabina Khan, PhD, OTD, says the immersive program at USAHS Miami goes beyond the typical one-day simulations that other programs might offer. In research published in the Journal of Occupational Therapy Education, Khan and colleague Jacqueline Achon, OTD, MS, a Clinical Instructor, noted a marked improvement in empathy among students who participated in the simulation over several days.

Students wore geriatric simulation suits and ankle weights, wrist weights, a weighted vest, knee restraints, elbow restraints, gloves, and cataract impairment glasses in order to experience how common aspects of aging affect daily living. They were then asked to rate the level of difficulty for tasks such as getting dressed, meal preparation, and laundry.

“The simulation teaches clinical reasoning skills while fostering a deepened empathy and a nuanced understanding of the integral role occupational therapy practitioners (OTPs) play in enhancing the quality of life for older adults,” says Khan.

King says she learned the importance of adapting the treatment to accommodate a patient’s needs, which was useful during her internship at a skilled nursing facility.

“I made several modifications to the equipment used and adjusted the repetitions accordingly,” she says. “I realized that many of my patients were lethargic not due to lack of effort, but because aging limits their performance, especially if they have underlying health conditions.”

“The combination of restricted movement and limited vision made moving around feel disorienting and physically exhausting,” says Marco Jimenez, who is in his third year at USAHS Miami. “These aspects of the simulation really emphasized how much effort older adults need to put into tasks we might typically consider simple and take for granted, like walking or climbing stairs.”

Geriatric simulation has become a fundamental element of the occupational therapy education program at USAHS Miami, bridging the gap between theory and practical experience. Khan says the immersive experience gives students a direct experience with the challenges associated with aging.

“More than a classroom activity, this lab encourages deep engagement with the conditions older adults face. It fosters an immediate empathy that traditional learning methods cannot achieve,” says Khan. “Students gain invaluable insights into the everyday realities of older adults, and are better prepared to provide empathetic, individualized care to their patients.”



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Florida Atlantic University College of Nursing Creates AI Club

BY LOIS THOMSON

"The future isn't just coming – it's already here and powered by the cutting-edge technology!" David Newman, Ph.D., exclaimed. "And it holds a massive potential to transform the healthcare system." Dr. Newman, a biostatistician and professor at the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing (CELCON) at Florida Atlantic University (FAU), shared his excitement about the new initiative of the AI/ML (Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning) Club that came into being to introduce the current trending AI/ML technologies to the nurses at the College.

Dr. Newman said that a few years ago, he and former Dean Safiya George, Ph.D., had discussed the college's direction and the steps needed to shift paradigms. "We talked about data science's role in healthcare research and practice as we move forward. The field of research in nursing and healthcare science has changed so dramatically over the past five to 10 years; it's scary how different we're looking in the future landscape."

With that in mind, they decided to hire and get people involved. "We talked about creating courses, like a graduate certificate program and a master's degree eventually, in healthcare data science. Having an AI/ML Club could aid in curriculum development for the healthcare data science program in the CELCON. This initiative marks the beginning of an era of the healthcare data science research center at FAU." Dr. Newman added that despite starting the Club in the CELCON, it is not just for nurses only. "We want to have everyone. So, we opened it to the college – anyone in the university who wanted to explore AI in Healthcare." He said that nearly 100 people across the university are involved right now.

Debarshi Datta, Ph.D., an assistant professor in data science at the CELCON, has expertise in developing AI-driven decision support systems to understand disease prognosis better. Dr. Datta is also the founding member of the AI/ML Club. He said, "We have people from the College of Medicine who joined us, the College of Engineering, College of Education – ones throughout all FAU colleges." Dr. Datta stated that they decided to create a common platform because they could offer students, staff, and faculty an opportunity to come together and share their ideas and research.

Dr. Newman said the AI Club is also opening the door for partnerships and research opportunities for those outside FAU. Dr. Datta pointed out that partnerships, such as with Memorial Healthcare System, are already taking place.

Dr. Newman said that people in engineering or computer science might be skilled at AI modeling but do not know the health science facets. "Just like people who come



Dr. David Newman



Dr. Debarshi Datta



Dr. Subhosit Ray

out of nursing are good on the health aspects side, but not necessarily the informatics and ML. So, they meet in the middle; they learn from each other, which is great to have happen."

Subhosit Ray, Ph.D., a postdoctoral fellow at the CELCON, is another team member. He mentioned using AI/ML to handle large electronic health records, predict diseases, and identify clinical determinants of disease progression. For one project, he, along with Dr. Datta and Dr. Newman, among others, performed a study on more than 5,000 patients from South Florida diagnosed with COVID-19 and concluded, "The model not only predicts mortality or disease

severity but also allows clinicians to identify important clinical features that are crucial for disease management from the healthcare reports of the patients from a multi-hospital system." He also said that the data on which the ML model was built contains a multitude of different co-morbidities, including diabetes, diarrhea, and heart disease, as well as social demographics such as age, weight, and history of medications.

(The findings were captured in an *MDPI Journal* article titled, "Feature Identification Using Interpretability Machine Learning Predicting Risk Factors for Disease Severity of In-Patients with COVID-19 in South Florida" (2024-08-26): <https://doi.org/10.3390/diagnostics14171866>. More information about the AI COVID study can be found here: [transforming-care \(fau.edu\)](https://transforming-care.fau.edu).)

Despite having this type of information, Dr. Ray said, "We don't expect nurses to become experts in AI, but rather have them get a feel for the data. Our AI/ML Club aims to create an interest in nursing research that gears them toward a smooth transition to new cutting-edge technologies they will experience when entering practice."

Dr. Newman concluded, "We want to use the best tools possible, including AI along with traditional statistics. AI is not a replacement for statistics; it enhances various research aspects. AI has so many advantages, it's another tool we need to make sure our researchers and practicing nurses have available. As we have seen in the industry, these changes will improve research, hospital and provider services, and overall patient care."

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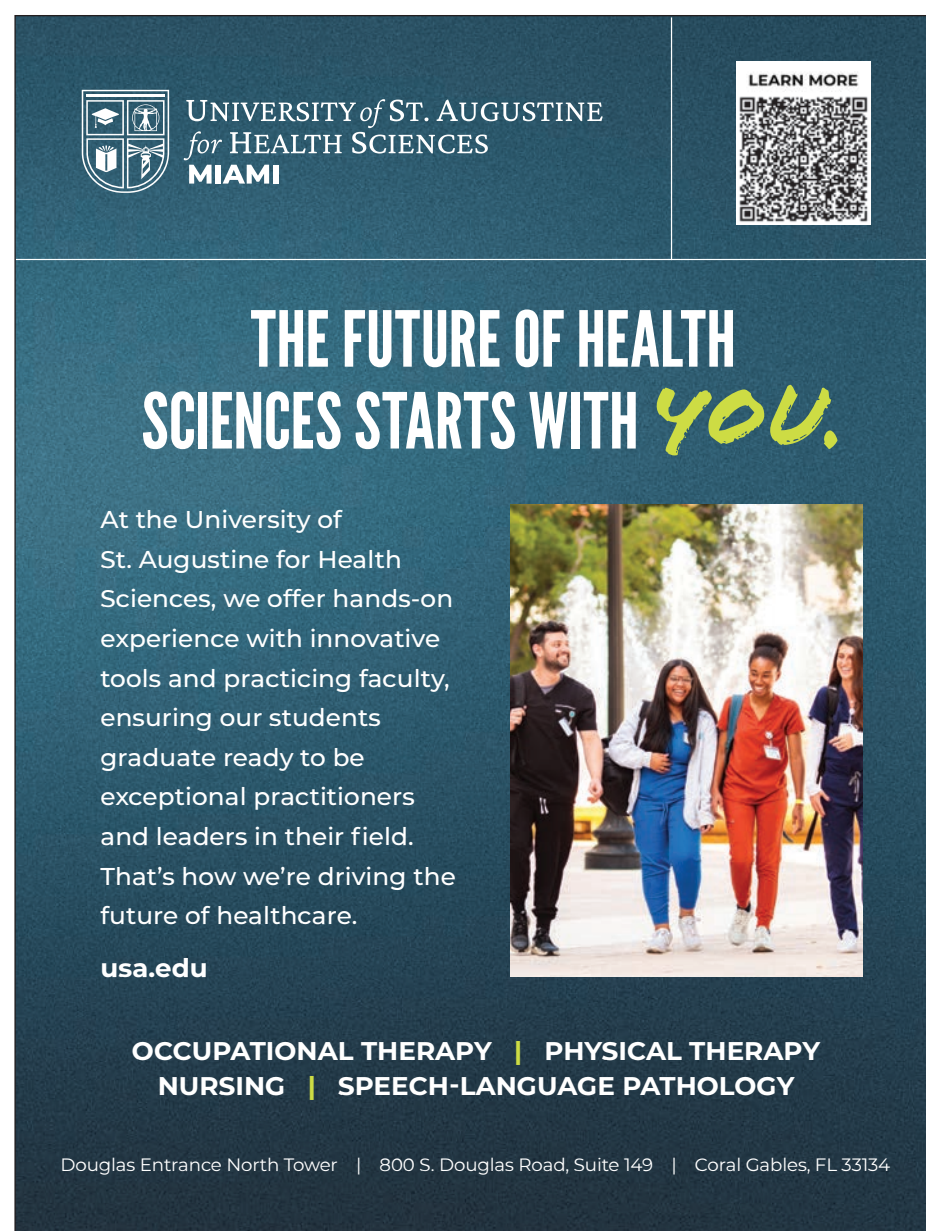
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Cover Story: FAU Executive Master of Health Administration Designed for Working Professionals

Continued from page 1

"I'm happy I did it in person because I made lifelong connections with other students. We still get together all the time," she said. "I've made friends for life, as well as business associates I can connect with; it was a very valuable networking opportunity."

The EMHA curriculum covers a broad cross-section of business disciplines, ranging from Health Law and Organizational Behavior in Healthcare to Healthcare Finance and Research Methodology. Students also earn the Lean Six Sigma Green Belt certification by completing the Healthcare Operations elective.

Woolf said that she uses the knowledge she gained while earning her degree every day in her current position as vice-president of the Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS) in Palm Beach.

"The Healthcare Finance class was incredibly well thought out and well presented, and it's important for what I do every day at my job," she said, noting that all of the classes are taught by highly esteemed leaders actively working in healthcare. "I also really enjoyed the Strategic Planning class; it provided a great overview of how senior leaders in healthcare think and how to plan for business success."

"I'm incredibly proud to be a graduate of the program, and I tell everyone I can about it," she added. "I think that it can be a real benefit to those who want to grow personally and professionally, and I'd do it again in a heartbeat."

To learn more about the Executive Master of Health Administration, visit <https://business.fau.edu/masters-phd/mha/>. An upcoming information session will also be held on Nov. 13, 2024, at 6:45 p.m. EST. To join in-person at the FAU Boca Raton Campus or virtually via Zoom, register at <https://fauchoep.radiusbycampusgmt.com/ssc/eform/M00N7GKB700nx6700ICL.ssc>.

The on-campus Executive MHA program begins each fall and spring semester, whereas the Online MHA has three intakes per academic year (spring, summer, and fall). The upcoming spring cohorts begin on Jan. 4 for online students and Jan. 11 for those attending on-campus at FAU's Boca Raton Campus.

FAU Nursing Offers New Online and On-Demand Nursing Certificate

BY GISELE GALOUSTIAN

Florida Atlantic University's Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing is offering a 25-hour, fully online and on-demand "Teaching/Learning Grounded in Caring Science Certificate" course to provide the essential knowledge for engagement in the innovative process for studying nursing grounded in caring.

The Teaching/Learning Grounded in Caring Science course is a virtual-learning certificate program for nursing faculty, graduate nursing students, and working nursing professionals interested in a teaching career. The focus of the program is to acquire knowledge and competencies for engagement in caring science-based teaching.

The content includes the evolution of caring science, philosophical and theoretical foundations of caring science, epistemology, methodologies and praxis exemplars, and a framework for the study of nursing grounded in caring. In addition, the course includes content related to the application of this framework in nursing situations in classroom, clinical and simulation settings and caring-based measurement and evaluation of learning.

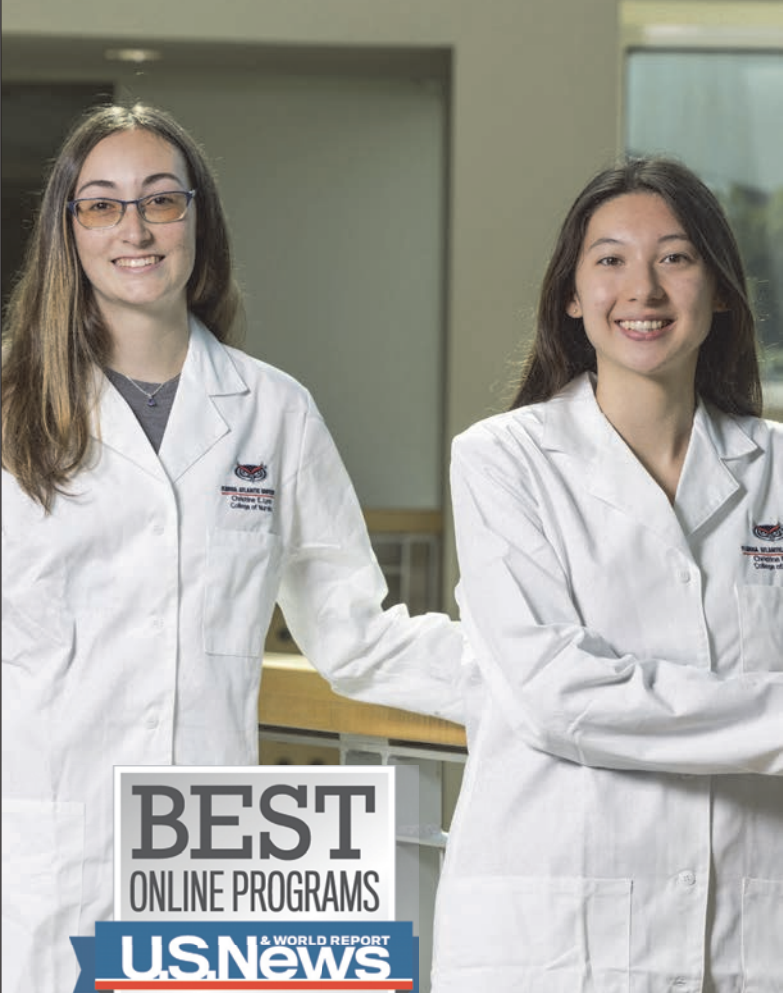
The program is designed and presented by scholars, theorists and experts in teaching nursing grounded in caring, who are on the board of the Anne Boykin Institute for the Advancement of Caring in Nursing. In addition, the course includes interviews with 19 international scholars in caring science.

This course also can be a valuable professional development opportunity for nurses transitioning into a potential nursing faculty role, and nursing leaders in health care systems who are involved in the professional development of nurses in practice settings and health care organizations.

The eight-week Teaching/Learning Grounded in Caring Science course is open to nurse educators, nurse leaders and graduate nursing students.

"After completing this course, participants will have the knowledge they need to apply a framework for the study of nursing grounded in caring to their teaching and nursing practice," said Louise Aurélien-Buie, Ed.D., APRN, an associate professor and assistant dean of executive and continuing education and academic-practice partnerships, FAU Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing. "As this important work of caring science emerges, knowledge of the discipline of nursing will advance in tandem."

For more information, visit <https://nursing.fau.edu/admissions/certificates/caring-science/index.php>



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The baccalaureate, master's and DNP programs at Florida Atlantic University's Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

Miami Dade College-Medical Campus: Health Service Management and Health Care Services Specialist Programs to Meet Workforce Needs

According to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (FLDEO), employment in Health Service Management in Workforce Development Area 23 (Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties) is projected to grow by 12.5% from 2021 to 2029, much faster than the average for all occupations. Similarly, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a 32% growth for Medical and



BY DR. RON WINSTON

Health Services Managers from 2020 to 2030. The demand for health care services will increase, leading to a greater need for health care workers, medical procedures, and facilities. This will, in turn, increase the demand for managers to organize and manage medical information and staff. Employment is expected to grow in health practitioners' offices as services shift from hospitals to these settings, especially with advancements in medical technology. The demand for medical group practice management is also projected to grow as practices become larger and more complex. Additionally, the widespread use of electronic health records (EHRs) will continue to create demand for managers knowledgeable in health information technology (IT) and informatics systems.

The School of Health Sciences has developed an Associate in Science (AS) in Health Sciences - Health Services Management program to prepare students for health-related careers or graduate programs. The Health Services Management program introduces students to the health care field and provides an in-depth background in health care management. Students will gain extensive knowledge of comprehensive and advanced theory, legal and ethical responsibilities, current issues in the health care system, health services management concepts, health care quality management, and management of multicultural organizations.

Additionally, the School of Health Sciences also has developed a 27-credit-hour Health Care Services Specialist

College Credit Certificate (CCC). This certificate program includes courses that prepare students for employment as health service supervisors, managers, or medical office managers or provide supplemental training for those in previous or current health care occupations.

Responsibilities of a medical office manager include monitoring the office budget, ordering medical supplies, and implementing office policies and procedures. Graduates will also be trained to understand health care insurance regulations and payment systems. The CCC program is designed for individuals seeking entry-level employment as health care professionals responsible for part of the operations of a medical office or those seeking supplemental training.

The CCC in Health Care Services Specialist is a stackable credential with credits that articulate directly into the AS in Health Sciences - Health Services Management. In the final term of both programs, students must complete an internship at a health care facility, providing hands-on experience, skill development, and exposure to various specialties.

The development of the Health Care Services Specialist and Health Services Management programs aims to address the need for qualified health service managers to meet workforce demands in Miami-Dade County. Miami Dade College's School of Health Sciences is preparing students to become highly skilled Medical and Health Services Managers, improving their quality of life and integrating them into health care teams. By training the next generation of health care providers, the School of Health Sciences turns career dreams into reality for thousands of students every year.

For more information, visit www.mdc.edu/health-sciences or call (305) 237-4434. Dr. Ron Winston is Dean, School of Health Sciences at Miami Dade College.

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South University's Vision for Healthcare Education in 2025

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

As healthcare education continues to evolve, South University is among the leaders in higher education preparing future professionals to meet the needs of an ever-changing healthcare landscape. In an insightful conversation, Gil Singletary, Ph.D., JD, MBA, MSW, Provost and Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs at South University, shared his perspective on key trends in healthcare education and how the university is adapting to the demands of 2025 and beyond.

Adapting to the Post-Pandemic Landscape

According to Dr. Singletary, one of the most significant changes in healthcare education has been the aftermath of COVID-19, which has created an increased interest in healthcare professions and a corresponding wave of burnout and attrition. "We're seeing an increase in those wanting to enter the nursing profession," Dr. Singletary explains, "but we're also seeing many healthcare professionals leaving the field."

To address this challenge, South University is revolutionizing its curriculum, making it more responsive to the



Dr. Gil Singletary

needs of the healthcare community while preparing students for the real-world challenges they will face. "We're not only looking at what students need academically but also ensuring that our programs align with the realities of the profession," he says.

The Shift from Traditional to Non-Traditional Students

One key trend shaping healthcare education is the shift from traditional 18- to 23-year-old students to non-traditional students. Dr. Singletary notes that more students today are seeking second careers or juggling full-time jobs and family responsibilities. "The non-traditional student is becoming the new traditional," he says.

This shift requires South University to rethink how it delivers education. With students balancing multiple commitments, the university has adapted its curriculum to use multiple types of devices and platforms. "Students might be at a soccer game or waiting in the car line, so we need to ensure our delivery methods meet their needs," Dr. Singletary emphasizes.

Mental Health and Non-Academic Challenges

In addition to academic challenges, students today are grappling with mental health issues that can significantly impact their performance in the class-

room. Dr. Singletary explains that many students face non-cognitive challenges that affect their ability to succeed. "We're seeing that external factors, such as mental health, can have just as much or more of an impact on student performance as academic ones."

In response, South University has made mental health support a key focus, offering resources and services to help students navigate these challenges and thrive in their educational journey.

Integrating Technology and Simulation into Healthcare Programs

As healthcare evolves, technology is increasingly important in training future professionals. Dr. Singletary shares that South University is heavily investing in advanced simulation equipment to provide students with hands-on experience that closely mimics real-world medical scenarios. "We're using high-fidelity simulation technology that can replicate everything from childbirth to diverse patient interactions," he adds.

The university is also exploring using artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance learning, particularly in research, writing, and classroom engagement. "AI can answer basic questions and help students with assignments, allowing professors to focus on more in-depth learning," Dr. Singletary says. However, the university is committed to maintaining academic integrity by implementing strict guidelines around AI usage to prevent issues like plagiarism.

Fostering Interprofessional Collaboration

One of the hallmarks of South University's approach to healthcare education is its commitment to interprofessional education (IPE). "In healthcare settings, professionals don't work in isolation—they work as part of a team," Dr. Singletary notes. To prepare students for this reality, the university holds quarterly IPE events where students from different healthcare disciplines come together to tackle complex case studies from multiple perspectives.

"These events allow students to engage with their peers from other professions, like pharmacy or mental health counseling, and learn how to collaborate effectively," he says.

This approach ensures that South University graduates are well-trained in their specific fields and equipped to work as part of a larger healthcare team.

Addressing the Need for Healthcare Professionals in Underserved Areas

South University is also committed to addressing the growing need for healthcare professionals in underserved areas, particularly in rural parts of Florida. "We're an open-access institution, and we believe education should be available to all students, regardless of their background," says Dr. Singletary.

The university actively recruits students across the US including rural areas and encourages them to complete practicums and internships in underserved communities. In addition to providing grants to help students from all areas, South University has partnered with historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) to offer scholarships in fields like pharmacy.

Leading Innovation in Healthcare Education by 2025

Looking ahead to 2025, Dr. Singletary expresses South University's commitment to being a trailblazer in healthcare education. "We strive to be a leader in using innovation and technology to advance our students and impact the communities we serve," he says.

The university's expansion plans to expand program offerings through online and hybrid classes include growing its reach beyond the Southeast to meet the increasing demand for healthcare professionals.

"We don't grow just for the sake of growth. We grow to meet the needs of the communities we serve," Dr. Singletary explains.

Conclusion

As South University looks to the future, its focus on innovation, technology, and community impact, positions it as a leader in healthcare education.

Whether through advanced simulation technology, interprofessional collaboration, or its commitment to serving underserved areas, the university is well-equipped to meet the demands of 2025 and beyond.

As Dr. Singletary sums up, "Quality is at the heart of everything we do. When you see a South University graduate, you can feel confident they're prepared to provide the highest level of care."

For more information, visit southuniversity.edu.



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Discharge planning can be complicated by factors such as insurance verification, eligibility assessments, and the complexities of managing diagnoses under the Diagnosis-Related Group (DRG) system. Hospice care, however, simplifies this process. VITAS handles transitions in compliance with CMS guidelines, assuming responsibility and easing the burden on hospital resources.

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- **Care Coordination:** If eligible, we manage admission, develop an individualized care plan, arrange home medical equipment delivery, and schedule team visits.
- **Transition to Care Setting:** We coordinate the move to the appropriate setting, whether it's a private residence, nursing facility, assisted living facility, skilled nursing facility, or inpatient hospice unit.

VITAS ensures that transitions to hospice care are as stress-free as possible, regardless of where “home” is for your patient.

In the Best Interests of the Patient: Personalized Care Planning and Support

At VITAS, we prioritize what matters most to patients. By asking patients and their families about their wishes and goals, we tailor our care plans to meet their specific needs. Our full-time medical directors and physicians work closely with your hospital staff to develop personalized plans that enhance patient outcomes, improve family and caregiver satisfaction, and contribute to better hospital metrics and satisfaction scores.

Our hospice services may include:

- Physical, occupational, and/or speech therapies
- Respiratory therapy (RT) for patients with complex respiratory needs
- Emotional and spiritual care, including grief counseling, pastoral care, and emotional support



VITAS provides comprehensive symptom management and an open formulary to ensure access to the necessary medications, medical equipment, and expertise. Our protocols cover a range of complex modalities, such as:

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- PEG-tube care and tube feedings

Hospice clinicians continuously adjust care plans to address both clinical and personal needs with greater flexibility. By meeting patients and families “where they are,” hospice offers holistic care that can be challenging for hospitals to provide due to time constraints and resource limitations. Our approach ensures that care is patient-directed and family-supported.

If a patient’s symptoms worsen while under hospice care, VITAS adapts by providing full-time clinical support via phone, telehealth, or in-person visits, along with additional palliative measures or a temporary stay in a VITAS inpatient hospice unit until symptoms are stabilized and pain is managed.

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When patients transition to hospice, they free up critical ICU beds for other patients and alleviate the strain on hospital resources. Shorter lengths of stay in acute care settings also reduce the risk of falls, infections, and pressure sores while enhancing patient satisfaction and improving outcomes. Early identification of hospice-eligible patients increases your clinical capacity and supports better resource management.

Additionally, the Medicare Hospice Benefit covers many expenses that families would otherwise bear, including medications, medical equipment, and in-home care. This financial relief allows families to focus on what matters most—spending quality time with their loved ones during a challenging period.

Hospice care addresses the comprehensive physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of both patients and their families, offering individualized care that hospitals may not always be equipped to fully provide. The cost-effectiveness of hospice further highlights its value, benefiting patients, families, and healthcare systems alike, contributing to a more efficient care continuum.

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Hospice Care: More Than Medical Treatment, Providing Holistic Support

When it comes to hospice care, the conversation can often feel overwhelming. Many families find themselves grappling with misinformation or a lack of understanding about what hospice truly entails. In times of serious illness, figuring out the right type of care for a loved one can be daunting, leaving families feeling disorganized and uncertain about the next steps.

While this phase of life can be intensely challenging, hospice care can be about much more than physical comfort and medical support. It's also a time to reflect, celebrate, and preserve the moments that define a life. Exceptional hospice care should include not only top-notch medical support but also life-enriching services for patients and their families, such as palliative care, grief support, and emotional and spiritual guidance.

At MorseLife Hospice, we are committed to providing patients in Palm Beach County with the highest standard of care and comfort, valuing the dignity and legacy of each individual and their families. With our 40-year history of compassionate service to the community, MorseLife has reshaped the standard of excellence for end-of-life care, offering innovative and life-enriching programs and a unique approach to personalized hospice care.

A Holistic Approach

The best care requires an interdisciplinary

nary team of professionals who can work together seamlessly on a patient's behalf. Quality hospice programs will employ physicians, nurses, hospice aides, medical social workers, spiritual care counselors, and bereavement coordinators who work together to improve each patient's symptoms and quality of life.

MorseLife offers a variety of traditional palliative care services, such as pain management and care coordination, led by highly skilled healthcare teams. It also offers unique signature programs like the Mitzvah Sensory Care program, rooted in the Jewish tradition of Bikur Cholim, which means "to visit and extend aid to the sick." This program incorporates holistic sensory techniques to soothe and celebrate the whole person. Patients engage in meditation and music experiences and receive soothing grooming and massage with scented oils and a compassionate touch.

Capturing Memories and Recording Legacies

Another important aspect of hospice is helping families create lasting memories and meaningful connections.

The 'Cherishing Life's Journey' program was recently introduced at MorseLife, allowing patients to honor their memories and share their legacies with loved ones. Through a series of tailored programs, we help patients capture their unique stories

in various ways, from creating personalized keepsakes to recording life stories and even fulfilling long-held wishes with virtual reality.

One of these is My Treasure Chest, where patients create cards, videos, and gifts for future milestones like birthdays, weddings, and anniversaries, ensuring their presence is felt in the hearts of their loved ones even after they're gone. Patients can also create their own music or music timelines to share with loved ones, develop an on-screen legacy with photos and videos, or even pen their own personal autobiographies with the caring support of the hospice team.

Support for Families

Families and patients want and need a great deal of support during this difficult time. Patients don't want to feel alone, while families want to be included in the caregiving process and may need someone to turn to when their emotions become overwhelming.

To support this connection, MorseLife engages with family through a mobile communication app. The app keeps families informed with real-time updates on their loved one's care.



BY THOMAS SWOPE

Comprehensive hospice programs offer a range of bereavement counseling services, from one-on-one counseling to support groups, helping individuals make emotional and psychological adjustments both before and after death. Taking each patient and family's unique circumstances into account, MorseLife has introduced the Rest Assured program to ensure that a caregiver or

volunteer is always available to offer comfort and reassurance during the final hours of life, so no one in hospice will pass away alone.

When selecting a hospice, families and patients should ensure that care encompasses more than just medical treatment. True hospice care extends to emotional, spiritual, and psychological support, creating a space for reflection, love, and cherished memories. At MorseLife, we are committed to leading the way in hospice care by offering compassionate support that honors dignity and helps families create a meaningful legacy during life's final chapter.

Thomas Swope is MorseLife Hospice Director.

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HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE IN SOUTH FLORIDA PROFILES

MORSELIFE HOSPICE

Donna Lopez, RN

Donna Lopez, R.N., joined MorseLife Hospice in West Palm Beach, FL in February 2024 after relocating from Nevada. As a registered nurse case manager, Donna works closely with the interdisciplinary team to provide compassionate care to terminally ill patients and their families. She is deeply committed to ensuring each patient's comfort and dignity, tailoring their care to their unique needs and wishes. Donna feels honored and privileged to guide families through this sensitive and deeply personal time, offering empathy, advocacy, practical and emotional support. She is passionate about getting to know her patients' life stories and cultural beliefs, which helps her to personalize her care approach. Donna was inspired to make a career change after 34 years as a licensed cosmetologist when her own mother entered Hospice with a terminal illness. The care and support received by her mom and family was above and beyond any expectations. From that time forward, her goal of care was specific to the specialty of Hospice. Donna earned an associate degree in nursing from Las Vegas College in Nevada.



Coral Clarke, RN

Coral Clarke, R.N., has been a dedicated case manager at MorseLife Hospice since January 2021, where she provides five-star hospice services to her patients that include life-enriching programs and therapies. In her role, she works closely with the hospice physician, assessing and treating patients, while helping to improve their quality of life with symptom and pain management. Coral is also in charge of ordering medical equipment and training new nurse hires. She is passionate about caring for her patients with respect and compassion during their final stages of life. Prior to joining MorseLife, Coral previously worked on the cardiac telemetry floor at HCA Florida JFK Hospital and earned her associate degree in nursing from Penn Foster College in Arizona.



CATHOLIC HOSPICE

Tracey Moody

Tracey Moody is a Registered Nurse at Catholic Hospice's Holy Cross Inpatient Care Center whose excellence shines tremendously. Her colleagues describe her as an "excellent nurse and team player who takes pride in her patients' and their families' needs." Her compassionate care and kindness go above and beyond and receives constant recognition from patients and their families. One family shared, "Navigating putting a loved one into hospice is by far one of the hardest things to do. I want to specifically call out Tracey for her excellent patient care. Tracey has been supportive, quick to respond when needed, and patient. Thank you, Tracey, for making this extremely difficult time just a bit easier!" Tracey's care as a hospice nurse truly brings so much comfort and warmth to so many lives.



Tamara Esquijarosa

Tamara Esquijarosa is a Clinical Care Manager at Catholic Hospice overseeing an interdisciplinary team caring for an average daily census of 100 patients in Miami-Dade County. Esquijarosa obtained her Associate Degree in Nursing from Florida National University and later went on to obtain her Master's Degree in Nursing from AGM University. She promotes a patient centered approach by connecting on a deeper level with staff, patients, and families. The team's CAHPS scores reflect her commitment to the evolving needs of patients and caregivers. Esquijarosa holds the Team of the Year recognition award for excellence in patient care delivery for two consecutive years. She is well respected and admired by her staff, peers and management team.



CELEBRATING 35 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE



Dr. Angel Sanchez Artiles
ASSOCIATE MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Strength, articulate communication, humility, integrity, medical expertise, kindness, honesty, flexibility, and a bit of humor are just a few of the qualities that a leader of this field should manifest consistently, and Catholic Palliative Care Services and Catholic Hospice are so proud to have all of these and more in our Associate Medical Director, **Dr. Angel Sanchez Artiles**. Dr. Sanchez joined our organization in 2021 and has made such a tremendous impact within our team and on behalf of our healthcare community, touching countless lives entrusted to our care. He is Board Certified in Internal Medicine and in Hospice and Palliative Medicine and has over 10 years of experience with special interest in cancer pain and symptom management, end of life care, and health disparities. All throughout his professional journey, he has won a plenitude of awards recognizing his excellence as a physician and educator. When we think of the best of the best, it is truly doctors like Dr. Angel Sanchez Artiles that come to mind!



Dr. Jorge Hernández Canciobello
HOSPICE PHYSICIAN

Catholic Hospice is privileged to have a dedicated, skilled team of Hospice Physicians rendering sensitive end of life care to members of our community. One such Physician is **Dr. Jorge Hernández Canciobello**. Dr. Canciobello utilizes his expertise in medicine in several roles, including as an Internal Medicine Physician providing hospital care and in caring for patients in post-acute and long-term care facilities. Dr. Canciobello is consistently praised by our patients and families for providing compassionate care with tremendous authenticity, heart, and a tender smile. One family said this about him, "He is a very caring physician who listens to his patients. Other physicians might see a 95-year-old person and think they are not all there, but Dr. Canciobello saw that my father was cognitive and alert, and made sure to listen to his concerns and discuss with him about his care." We are blessed to call him a colleague and to partner with him to provide superb care at Catholic Hospice!

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HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE

Hospice Choices: VITAS Is Now Serving Florida's Pasco County



Families in Pasco County can now choose VITAS Healthcare for high-quality hospice services. This expansion meets the growing demand for compassionate hospice care in the Northern Tampa Bay area, offering residents another trusted option for comfort care that aligns with patients' end-of-life wishes.

"At VITAS, we are committed to ensuring that every patient receives the best care possible—individualized care tailored to their values that allows them to live with dignity," said Jalisha Wynn, general manager for VITAS. "By expanding into Pasco County, we are providing families with a premier choice, backed by decades of expertise and compassion.

VITAS specializes in delivering patient-centered physical, emotional and spiritual care wherever patients reside, whether in their homes, nursing homes, assisted living communities or inpatient settings. With the ability to manage complex clinical modalities, VITAS care teams help seriously ill patients focus on comfort and quality of life during their final stages of an advanced illness.

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To learn more about our proactive clinical approach and care coordination that enhance patients' quality of life and symptom management, contact us. Call 800.93.VITAS or visit VITAS.com

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Miami Cancer Institute Launches New Bladder Cancer Center

Advances in cancer care are being driven by rapid growth in technology — including genetic testing, artificial intelligence (AI) and increasingly precise diagnostic, treatment and surgical techniques. Experts at Baptist Health Miami Cancer Institute are using these tools to provide breakthrough care that offers patients hope.

With its world-renowned medical expertise, Miami Cancer Institute's Abbhi Family Bladder Cancer Center provides individualized, comprehensive and compassionate care for patients with all stages of bladder cancer.

"Each patient has a different grade of disease, a different expression of bladder cancer, so one treatment does not fit everybody," says

Murugesan Manoharan, M.D., Miami Cancer Institute's chief of urologic oncologic surgery and Abbhi Family Endowed Chair in Urologic Oncology.

"The goal is to identify and classify the disease correctly and to determine the best treatment approach for each patient."

The American Cancer Society estimates that 83,190 new cases of bladder cancer will be diagnosed in 2024 in the United States, with 17,000 deaths in 2024.

"When bladder cancer is caught early, the prognosis is very good," states Dr. Manoharan. Molecular profiling of tumors allows clinicians to identify genetic alterations and tailor treatment strategies accordingly.

One of the most promising developments is immunotherapy. Immune checkpoint inhibitors work by unleashing the body's immune system to attack cancer cells. Targeted therapies also have emerged as an option for certain subtypes of bladder cancer.



Miami Cancer Institute has been involved in a number of bladder cancer clinical trials, some studying combinations of chemotherapy, immunotherapy and radiation therapy. "These studies are leading to better outcomes for patients," Dr. Manoharan says.

Surgery is used to remove some tumors and often is performed using robotic-assisted techniques. Robotic tools magnify the surgical area and provide a 3D view of the bladder and surrounding tissue, making it less likely that nearby nerves will be affected. This helps protect sexual function and bowel control, while improving recovery.

Dr. Manoharan was a pioneer in reconstructing a new bladder with tissue from the intestines to avoid the need for an external ostomy bag for those whose bladder must be removed. He also spearheaded the creation of the Global Bladder Cancer Consortium (GBCC) with experts from Japan, Australia, Canada, the U.K., Malaysia, India and New Zealand.

"We're proud to be at the forefront. By collaborating, we are able to share our information, grow research participation and streamline data collection," explains Dr. Manoharan, the consortium's leader.

"New therapies and technologies are revolutionizing diagnosis and treatment."

To learn more, please visit **BaptistHealth.net/BladderCenter**



Baptist Health

Miami Cancer Institute

A message from our President

How Important Is Mental Health?

The stresses associated with delivering healthcare services during the COVID epidemic brought many issues into focus. While prior to COVID we had been reading periodic articles about burnout in the medical profession, articles after the epidemic waned came fast and furious.

The more recent articles are providing evidence about the toll from COVID and about how the workforce has changed as a result.

In a recent edition of McKinsey & Company's "Leading Off" and article entitled, "Nurturing employees' mental health: A leader's guide" talks about, "Mental health is a key element of well-being in the workplace and an increasingly important area of focus for business leaders."

The links between anxiety and depression and burnout came to life before our eyes. The linkages are so noteworthy that mental health insurance coverage for many healthcare workers is a critical factor in making a decision to stay in a current job or more to a new one.



Jaime Caldwell

"About 3 in 4 Generation Z workers said they prioritize access to mental health resources when choosing an employer," says Becker's Hospital Review October 21, 2024. Moreover, potential employees are looking for other mental health benefits like yoga and meditation APP subscriptions.

Clearly we are still recovering from the effects of COVID. When talking about what we need to do to make work situations tolerable, most experts say that change has to come from the top. Management has to articulate "a vision and mission that inspires their employees".

Leaders will also have to figure out how to make their employees "feel supported, respected, and included". "Healthcare leaders have also noted emerging priorities as more Gen-Zers enter the workforce. It is important to consider how to accommodate work-life balance while maintaining values and service to patients".

Meeting the challenges of managing a multigenerational workforce will continue to vex healthcare leaders. Clearly baby-boomers continuing to retire in larger numbers will definitely change the healthcare working environment. Perhaps for the better.

Cover Story: Innovating for 2025: ImageFIRST Expands Leadership and Enhances Healthcare Linen Services

Continued from page 1

Fostering a Culture of Service Across Regions

One of the primary challenges for a company with a national presence like ImageFIRST is maintaining a strong and cohesive company culture across diverse regions. Acevedo's background in various roles within the company has provided him with firsthand experience in how to cultivate this culture in different markets. "In my new role, I've been focusing on enhancing our regions to continue bringing our Service Vision to life in a supportive and collaborative way," he explains.

ImageFIRST's Service Vision, "to create a positive moment with every interaction," serves as the foundation for the company's customer relationships. Acevedo is committed to ensuring that this vision remains central as the company grows. "As we continue to expand, I want to make sure that this vision drives every customer relationship and remains a focal point of our culture."

Innovation in Healthcare Linen Services for 2025

Looking ahead to 2025, ImageFIRST has several innovations in the works aimed at improving their service offerings and strengthening their role as a comprehensive partner to healthcare facilities. "We're not just selling a linen product or a laundry program," Acevedo shares. "We're working to be a complete partner by providing additional facility services. This has always been a part of ImageFIRST's model, but we're focused on making sure our customers can take full advantage of all our current and future solutions."

By expanding their service offerings, ImageFIRST aims to address the increasing demands of healthcare providers, particularly those focused on enhancing the patient experience. As more hospitals and clinics seek to improve their HCAHPS (Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems) scores, ImageFIRST is positioned to support these goals with high-quality products and services designed to elevate patient satisfaction.

Navigating the Unique Challenges of the Florida Market

Florida presents unique market dynamics, both in terms of opportunities and challenges. With a growing population and a booming healthcare industry, the state is an attractive but highly competitive market for ImageFIRST. "The strong competition here is something that stands out, along with the ever-increasing population," Acevedo says. "At ImageFIRST, we have the capacity to support more healthcare facilities as they enter the market, and we're focused on helping them build a strong brand and patient experience."

In Florida's diverse healthcare landscape, the needs of providers are continually evolving. One of the key trends Acevedo has observed is the growing emphasis on enhancing patient experiences, a priority that aligns closely with ImageFIRST's mission. "Our efforts are centered on helping facilities achieve superior HCAHPS scores," Acevedo explains. "We aim to be a vital partner in exceeding these standards and delivering exceptional patient experiences."

Sustainability as a Pillar of Growth

As ImageFIRST continues to grow, sustainability remains a key component of the company's strategy, particularly in environmentally conscious regions like Florida. ImageFIRST has long been committed to reducing its environmental footprint through a variety of initiatives, including the use of water reuse and recycling systems, energy-efficient equipment, and wastewater heat reclamation technology.

"Sustainability is something we take very seriously," Acevedo emphasizes. "For example, our wastewater heat reclamation systems utilize warm wastewater to heat incoming water, which reduces our natural gas usage. We're always looking for ways to remain on the leading edge of technology when it comes to environmental impact."

This commitment to sustainability not only helps ImageFIRST reduce its environmental footprint but also resonates with healthcare providers who are increasingly focused on implementing green initiatives within their own operations.

Driving Growth and Innovation Across Markets

As the healthcare industry continues to evolve, so too must ImageFIRST's sales strategies and market approach. For Acevedo, the key to success lies in building a strong, collaborative sales team that is well-equipped to deliver high-quality service consistently across all markets.

"Our main goal is always centered around helping our customers," Acevedo explains. "In Florida alone, we have three plants and five depots, which gives us a unique advantage. This network

allows us to provide uninterrupted, seamless service to healthcare facilities, even in emergencies. It also helps us stay connected with our customers and better understand their needs."

One of Acevedo's top priorities as Vice President of Sales is to ensure that ImageFIRST's regional teams are aligned and working collaboratively to achieve these goals. "By fostering collaboration between regions, we can deliver the consistent, high-quality service that defines ImageFIRST," he says. "Our network gives us the capacity to expand and serve more customers while maintaining our focus on service excellence."

Looking Ahead: Goals for 2025

As ImageFIRST continues its expansion, Acevedo has set clear goals for the company's sales team in 2025. "Our primary goal is to better serve our customers by ensuring we are providing the highest level of service," he states. This commitment to service, combined with the company's growing footprint in key markets like Florida, positions ImageFIRST for continued success.

With a strong emphasis on innovation, sustainability, and customer satisfaction, Acevedo is confident that ImageFIRST is poised to make a significant impact on the healthcare linen and laundry service industry in the coming year. "We're constantly looking for ways to improve, and 2025 will be a year where we push ourselves even further," he says. "By staying true to our core values and focusing on the needs of our customers, we will continue to drive growth and innovation across all the markets we serve."

For more information, visit imagefirst.com.

Cover Story: KIDZ Medical Executive Raises Flag On Declining Maternal Care in the U.S.

Continued from page 1

medical malpractice changes, natural disasters, and even a global pandemic.

Despite that, I remain concerned about a growing trend impacting hospitals across the country, and that's also impacting us here in Florida. This certainly didn't happen overnight, but we're witnessing a disturbing trend of closures of labor and delivery services at hospitals. These closures are creating maternity deserts where access to adequate OB-GYN care is simply unavailable. This issue is complex, but at its core, it identifies a weakness in our healthcare systems to prioritize maternal care.

Q: What do you attribute as the root cause of these closures?

The reality of the situation is complicated because it isn't simply a consequence of economic or operational shifts within hospitals. Healthcare operators are used to supporting "loss leader" services that feed other more profitable services. We do this because they meet a critical need, and it helps keep a complex healthcare ecosystem operational. But what we have here is a perfect storm.

First, nearly half of all births in this country are paid for by Medicaid, which we know is significantly less than the average commercial insurance reim-

bursement rate. And that percentage gets even higher when we move into rural areas. So, it's not difficult to see why most labor and delivery units stay underfunded and end up closing. To add insult to injury, these low reimbursement rates and underfunded programs are then driving talented doctors and nurses away. Students and residents see what's happening and are reluctant to specialize in obstetrics and gynecology, exacerbating an already difficult recruitment problem that will only worsen over time if something doesn't change.

If you don't have a solid labor and delivery program infrastructure in place, or specialized providers to provide care, you won't be able to sustain that program. But this isn't only a problem within hospital walls. It's become incredibly difficult for independent OB-GYN providers to practice out in the community. They need support, too.

In South Florida, we're seeing previously underserved areas—like in South Miami-Dade for example—experience a population boom because of the availability of more affordable housing. Young couples and families moved south, but we also saw OB-GYN providers retiring without new providers coming into the area to take care of those patients. This is why we opened the MOMZ OB-GYN practice in Homestead nearly two years ago. We're already so

busy that we've had to bring in more doctors. We're also looking to expand our office space to meet the demand.

And then there's the politics of it all, of course.

Q: Yes, you've spoken about some of the issues that are impacting this perfect storm, as you call it. And we want to touch on the political aspect as well, but what does this look like in Florida, specifically?

We know from a recent March of Dimes study that over 35% of counties across the U.S. are considered maternity care deserts; in Florida alone, 19.4% of counties fall into this category. Unfortunately, these numbers are particularly concerning for underserved areas. Hospitals like Hialeah, North Shore, and Lake Shore have already closed their labor and delivery units, and these closures disproportionately affect our most vulnerable populations.

Also, the political climate in Florida is a battleground over the very concept of having a baby. Debates about reproductive rights are ongoing, but what's missing from the conversation is how this indirectly contributes to the decline of labor and delivery services at hospitals. This isn't just a matter of politics or philosophy; it's about healthcare infrastruc-

ture—and nobody is addressing its impact on this important care.

What can be done to address, and eventually fix, the problem?

I know we can turn this around by implementing creative solutions. It can't be up to the hospitals alone. We have to start at the education level to encourage more medical students to pursue OB-GYN as a career—similar to how we addressed primary physician and nursing shortages in the past. We also have to work together alongside nonprofit partners, community and government entities and elected officials, and private healthcare organizations to tackle the issue. We need to work together to ensure that expectant moms in our communities receive adequate perinatal care, and over time, we'll see this very meaningful investment affect other future health outcomes in a positive way.

If we force women to travel farther to access care before and after giving birth, we will only continue to see increases in the already troubling health disparity statistics.

We can't ignore this. We need to build community collaborations and support legislation that prioritizes maternal health and ensures that all families have a safe and supportive space to welcome their children into the world.

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*3 x \$30,000 per revision surgery. **100 cases x \$300 per Ampushield® with 50% of cases billed to Medicare

Cleveland Clinic Martin Health Welcomes Gastroenterologist

Gastroenterologist George Khoudari, M.D., has joined the medical staff at Cleveland Clinic Martin Health and brings a multicultural perspective to his practice. Board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine, he received his medical degree from the University of Aleppo School of Medicine in Syria. He then completed a residency in internal medicine at Unity Hospital, an affiliate of the University of Rochester in New York, followed by a fellowship in gastroenterology at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Khoudari is proficient in both English and Arabic, which enhances his ability to serve a diverse patient population. His clinical interests are broad and include eosinophilic esophagitis, liver diseases, gastrointestinal bleeding, and advanced endoscopic procedures. Dr. Khoudari is committed to colorectal cancer screening and prevention, as well as the management of inflammatory bowel diseases and functional GI disorders such as GERD, diarrhea and constipation. His approach to patient care is comprehensive, compassionate, and tailored to the individual needs of each patient.



Dr. George Khoudari

Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital Adds General Surgeon

Laurel Blair, M.D., has joined the medical staff at Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital. A distinguished surgeon with specialized expertise in minimally invasive surgical techniques, she has a strong commitment to patient-centered care. Dr. Blair earned her medical degree at Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, PA, where she laid the foundation for her surgical career.

She further honed her skills during her internship and residency at Lankenau Medical Center's General Surgery Department in Wynnewood, PA. Following her residency, she pursued a fellowship in Minimally Invasive Surgery at Carolinas Medical Center in Charlotte, NC, where she developed advanced techniques in abdominal wall reconstruction and hernia repair.

Dr. Blair's clinical interests include the treatment of colon cancer, gallbladder disease, and port placement, making her a trusted provider in various surgical disciplines. She is dedicated to delivering the highest quality of care and is passionate about improving surgical outcomes for her patients.



Dr. Laurel Blair

Transplant Specialist Joins Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital

Kalyan Ram Bhamidimarri, MD, MPH, FACG, FAASLD, has joined the medical staff at Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital. Specializing in transplant hepatology, he is board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine.

Dr. Bhamidimarri received his medical education at Andhra Medical College in Andhra Pradesh, India. He completed his residency and internship in internal medicine at the Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center in New York, and a fellowship in hepatology/transplant at the prestigious Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York.



Dr. Kalyan Ram Bhamidimarri

Maternal-Fetal Medicine Specialist Joins Cleveland Clinic Tradition Hospital

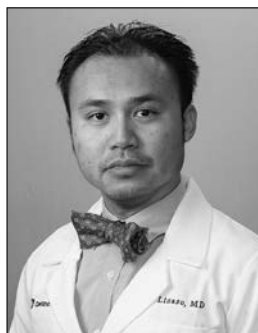
Ramada Smith, M.D., has joined the medical staff at Cleveland Clinic Tradition Hospital. A dedicated maternal-fetal medicine physician committed to providing exceptional care for high-risk pregnancies, she is board-certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Dr. Smith brings extensive expertise and compassion to her practice, ensuring the best outcomes for mothers and their children. Dr. Smith earned her medical degree from Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit, MI, where she laid the groundwork for her medical career. She completed her residency in obstetrics and gynecology at the Detroit Medical Center's Hutzel Hospital, and gained invaluable experience in managing diverse obstetrical cases. Following her residency, Dr. Smith completed a fellowship in maternal-fetal medicine at the Detroit Medical Center, further deepening her knowledge and skills in the field.



Dr. Ramada Smith

Radiologist Joins Cleveland Clinic Hospitals on the Treasure Coast

Radiation oncologist Mel Lizaso, M.D., has joined Cleveland Clinic as a dedicated radiation oncologist with a strong commitment to providing advanced cancer care. With a focus on innovative treatment techniques, he specializes in utilizing cutting-edge technology to deliver precise radiation therapy tailored to each patient's unique needs. Dr. Lizaso earned his medical degree from the University of Central Florida in Orlando, where he developed a comprehensive understanding of medical principles and patient care. He completed his residency in radiation oncology at the University of Cincinnati, gaining extensive experience in a variety of radiation treatment modalities.



Dr. Mel Lizaso

Introducing Cleveland Clinic's Hospital Care At Home Co-Director

Samantha Daniel, M.D., serves as Cleveland Clinic's co-director for Hospital Care At Home. After earning a medical degree from the Medical University of the Americas, Dr. Daniel completed her residency in Internal Medicine at Florida Atlantic University in 2017.

Dr. Daniel's work with Cleveland Clinic has been instrumental in expanding access to quality healthcare. Her efforts in the Hospital Care At Home program have been particularly impactful, allowing patients to receive high-level medical care outside the traditional hospital setting. This innovative model of care has not only improved patient outcomes, but also enhanced the overall healthcare experience for patients and their families. Her work in the program emphasizes the importance of accessibility and personalized treatment plans, ensuring that each patient receives the highest standard of care tailored to their unique needs.



Dr. Samantha Daniel



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Christine V. Pestana, MD, Joins Baptist Health as Breast Surgical Oncologist

Fellowship-trained breast surgical oncologist Christine V. Pestana, M.D., has joined the Eugene M. and Christine E. Lynn Cancer Institute, part of Baptist Health, at Boca Raton Regional Hospital. Prior to joining Lynn Cancer Institute, Dr. Pestana served as assistant professor of surgery at Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist/Wake Forest University School of Medicine. Dr. Pestana earned her medical degree at Temple University School of Medicine. She served as chief surgical resident at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center and completed a mastery of general surgery fellowship at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center. She also completed a breast surgical oncology fellowship at Carolina Medical Center. She is certified by the American Board of Surgery.



Dr. Christine V. Pestana

Neurologist Michelle Ferreira, DO, Joins Holy Cross Medical Group

Board-certified neurologist and movement disorder specialist Michelle Ferreira, D.O., has joined Holy Cross Medical Group.

A clinical professor of neurology at Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Fort Lauderdale since 2013, Dr. Ferreira previously owned Neurology Specialists of Florida and was a partner with Neurology Offices of South Florida. She is a past professor of neurology at Palmetto General Hospital and Larkin Community Hospital and served as a clinical professor of the facial pain clinic at the Nova Southeastern University College of Dentistry.

Dr. Ferreira earned three degrees at Nova Southeastern University—Bachelor of Science in Biology, Master of Public Health and Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine. She completed a movement disorder fellowship at Cleveland Clinic Florida in Weston, adult neurology and allopathic internal medicine residencies at Jackson Memorial Hospital/University of Miami and osteopathic transitional internship at Palmetto General Hospital/Nova Southeastern University.



Dr. Michelle Ferreira

Kathleen E. Minnick MD, Joins Palm Beach Health Network Physician Group

Board-certified breast surgeon Kathleen E. Minnick, M.D., joins the Palm Beach Health Network breast surgery team. She brings a quarter century of experience caring for women in Palm Beach County. She is a member of the medical staff at Good Samaritan Medical Center in West Palm Beach, and part of the Palm Beach Surgical Breast Care with offices located in West Palm Beach, Jupiter and Royal Palm Beach. Dr. Minnick, who has been practicing since 1999, earned her medical degree and completed her internship, fellowship and multiple residencies at Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine in Hershey, PA.



Kathleen E. Minnick

Ravindra Ganesh, MD, Joins Baptist Health Concierge Medicine

Ravindra Ganesh, MBBS, M.D., MPH, FACP, has joined Baptist Health Concierge Medicine. Dr. Ganesh specializes in providing preventive care and coordinating ongoing medical care for concierge medicine patients. Prior to joining Baptist Health, Dr. Ganesh held multiple clinical and leadership positions at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. He was an attending physician in the Division of General Internal Medicine, head of the Section of International Medicine, practice chair of Integrative Medicine and Health and medical director of the Long COVID Clinic. He also served as a preceptor and lecturer for medical residents and fellows. Dr. Ganesh earned his medical degree at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health in Madison, WI, after earning a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery degree at the University of the West Indies Faculty of Medical Sciences in Kingston, Jamaica. His clinical training includes an internal medicine residency at The Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, MD. He also earned a Master of Public Health degree at The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. He is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine and the American Board of Obesity Medicine.



Dr. Ravindra Ganesh

Family Medicine Physician Teresa Colón-Asumu, MD, MPH, Joins Holy Cross Medical Group

Family medicine physician Teresa Colón-Asumu, M.D., MPH has joined Holy Cross Medical Group.

Dr. Colón-Asumu recently completed her family medicine residency program at Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta, GA. There, she provided a full spectrum of care to patients of all ages from newborns to geriatric patients. She also gained experience with contraception management, skin biopsies, colposcopies, endometrial biopsies and joint injections. Passionate about women's health, during her residency, she co-chaired the wellness committee to help encourage people to live healthy lifestyles by organizing art therapy classes, wellness walks and fitness challenges.

The board-eligible family medicine physician was previously a medical assistant at Southeast Orthopedics in Jacksonville, health assessment coach at Health Designs in Tampa and Jacksonville, team coach and outcome evaluation researcher at Girls on the Run in Tampa, and student research coordinator and supervisor at Women's Health Project in Tampa. She also interned at Judeo Christian Clinic in Tampa, FL during her public health program. She also served as an emergency department scribe in Orlando and Zephyrhills, FL.



Dr. Teresa Colón-Asumu



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Baptist Health Foundation Installs Michael L. Katz as New Board Chair

Baptist Health Foundation announced that it has installed Michael Katz as chair of its Board of Directors for fiscal year 2025, which begins October 1, 2024, for a two-year term. He previously served as the Board's vice chair from 2022 to 2024. Katz succeeds Lani Kahn Drody, president and founder of Lowell International Realty in Miami, who has served as the Foundation's Board chair for the past two years. Michael Katz has been a longtime supporter of Baptist Health. In addition to serving as vice chair of the Baptist Health Foundation Board, he has been a member of Board's Miami Cancer Institute council since 2016, serving as its chair from 2020 to 2022; and Foundation Board Treasurer from 2019 to 2020. He will also serve as a member of the Baptist Health Planning Committee in the upcoming fiscal year.



Michael L. Katz

Delray Medical Center Names Jessica DeVore Administrative Director of Surgical Services

Delray Medical Center appoints Jessica DeVore, R.N., M.S.N., to the position of Administrative Director of Surgical Services. DeVore has over 20 years of nursing leadership experience across our region. Most recently, she served as the Director of Surgical Services for Palms West Hospital. In that role, she directly managed over 80 full-time equivalent employees while maintaining oversight of surgical services, including eight operating rooms, ASU, PACU, and the Sterile Processing Department. Prior to that role, she was the Operating Room Robotics Coordinator for Broward Health. DeVore received her bachelor's in nursing from Ohio University and her Masters of Science in Nursing from the University of Alabama.



Jessica DeVore

COO and CMO Named at Broward Health Medical Center

Broward Health Medical Center is pleased to announce the arrival of two new leaders. Michele Thoman, MBA, RN, has been named chief operating officer (COO), and Jose Martinez-Elejalde, M.D., FACC, FACP, has been named chief medical officer (CMO).



Michele Thoman



Dr. Jose Martinez-Elejalde

Thoman began her career in healthcare as a registered nurse and has two decades of experience in healthcare administration. Most recently she served as COO for Good Samaritan Medical Center in West Palm Beach. Her prior experience includes chief nursing officer (CNO), then COO at Palmetto General Hospital in Hialeah. Michele also held the positions of system CNO and COO at Naples Community Healthcare System in Naples. Thoman holds a Master of Business Administration in Executive Healthcare from Baldwin Wallace College and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Akron. A cardiologist by training, Dr. Martinez has more than 24 years of experience in the healthcare in South Florida. He most recently served as an occupational health physician at Baptist Health and previously held the position of CMO at HCA Healthcare. Dr. Martinez is an assistant professor of internal medicine and course director of cardiovascular and respiratory systems at Florida International University. Dr. Martinez earned his doctorate at Ponce School of Medicine in Puerto Rico and holds a Master of Business Administration in Healthcare from Florida International University, a Master of Arts in Theology Studies from St. Vincent De Paul Regional Seminary in Boynton Beach and a Master of Science in Bioethics from St. Thomas University in Miami. He completed a residency in internal medicine and fellowships in cardiology and interventional cardiology at University of Miami/Jackson Health System Jackson in Miami.

RECOGNIZING THE BEST OF THE BEST IN THE HEALTH CARE COMMUNITY



The Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce is now accepting nominations for the 2025 Health Care Heroes® Awards Program; deadline is December 15. The 26th Annual Health Care Heroes® Awards Luncheon will take place May 15, 2025.

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.

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

West Boca Medical Center Names Erica Walker as New Chief Operating Officer

Erica Walker has been named to the position of Chief Operating Officer (COO) of West Boca Medical Center.

Walker has held a variety of executive operational leadership positions throughout her career, all within an acute-care setting. Most recently, she served as the Director of Corporate Strategy for Baptist Health.

Prior to that she was the Chief Executive Officer of Northwest Medical Center where she grew and expanded emergency services, women's services with level III NICU care, robotic surgery, orthopedics, and cardiovascular services. She was also responsible for leading construction and expansion projects and helping to implement initiatives to help improve facility and clinical operations.

Walker holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Mary Washington University and has a Master of Health Administration from Virginia Commonwealth University, both located in Virginia.



Erica Walker

Palm Beach Health Network Names Lukas Iwanski as Its Group Assistant Chief Financial Officer

Palm Beach Health Network (PBHN) appoints Lukas Iwanski, MBA, to the position of Group Assistant Chief Financial Officer (GACFO). Iwanski has worked for PBHN in a variety of financial leadership roles since 2021, serving as the assistant controller for St. Mary's Medical Center and Palm Beach Children's Hospital, the controller for Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center and most recently, the controller for Good Samaritan Medical Center. Iwanski graduated from Florida Atlantic University with a bachelor's in international business and trade. He received his master's degree in finance from Nova Southeastern University.



Lukas Iwanski

Delray Medical Center Names Chief Operating Officer

Delray Medical Center promotes Aganette Parks, MHA, PMP, to the position of Chief Operating Officer (COO). She has been serving as the Interim COO since July 2024. In October 2021, Parks was named Associate Administrator of Delray Medical Center. Prior to that role, Parks was the Service Line Administrator for Surgical Services for the Palm Beach Health Network. Before joining the Palm Beach Health Network, Parks was with Tenet Healthcare's Desert Regional Medical Center in Palm Springs, CA, where she served in multiple roles such as Business Manager of surgical services with oversight of daily operations of the operating room, Service Line Manager for orthopedics & neurosciences and Administrative Fellow. Parks earned her Bachelors in Health Science and her Masters in Health Administration from the University of Florida.



Aganette Parks

Dr. Antonucci Named Chair of FHA Board of Trustees

The Florida Hospital Association (FHA) announces its 2024-2025 Board of Trustees. Dr. Larry Antonucci, president and CEO of Lee Health System, was chosen to serve as chair of the Board.

"Serving as FHA's Board Chair is both an honor and opportunity to continue working with my hospital colleagues, FHA leadership, and state and federal policymakers to strengthen our health care system for the benefit of all Floridians," said Dr. Antonucci. "FHA is the united voice for Florida hospitals and brings us together to collaborate, share ideas, and advocate as one to drive innovation, enhance patient care, and secure health care-friendly policies and investments."

Executive Officers:

- **Chair:** Dr. Larry Antonucci, M.D., President/CEO of Lee Health System
- **Chair-Elect/Vice Chair:** Randy Haffner, PhD., Group President and CEO of AdventHealth Florida
- **Treasurer:** Danielle Drummond, President and CEO of Lakeland Regional Health
- **Secretary:** Matthew Love, President and CEO of Nicklaus Children's Health System
- **Immediate Past Chair:** Gino Santorio, President/CEO, Mount Sinai Medical Center



Dr. Larry Antonucci

Holy Cross Medical Group Appoints Maggy Perez-Dickens, MBA, CMPE, as New President

Maggy Perez-Dickens, MBA, CMPE, has been named President of Holy Cross Medical Group and will also serve on the Holy Cross Health Senior Leadership Team. Most recently, Perez-Dickens served as Senior Administrative Officer at the University of Miami in the Department of Neurological Surgery and Department of Psychiatry & the Behavioral Sciences. Her previous leadership positions include Vice Chair of Administration in the Department of Neurological Surgery at University of Miami; Transplant Administrator at Miami Transplant Institute (MTI) at University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Hospital; and Administrator at DeWitt Daughtry Department of Surgery at The Center of Excellence for Laparoendoscopic and Minimally Invasive Surgery. Perez-Dickens earned a Master of Business Administration from the University of Miami, specializing in finance and legal implications, and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of Central Florida.



Maggy Perez-Dickens

Holy Cross Medical Group Names Teresa Deasy, RN, BSN, MS. as Vice President of Operations

Teresa Deasy, R.N., B.S.N., M.S., has been named Vice President of Operations for Holy Cross Medical Group. Prior to joining Holy Cross Medical Group, Deasy was most recently Associate Vice President of Product Line Services for Broward Health Medical Center, where she served in a variety of significant roles in her 23-year career there. She is also a former assistant nurse manager at Cleveland Clinic-Fort Lauderdale. Deasy earned a Master of Science in Leadership from Nova Southeastern University's H. Wayne Huizenga College of Business and Entrepreneurship in Davie, Florida. She received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from NSU and an Associate of Science in Nursing from Whipp's Cross Hospital School of Nursing in London, England.



Teresa Deasy



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

Congresswoman Lois Frankel and Palm Beach County Mayor Maria Sachs Join the Health Care District to Celebrate the Falls Prevention Program's First Anniversary

On October 16, the Health Care District of Palm Beach County celebrated the first anniversary of its falls prevention program, Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance®. Falls are the leading cause of traumatic injury among Palm Beach County residents, and Tai Ji Quan is proven to help improve balance and reduce the risk of falls. To combat this, last year, Congresswoman Frankel secured a \$1 million grant for this initiative to expand Tai Ji Quan classes across the county.

"Falls are the leading cause of traumatic injury among adults over 65 in Palm Beach County and across the country, costing the United States health care system over \$80 billion each year. These falls can be debilitating, heartbreaking, and financially burdensome," said Rep. Frankel. "But the good news is that they're preventable! That's why I'm so proud of the Health Care District's fall prevention program and excited to help expand their vital work across our county and the nation." Health Care District President and CEO Darcy J. Davis presented Congresswoman Lois Frankel with an award for championing the initiative countywide.



Darcy J. Davis (left) presented Congresswoman Lois Frankel with award

Miramar Park of Commerce Announces More Than 92,000 SF of New Leases and Expansions



Miramar Park

Miramar Park of Commerce, the largest locally owned and managed business Park in South Florida, has announced the expansion of tenants Memorial Healthcare, SIMTEC Silicone Parts, Sunshine Avionics and welcomed new tenant Kids SPOT Rehab, bolstering its position as a regional healthcare and aviation hub.

Memorial Healthcare System, a long-standing tenant and important community partner, has expanded by 26,546 sq. ft. in MPC 11A at 2989 North Commerce Parkway. Memorial now occupies more than 200,000 sq. ft. in the park for a variety of uses including administrative offices, training, pharmaceutical, IT and pathology.

In March 2024, Memorial Healthcare System renewed its lease for 73,567 sq. ft. of flex office space at 2900 Corporate Way and 19,390 sq. ft. at 2954-2990 Executive Way.

SIMTEC Silicone Parts, a leader in customized Liquid Silicone Rubber (LSR) and LSR 2-Shot injection molded parts, has expanded to 87,540 sq. ft. in the Park with the addition of 39,670 sq. ft. The international company, whose products are used by surgical, medical and healthcare companies among others, is located in MPC-27 at 9658-9698 Premier Parkway.

Since 2012, Sunshine Avionics, and its' affiliates, have been a tenant of the Miramar Park of Commerce. The company recently expanded in MPC-6 at 3261 Executive Way adding 14,617 sq. ft. Known for providing top-tier maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) services for advanced avionic components, Sunshine Avionics is part of the Park's aviation hub, occupying more than 38,000 sq. ft. of space in multiple buildings.

Kids SPOT Rehab has established a 12,052-sq.-ft. headquarters and administrative office in MPC 24-B at 3045 North Commerce Parkway. Kids SPOT provides comprehensive pediatric therapies, including speech therapy, in-home applied behavior analysis (ABA), occupational therapy and physical therapy for children.

Baptist Health Orthopedic Care Now Offers Minimally Invasive Treatment for Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Michael Cohn, M.D., an orthopedic hand surgeon with Baptist Health Orthopedic Care, is now offering the most advanced, minimally invasive surgery to treat carpal tunnel syndrome that uses live ultrasound visualization and a sophisticated single-use device. Dr. Cohn is the first hand surgeon in Boca Raton performing this innovative procedure.

The procedure known as "carpal tunnel release" is done in minutes using only local anesthesia and does not require stitches. The procedure has been shown to decrease patients' pain and reduce their recovery time significantly, compared with the standard open and endoscopic carpal tunnel release.

"Unlike traditional surgery for carpal tunnel syndrome, this minimally invasive approach involves a very small incision and less disruption to the surrounding tissue allowing patients to return to their daily activities much sooner", said Dr. Cohn. "With the latest tools and technology at our hospital, we are proud to offer this innovative procedure to our community and improve outcomes and recovery experiences."



Dr. Michael Cohn



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ACHE November Event

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TITLE	The State of Healthcare: Industry Leaders' Perspectives
DATE	Thursday, November 21, 2024
TIME	5:30 pm to 6:30 pm - Registration and Networking 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm - Panel Discussion
LOCATION	Cleveland Clinic – Weston Hospital 2950 Cleveland Clinic Blvd. • Weston, FL 33331
REGISTRATION INFORMATION	https://www.acheofsouthflorida.org/events.php

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

Bethesda Hospital East Unveils State-of-the-Art Cardiac Catheterization Lab



Bethesda Hospital East, part of Baptist Health, has opened a new Cardiac Catheterization Lab in Boynton Beach, FL, expanding its comprehensive cardiac services to allow our interventional, electrophysiologists and structural heart cardiologists to provide the most advanced cardiac procedures to our community.

The new Cath Lab is equipped with the cutting-edge Philips Azurion 7 system, one of the most advanced technologies available for cardiac procedures. The 580-square-foot Class II Imaging suite, supported by a 215-square-foot control room and a 125-square-foot equipment room, positions Bethesda Hospital East at the forefront of cardiac care. It's designed not only to serve patients but also to attract top interventional cardiologists, further enhancing the quality of care available in the region.

Celebrating Strength and Resilience: World Gynecologic Oncology Day Patient Reunion at Jupiter Medical Center

Jupiter Medical Center recently observed World Gynecologic Oncology Day with a heartfelt patient reunion at the Anderson Family Cancer Institute. This special event brought together patients and their family members with their oncology care team to celebrate life, share stories, and reinforce the importance of early detection and listening to your body.

Among the several patients who shared their stories was Melanie Van Trump, who spoke about her emotional journey of being diagnosed with ovarian cancer less than a year after her mother had passed away from stage 4 ovarian cancer.

"This journey has been extremely tough, but when you have a strong foundation, anything is possible and the medical team (at Jupiter Medical Center) is exactly that," said Van Trump. "If I could give any advice to help anyone ... don't wait. If you feel anything different from cramping to bloating. I know I was very lucky that my symptoms started screaming at me."

"There are more and more women being diagnosed with Gynecological cancers, and

many women still are not aware of the signs and symptoms of these cancers," said Donna Pinelli, M.D., Medical Director of Gynecologic Oncology. "Advancements in medical research and treatment options are continually improving. With greater awareness and proactive healthcare, we can make strides in reducing the impact of gynecological cancers."

Observances like World Gynecologic Oncology Day reiterate the importance of routine screenings and listening to our bodies' signs and symptoms. They serve as vital reminders that early detection can significantly improve outcomes and save lives by spreading awareness and encouraging open conversations about gynecologic health.



(l-r) Melanie Van Trump, Nancy Bates, Deborah Newman, Dr. Donna Pinelli, Kathy Wright

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Call Charles at (954) 605-4785 or email charles@southfloridahospitalnews.com

ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY

TGH First in Tampa Region Offering Same-Day Spinal Surgery

Tampa General Hospital (TGH) is the first health system in the Tampa region to treat a range of spine diseases and conditions via minimally invasive endoscopic spine surgery. Patients at the academic health system's TGH Neuroscience Institute experience same-day discharge, quicker recovery, minimal downtime and less pain.

The procedure involves the surgeon inserting the endoscope through a tiny incision about the size of a pencil tip to access an affected area. The device is then guided to the spine to capture video that's projected onto a monitor. The surgeon can also insert miniature tools through the endoscope to help perform procedures to treat bone spurs, chronic pain, degenerative disc disease, facet joint syndrome, herniated discs, sciatic nerve compression and spinal stenosis.

According to Dr. Patrick Kim, an endoscopic spine surgeon at Tampa General, and an assistant professor in the Department of Neurosurgery and Brain Repair at the USF Health Morsani College of Medicine at the University of South Florida, there are multiple benefits to this technique, including a nearly zero percent chance of wound infection. "The end result is smaller incisions, less tissue disruption and quicker patient recovery time after surgery," he said.

Dr. Kim is the first fellowship-trained endoscopic surgeon in the Tampa region. He received his medical degree from LSU New Orleans and completed his residency at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Subsequently, he pursued a fellowship in endoscopic spine surgery at the University of Washington Harborview Medical Center.

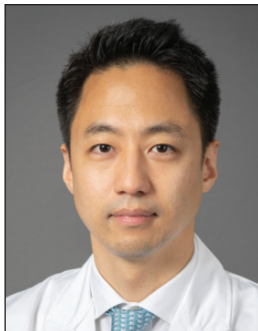
Tampa General's Spine Neurosurgery Program leverages a multidisciplinary team of physicians who specialize in the treatment and management of degenerative cervical and lumbar conditions and complex spinal deformities.

TGH Neuroscience Institute surgeons perform more minimally invasive spine surgeries than any other hospital in the region, including endoscopic laser spine surgeries, microdiscectomies, laminectomies, foraminotomies, and lumbar fusions.

Tampa General is a U.S. News & World Report 2024-2025 high performing hospital for Neurology & Neurosurgery, meaning the academic health system is ranked among the top 10% of hospitals in the nation. Additionally, the TGH Neuroscience Institute is one of the top neurology and spine programs in the U.S., according to Becker's Hospital Review's 2023 list of "Hospitals and Health Systems with Spine and Neuroscience Programs to Know."

Since 2020, Tampa General has been creating a framework of state-of-the-art services for patients in Palm Beach and Martin counties with the expertise and innovation of a preeminent academic health system. Patients treated by Tampa General East Coast physicians enjoy several benefits, including access to minimally invasive and complex surgeries that utilize state-of-the-art technologies.

For more information about the minimally invasive endoscopic spine surgery offered at Tampa General, visit TGH.org/MinimallyInvasiveSpineSurgery.



Dr. Patrick Kim

Delray Medical Center Successfully Implants New Dissolvable Stent for People with Chronic Limb Threatening Ischemia Below-the-Knee



Delray Medical Center (DMC) successfully implanted the Esprit™ BTK Everolimus Eluting Resorbable Scaffold System (Esprit™ BTK System), a first-of-its-kind dissolvable stent for people with chronic limb threatening ischemia (CLTI) below-the-knee (BTK). DMC is the first hospital in Palm Beach County to utilize the Esprit in surgery. The procedure was completed by vascular surgeon Dr. Joseph Ricotta, National Medical Director of Vascular Surgery and Endovascular Therapy for Tenet Healthcare and Professor of Surgery and Program Director of the vascular surgery fellowship at Florida Atlanta University School of Medicine.

Approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in April 2024, the Esprit BTK System is designed to keep arteries open and deliver a drug called everolimus to support vessel healing prior to dissolving. The Esprit BTK System is comprised of materials similar to dissolving sutures. Once the blockage is open, the device is implanted through a catheter based minimally invasive procedure. The scaffold helps heal the vessel and provides support until it is strong enough to remain open on its own.

"The FDA's approval of Esprit BTK System is a step forward in below-the-knee therapy. This new treatment option supports healing while reducing the risk of long-term complications," said Dr. Ricotta. "We're excited to be able to offer our patients the latest technological advancements to treat chronic limb-threatening ischemia below-the-knee such as Abbott's new bioresorbable stent."

PROFILES IN TECHNOLOGY

BROWARD HEALTH

Daisy Senior

Director of IT Revenue Cycle

Broward Health's director of information technology (IT) revenue cycle, Daisy Senior, leads a team to create specific system build for Epic implementation and works collaboratively with leadership to ensure coordination at the highest level.

Senior, who has always been interested in technology and problem-solving, has worked at Broward Health's IT department for over 18 years. She enjoys the energetic nature of the IT field and the opportunity to use technology to improve systems and processes in healthcare.

"Working in healthcare allows me to apply my IT skills in a way that directly benefits patient care and operational efficiency, which I find incredibly fulfilling," said Senior. "Leading initiatives that enhance revenue cycle management and improve our patients' billing experience is incredibly rewarding."

Senior has a bachelor's degree in applied science for supervision/management from Palm Beach State College in Lake Worth.



Eric Shorr

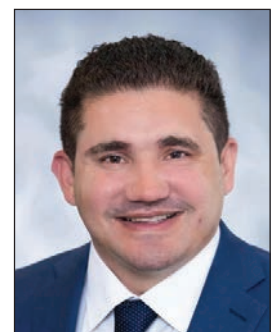
Director of Technical Services – End User Support

As a director of technical services and end-user support, Eric Shorr has played an integral role in overseeing Broward Health's transition to the Epic Electronic Medical Records system. His responsibilities include managing technical infrastructure projects that involve hardware deployment and end-user support.

As a child, Eric's passion for technology was sparked by watching his brother build computers. He was drawn to the healthcare industry for the opportunity to make a meaningful impact within his community.

"I've always been passionate about problem-solving, and healthcare offers a unique opportunity to apply those skills in a way that directly benefits my community," said Eric. "The ability to support healthcare professionals in providing quality care through reliable and efficient IT systems is incredibly rewarding."

Before joining Broward Health four years ago, Eric worked at Tenet Health. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Central Florida.



ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY

Holy Cross Health Announces \$6.5 Million Gift from Wanda and Jim Moran, Jr.

In one of the single largest gifts in Holy Cross Health's 69-year history, philanthropists Wanda and Jim Moran, Jr. and the Wanda & Jim Moran Foundation have donated \$6.5 million to support the hospital's crucial needs.

Their transformational gift will fund the purchase of a dedicated CT scanner that enhances the diagnostic capabilities in the Emergency Department (ED) as well as conversion of an existing X-ray room into a dedicated CT room in the ED. Their gift will also support renovations and capital improvements in the hospital, including the acquisition of new medical equipment. Holy Cross Health will proudly name the building where the ED is located as the Wanda and Jim Moran, Jr. Emergency Department.

"Our family has a long-standing relationship with Holy Cross Health," said Jim Moran, Jr., President and Founder of the Wanda & Jim Moran Foundation. "We have always supported the Holy Cross mission and believe deeply in their commitment to providing exceptional care to the community. By contributing to the new CT scanner for the emergency department, we hope to ensure that patients receive the most advanced diagnostic technology when they need it most. It is our privilege to be part of this transformational project that will make a lasting impact on the health and well-being of so many."

The state-of-the-art Philips Spectral CT 7500 will be operational in the Holy Cross ED in late 2025/early 2026, significantly elevating the hospital's diagnostic capabilities. This CT scanner enables practitioners to provide faster, more accurate assessments and interventions for patients during their most vulnerable moments. The machine, which takes only two seconds to scan the chest, abdomen and pelvis, has a large bore and height-adjustable table to provide comfort for patients, while providing high-quality, low dose and low contrast images for physicians to review.



Philips Spectral CT 7500 Photo credit: Philips

West Palm Beach VA Sets the National Record: Dental Service to Offer First and Only FDA Approved Robotic Surgery

The West Palm Beach VA Healthcare System (WPBVAHCS) is proud to announce the only VA nationwide with the integration of the state-of-the-art Yomi robotic system, enhancing the precision and efficiency of dental surgery for Veterans. Transforming the way we provide care, the Yomi robot allows dental professionals to perform minimally invasive procedures with improved accuracy, offering a higher standard of care for Veteran patients.



This achievement is another milestone in the multi-year journey to distinguish the WPBVAHCS as a leader in cutting-edge healthcare with use of robotic technology to achieve faster recovery times, reduced discomfort, and improved long-term outcomes.

"We are truly dedicated to world-class healthcare, as the only VA to offer this enhanced dental service, put simply- we are just getting started," said Chief of Staff Dr. Ronald Williams. "Access is at the center of what we do, and innovation allows a standard of access for our Veterans they can't find anywhere else, but here with us."

The Yomi system is now operational and available to eligible patients. This addition underscores the VA's dedication to offering groundbreaking, high-quality care to America's heroes.

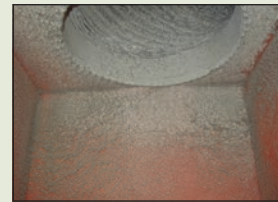
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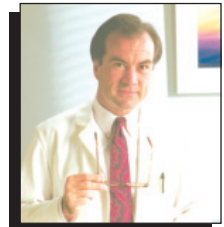


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Admissions to Kindred Hospitals may be recommended by physicians, acute-care hospitals, rehabilitation hospitals, managed care providers, case management companies or by the patient's family. In all cases family tours are encouraged.



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Florida Atlantic University is home to the 15-month Executive Master of Health Administration (EMHA) program designed for working professionals looking to enhance their career. The program offers the convenience to complete the master's degree in a structured 15-month cohort program offered on Monday and Wednesday evenings. The EMHA program will expand student's qualifications for challenging leadership positions in various healthcare sectors. Students are given the tools to help foster change in a dynamic, ever-changing environment. Call (561) 297-6000 or visit www.business.fau.edu/emha.

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Students at the Medical Campus learn as they build their experience in state-of-the-art facilities. Students practice their skills on human patient simulators - manikins capable of mimicking more than 200 illnesses and conditions. The Campus offers a variety of disciplines in nursing and allied health. There are more than 20 options, including bachelor's degree programs and training certificates that can put you on the fast track to an exciting career in healthcare. For more information, contact 305-237-4141 or visit <http://www.mdc.edu/medical/academic-departments> for more information.

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South University is a nonprofit institution offering educational opportunities for intellectual, social and professional development. With a 120-year story, our community is one where you can belong, believe and become. Providing excellent student services since 1981, the beautiful West Palm Beach Campus, with its landmark Clock Tower, is ideally located in the Palm Beaches of Florida. Regardless of pursuing an associate degree, baccalaureate, masters, or doctorate, our campus offers something for all. South University - West Palm Beach (561) 273-6500 • Toll-free 1-866-242-1840 www.southuniversity.edu/westpalmbeach

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MARITAL & FAMILY LAW ATTORNEY NEAVE FAMILY LAW, P.A.

Neave Family Law, P.A., provides legal services in the area of marital and family law. When family law matters must be decided by the legal system, the process can be complicated by heated emotions and financial turmoil. It is the goal of Neave Family Law, P.A., to guide you through the legal process and remove as much financial stress as possible. For a consultation, please call (954) 981-2200 or visit www.divorcelawyerfortlauderdale.com.

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BoardroomPR is a full-service PR and integrated marketing agency, leveraging the skills of our staff of former journalists, PR and marketing pros and multimedia specialists to provide visibility across numerous platforms to our healthcare clients. We combine PR with digital and branding campaigns to build brand and business. For more information, contact Don Silver at donsil@boardroompr.com.

MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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

PRIMARY MEDICAL CARE

CANO HEALTH - PRIMARY CARE

Cano Health is a high-touch, technology-powered healthcare company delivering personalized, value-based primary care to approximately 310,000 members. Founded in 2009, with its headquarters in Miami, Florida, Cano Health is transforming healthcare by delivering primary care that measurably improves the health, wellness, and quality of life of its patients and the communities it serves through its primary care medical centers and supporting affiliated providers. For more information, contact: (786) 206-3322 ext. 7559 or mediarelations@canohealth.com

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Join us in celebrating Charles Felix, publisher of South Florida Hospital News & Healthcare Report, who has shaped the healthcare industry for 20 years.

A Certified Public Accountant (CPA) with a diverse background in real estate, sports management, and franchise development, Felix is also a dedicated community leader, serving on boards like ACHE of South Florida and the Rotary Club of Fort Lauderdale.

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