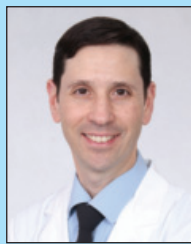




PROFILES IN CARDIOLOGY

See pages 25-29



Mount Sinai Medical
Center is Integrating
AI to Enhance Patient
Experience and
Retain Physicians
page 32

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February 2025

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Education



Dr. Joy Longo

Competency- Based Education: Transforming Nursing for Better Patient Outcomes

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

In the ever-evolving healthcare landscape, nursing education plays a pivotal role in preparing professionals to meet the complex demands of patient care. Dr. Joy Longo, Associate Dean of Academic Programs at Florida Atlantic University's Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing, highlights how competency-based education (CBE) is shaping the future of nursing.

What is Competency-Based Education?

"Competency-based education is student-focused," Dr. Longo explains. "It requires students to demonstrate knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors around specific competencies."

Melissa Durbin, MSN, RN, NEA, Vice President/Chief Nursing Officer Administration Boca Raton Regional Hospital (BRRH) and a member of the Advisory Board of the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing, stressed the importance and value of competency-based education to prepare students for the workforce.

"At BRRH, competency-based education is mandatory for all levels of nurses,

Continued on page 13

Cardiology

Reversing Heart Failure with BarostimTM Technology: "This Implant Has Saved My Life"

BY SUE MACDONALD

Dr. Vivek Patel, a cardiothoracic surgeon at Jupiter Medical, has a description for a new high-tech, implantable cardiac device designed specifically for patients with heart failure: "a life changer."

Jupiter resident Gerald Hermann, 74, a lawyer for more than 40 years and an extreme body builder, agrees wholeheartedly.

"It's impossible to explain to someone who hasn't had congestive heart failure what it's like," says Hermann, an active attorney who has lived with heart disease for more than 25 years. "It's not just the shortness of breath or lack of energy. It's generally feeling awful and having no quality of life. But this implant has changed my life."

They're talking about BarostimTM technology, a new cardiac device that Dr. Patel implanted in Hermann in early November.

An alternative to medications

Typically, patients with heart failure are treated with various medications designed to

Continued on page 18



Dr. Vivek Patel

Hospice

Mourning a Hospice Advocate: VITAS[®] Healthcare Honors the Carter Legacy

VITAS Healthcare joins the Carter family and all Americans in mourning the death of former President Jimmy Carter, 39th president of the United States. As a champion for healthcare and humanitarian causes, President Carter leaves a legacy of compassion, integrity and service that will encourage future generations.

The Carter family's decision to publicly announce their election for hospice care raised awareness about its benefits and the importance of accessing end-of-life care early in a serious illness. In 202 alone, more than 1.7 million Medicare beneficiaries nationwide chose hospice for compassionate, dignified care, according to MedPAC.

"President Carter's journey with hospice over the last 22 months has been an inspiration to American households," said Nick Westfall, VITAS chairman and chief executive officer. "His family's transparency has sparked dialogue across the country about what hospice is and what it can be, encouraging more families to discuss their care preferences openly and seek earlier referrals to hospice when appropriate."



President Jimmy Carter

Continued on page 12

Cardiology



Dr. Abdulwahab Aldousany

KIDZ Medical's Pediatric Cardiology Expertise

BY VANESSA ORR

While most people associate heart conditions with older adults, the fact is, in the United States, about 40,000 babies are born with heart defects each year, which is about 1 percent of births—or one in 100 children. Other children develop heart issues as they get older that require specialized care.

In Florida, many of these patients are treated by KIDZ Medical Services—a pediatric and women's health specialty group spanning across five Florida counties—whose pediatric cardiology specialists see a myriad of young heart patients each week, ranging in age from newborns to teens.

"We are passionate about what we do," said KIDZ Medical's Abdulwahab Aldousany, M.D., a leading pediatric cardiologist in South Florida and one of the four KIDZ cardiology experts who treat young patients from Miami to Naples, Boca Raton to West Palm Beach, and Port St. Lucie. "We see children with chest pain, fainting episodes, irregular heart rates, palpitations, or those who may have heart disease as a result of a genetic condition like Down Syndrome."

KIDZ Medical's pediatric cardiologists also collaborate closely with pediatric heart surgery programs at local chil-

Continued on page 21

Partners in Elevating Care

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Our physicians also hold positions of leadership at local health systems and academic institutions. Their innovative approaches have helped establish some of Florida's leading healthcare services and high performing institutes, while training the next generation of providers.

Together with our hospital partners, we change outcomes for the better.



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Publisher's Note

PART ONE

Carole's Back Surgery: An Adventure Begins

Our journey started in early January when Carol underwent surgery to her back. Initially, we anticipated a swift recovery, with her returning home within two to three weeks. However, after three weeks in the acute care hospital, we found ourselves extending our stay to a rehab hospital.

The time spent in the acute care hospital was an unforgettable experience. I spent most of my nights, if not all, sleeping next to Carol in a chair or a couch, providing her with constant companionship during her recovery.

The most exciting part of our journey was the transfer from the acute care hospital to Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital. We made this transfer through a medical nonemergency transport service, which proved to be the most comfortable car ride Carol and I had endured in the past three weeks. In fact, when she was leaving, I couldn't help but ask them if they would activate the lights and sirens, and they playfully laughed in response.

Upon arriving at Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital, we were greeted by a wonderful facility that provided the perfect environment for Carol's rehabilitation. We are hopeful that she will regain her strength and return to her normal self within a short period. We are incredibly grateful for the exceptional care and professionalism displayed by the entire staff, including the doctors, nurses, and rehab specialists.

As of now, we remain at Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital, but we are optimistic that Carol will be discharged and able to return home within the next few weeks. In our upcoming issue next month, we will provide a more detailed account of our experiences from the very beginning until the time we finally arrived home.

We understand that things may not be as straightforward as they once were in the newspaper, but we hope that you will still enjoy this edition.

-Charles Felix, Owner and Publisher



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Summit Director: Guenther Koehne, M.D., Ph.D.



This two-day symposium is designed to provide an overview and opportunity to learn about the most recent advances in the treatment of acute myeloid leukemia, acute lymphoid leukemia, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease, allogeneic stem cell transplants and CAR T-cell therapies. Updates on evolving immunologically and molecular-based system therapies will be profiled and discussed.

Speakers

Juliet Barker, MBBS (Hons), FRACP
Weill Cornell Medicine/
New York-Presbyterian Hospital

Catherine Bollard, M.D.
Children's National Hospital

Adam Cohen, M.D.
University of Pennsylvania

Corey Cutler, M.D.
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

Patricio Duarte, M.D.
University of Buenos Aires

Aleksandra Filipovic, M.D., Ph.D.
Imperial College of London

Guenther Koehne, M.D., Ph.D.
Miami Cancer Institute

Leo Luznik, M.D.
Baylor College of Medicine

Matthew Matasar, M.D.
Rutgers Cancer Institute

Marcelo Pasquini, M.D.
Medical College of Wisconsin

Raajit Rampal, M.D.
Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

Paul Richardson, M.D.
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

Michel Sadelain, M.D., Ph.D.
Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

Craig Sauter, M.D.
Cleveland Clinic

Robert Soiffer, M.D.
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

Eytan Stein, M.D.
Memorial Sloan Kettering
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Richard Stone, M.D.
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FREE MED MAL EXPERT REVIEW



HOW HEALTHY IS YOUR MED MAL POLICY?

It's no longer just a matter of signs hinting at a hardening market. Indisputable evidence is now at the forefront. Malpractice rates are going up across the board. Weaker malpractice carriers are being placed into receivership or sold. Juries in Florida are making shockingly high awards. And this is only the beginning.

ISN'T IT TIME YOUR MED MAL POLICY GOT A CHECKUP?

Risk Strategies will perform a no-obligation comprehensive review of your current malpractice coverage. Few doctors and administrators have an in-depth knowledge of their coverage or insurer and may not be asking all the right questions. For instance, do you know the following about your coverage:

- Are the policy exclusions outlined and clearly defined?
- Do you have full or just limited rights to consent to any lawsuit settlement?
- Is defense coverage offered outside or inside the limits of liability?
- What are the "tail" provisions upon termination of the policy?
- How is your corporation, professional association or other entity covered?

These are just a few of the questions you should be asking in this volatile market. It's not too late for a no-obligation medical malpractice insurance review, just contact Risk Strategies at **800.966.2120** or matt@dannagracey.com.

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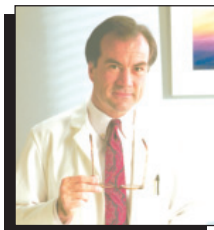


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Admissions to Kindred Hospitals may be recommended by physicians, acute-care hospitals, rehabilitation hospitals, managed care providers, case management companies or by the patient's family. In all cases family tours are encouraged.



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Let's Connect: ACHE of South Florida Spotlight

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ACHE of South Florida Member Spotlight: Rocio Diaz

BY LOIS THOMSON

After joining ACHE (American College of Healthcare Executives) three years ago, Rocio Diaz is now on the board as a member at large, and she couldn't be happier. "I don't (work on) a specific committee, which makes it great for me because I'm able to learn from and contribute to the different committees and initiatives."



Rocio Diaz

The healthcare landscape has become increasingly complex, making collaboration among all stakeholders – clinicians, administrators, healthcare systems and practices, health plans, advocacy, and community-based organizations – more essential than ever. As the saying goes, "It takes a village" to tackle challenges like improving outcomes, advancing health equity, and enhancing access and affordability.

Women's health is another passion for Diaz and is something she'd like to focus on this year, saying that women account for half of humanity, yet women's health has not been historically prioritized. "Women frequently serve as caregivers and primary healthcare decision-makers for their families, often putting others' needs before their own. I'm really passionate about how can we together address the gaps in care and advance women-centered healthcare."

In her everyday position, Diaz works as Director of the Florida and Puerto Rico Healthcare market for Genentech, a biotechnology company, and has been with them for 18 years. She said when she began her career, "healthcare was not on my list"; she started in business consulting in the consumer goods industry, and was on her way to getting her MBA when life took a turn: it was her god-mother (and paternal aunt), who introduced her to healthcare.

"She had cancer and was actually on a clinical trial treatment led by Genentech. I could see how the treatment, the care she was getting from her doctor and her health system, allowed her to visit family in Peru and celebrate special holidays with our family in California. She made

me decide to focus on healthcare."

Now, Diaz is responsible for developing local commercial strategies for the Florida and Puerto Rico markets, leading a team that executes those strategies. In addition, she manages the business-to-business relationships with executives from regional health plans, academic centers, health systems, and community organizations, with the

purpose of identifying solutions where all need to collaborate. "That's what makes me so passionate about ACHE, because it has a great mix of all the different stakeholders."

At Genentech, Diaz said the work is focused on local health care markets to align with the way health care is delivered today, and at ACHE of South Florida, she learned valuable insight into the real challenges our local community face.

Another reason for her enthusiasm for the organization comes from the fact that she values the importance of leaning on and helping others. "I moved to this country from Peru more than 23 years ago, and community has always been a core value for me. Since my family is far away, I consider those in my community my extended family. I deeply value being part of a group of people who are passionate about helping each other. That sense of connection and inclusion is exactly what I found in ACHE."

Diaz pointed out that when she first learned about ACHE, her first thought was that it was just for healthcare executives who work at health systems. "After attending various local ACHE events I realized it benefits all stakeholders in our healthcare ecosystem." She wants to encourage those who are passionate about healthcare to get involved with ACHE.

She also expressed how much energy she derives from working with those who are directly or indirectly impacting patients' care. "I love that so much, and being part of ACHE has allowed me to work closely with leaders committed to grow professionally and work together to serve the South Florida community."

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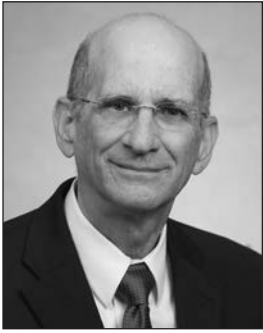
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Source: Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)

Health Insurance Through the Affordable Care Act Market Place, a Very Uncertain Future



BY RICHARD KLASS

Provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA)¹, Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the American Rescue Plan is immensely important to many. These legislative initiatives offer affordable and comprehensive health insurance coverage to over 21 million people nationally.

Sadly, the political climate does not favor consumers seeking coverage through the ACA Health Insurance Market Place ("Market Place"). Changes are forthcoming. The extent of these changes is unknown, but the likely outcome is a reduction in patient protections and an increase in premiums.

Little political effort is necessary to weaken the ACA program. Consider, the "enhanced subsidies that reduce premium costs — and contributed to the nation's lowest uninsured rate on record — are set to expire at the end of next year without congressional action."² An increase in premiums will certainly reduce the number of enrollees, significantly if costs potentially double for consumers.

Consumers are not the only group adversely impacted by the anticipated retooling of the ACA. Safety net hospitals will care for more uninsured/underinsured patients reducing their already thin profit margins, and local tax authorities will face shifting tax dollars to population healthcare needs.

Enrollment

In Florida, open enrollment ended January 15, 2025. Was this the last opportunity to take full advantage of cost saving and benefit protection opportunities through the Market Place? Probably yes. Based on 2024 enrollment figures, over 4 million people will likely enroll state-wide in a Market Place plan.

In the south Florida tri-county area, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) data shows in this past year:

- A half million people or over a quarter of the Broward County population got Market Place coverage.
- Almost a million people or 35% of the Miami-Dade County population depend on the Market Place for coverage.
- Almost 300,000 people in Palm Beach County, or 18% of the total population got coverage through the Market Place.

Market Place Enrollees

524,516
Broward



949,577
Miami-Dade



284,076
Palm Beach



Dependence on Subsidies

Over 96% of people in Florida and South Florida enrolled in a Market Place plan qualify for an advanced premium tax credit (APTC) to make their healthcare coverage affordable. The APTC is income based and assumes the maximum household outlay shouldn't exceed 8.5% of income for health insurance premiums.

Market Place Premiums and APTC, 2024

Market Place Statistic	County			Florida
	Broward	Miami-Dade	Palm Beach	
Average premium	\$584	\$618	\$625	\$693
Average APTC among Consumers Receiving APTC	\$543	\$582	\$568	\$628
Average Premium after APTC among Consumers Receiving APTC	\$41	\$36	\$57	\$64

Market Place enrollees have four plan choices with different cost sharing requirements. (See following table.) Selecting a silver plan qualifies enrollees for out-of-pocket expense relief³. A silver plan is the most popular choice among enrollees.

ACA Metal and Cost Sharing Levels

Responsibility	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Platinum
Insurance Co.	60%	70%	80%	90%
Enrollee*	40%	30%	20%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

*After enrollee meets the plan deductible.

Selection of ACA Metal Cost Sharing Levels by Florida and South Florida Enrollees#

County	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Total
Broward	26%	66%	8%	100%
Miami-Dade	26%	72%	2%	100%
Palm Beach	31%	65%	4%	100%
Florida	31%	64%	5%	100%

#The premium plan is omitted because few people choose this option.

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

¹ Enacted 3/23/2010

² S. Armour, S. Whitehead, J. Rovner (11/21/24) NPR, Here's how Trump and the GOP may try to weaken Obamacare.

³ Cost-sharing reduction [CSR] benefit.



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Navigating the New HIPAA Security Amendments: Essential Strategies for Healthcare Organizations

As cybersecurity threats continue to rise, the healthcare industry is at a critical juncture with the proposed amendments to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Security Rule. With over 167 million individuals affected by healthcare breaches in 2023 alone, adapting to these proposed changes is crucial for safeguarding patient data and maintaining organizational integrity. These proposed changes, currently under a 60-day response period, could take effect in 2025, aiming to bolster the protection of electronic protected health information (ePHI). This blog post explores the implications of these amendments and offers actionable insights for healthcare organizations to navigate this new regulatory environment.

Understanding the Proposed Changes

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has unveiled a comprehensive overhaul of the HIPAA Security Rule, marking the most significant update since 2013. Key changes include making all implementation specifications mandatory, requiring comprehensive documentation of Security Rule policies and procedures, and introducing annual updates to technology asset inventories and network maps. The amendments also enhance requirements for multifactor authentication (MFA), encryption, and risk analysis to address the 102% increase in healthcare breaches observed between 2018 and 2023, which affected over 167 million individuals in 2023 alone.



BY ALFREDO CEPERO

Key Drivers for Change

1. Rising Cyber Threats: The healthcare sector frequently faces significant cyberattacks, particularly ransomware. The proposed amendments aim to shift the focus from mere compliance to robust security practices, ensuring that organizations are better equipped to protect patient data.

2. Regulatory Evolution: The elimination of the "addressable" versus "required" distinction in the Security Rule mandates uniform compliance across all healthcare entities, regardless of size or resources. This change underscores the need for a standardized approach to cybersecurity.

3. Cost Implications: Implementing these new security measures is estimated to cost approximately \$9 billion in the first year, with subsequent annual costs of \$6 billion, according to recent projections from industry analyses. While these figures may seem daunting, the cost of inaction poses a greater risk to patient safety and organizational integrity.

Actionable Insights for Healthcare Organizations

1. Conduct Comprehensive Risk Assessments

Healthcare organizations should regularly update technology asset inventories and network maps, as appropriate, to identify potential vulnerabilities. Implementing MFA and encryption is crucial to safeguard ePHI both at rest and in transit.

2. Develop Incident Response Plans

Establishing documented procedures for incident response and data recovery is vital. These plans should be tested and updated regularly to maintain readiness

against cyber threats.

3. Leverage External Expertise

Consider engaging a virtual Chief Information Security Officer (vCISO) to navigate the complexities of cybersecurity. This approach provides strategic guidance and support without the overhead of a full-time hire.

4. Document All Policies and Plans

Organizations must document all security policies, procedures, and plans, including comprehensive testing strategies, to ensure compliance and audit readiness. Proper documentation ensures compliance and audit readiness.

5. Develop and Document an Incident Response Plan

Developing an incident response plan capable of restoring systems and data within 72 hours is critical. This includes documenting detailed procedures for swift and effective restoration.

6. Maintain an Updated Asset Inventory

Maintaining an up-to-date inventory of technology assets and network maps is essential for monitoring PHI movement and ensuring compliance.

7. Conduct Comprehensive Risk Analyses

Organizations must conduct detailed security risk analyses, identifying threats, assessing vulnerabilities, and evaluating risks. A Cloud Cost Control and Security Posture Health Check can provide valuable support for these efforts.

8. Implement and Test Security Controls

Mandatory security measures include implementing multifactor authentication (MFA), network segmentation, and encryption of PHI both at rest and in transit. Regular vulnerability scans and annual penetration testing can ensure robust defenses against evolving threats.

9. Perform Annual Compliance Audits

Annual compliance audits are required to ensure all technical controls are in place. Organizations must provide written certification of compliance.

BDO's Role in Helping Healthcare Organizations Adapt

BDO professionals provide a suite of services tailored to assist healthcare organizations in meeting these updated HIPAA Security Rule requirements. Whether it's through comprehensive risk assessments, incident response planning, or leveraging our managed services like Active Secure 365, we provide:

- **Assess:** Evaluate current security practices and identify gaps.
- **Enhance:** Strengthen security measures with solutions such as MFA, encryption, and proactive threat monitoring.
- **Remediate:** Address identified vulnerabilities to ensure compliance and resilience.
- **Position for Incident Response (IR) and Managed IT Security (MITS):** Prepare organizations for robust security and quick recovery in the face of potential breaches.

For smaller medical practices, our new Active Secure 365 managed offering provides a comprehensive solution that scales with your organization's needs.

As healthcare organizations prepare for the impending changes to the HIPAA Security Rule, adopting a proactive stance on cybersecurity is critical. By aligning with these new requirements, organizations can not only achieve compliance but also enhance their overall security posture.

Alfredo Cepero, Principal,
Assurance Market Leader, BDO,
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The Ongoing Fight Against Prior Authorization and Retroactive Denials

Physicians are a cornerstone of healthcare delivery. Yet, despite their critical role, administrative burdens continue to erode time better spent on patient care. Among these burdens, the processes of prior authorization and retroactive claim denials present significant barriers, jeopardizing patient outcomes and physician practices alike. The Dade County Medical Association (DCMA)



BY DR. PATRICIA
ARES-ROMERO

Similarly, retroactive denials present a growing concern. When insurers authorize procedures or treatments but subsequently deny claims post-service, physicians face financial uncertainty, and patients are often left bearing the burden. These policies undermine trust in the payer-provider relationship and disrupt continuity of care.

regulations, insurers may only deny previously authorized claims under narrowly defined circumstances, such as benefit limitations being reached after authorization or fraudulent information in the claim. These changes establish necessary guardrails that protect providers from unjust financial penalties while safeguarding patient access to timely care.

The protections aforementioned were provided to Doctors in Dental Surgery (DDS) and Doctors of Medicine in Dentistry (DMD) and not to physicians at large, who should equally have the same protections.

The DCMA's Commitment

The DCMA stands with the FMA in advocating for additional reforms to strengthen these measures. Physicians should not face unwarranted administrative hurdles to delivering patient care. The DCMA urges the Florida Legislature to:

- Apply the same protections granted to DDS and DMDs to physicians.
- Streamline prior authorization processes with mandatory electronic submissions and a standardized review timeline.
- Implement penalties for insurers fail-

ing to comply with these timelines.

- Mandate disclosure of all prior authorization requirements at the plan's inception.
- Expand protections against retroactive denials, particularly for urgent or lifesaving procedures.

Looking Ahead

The path forward requires unwavering resolve from the medical community, policymakers, and patient advocates. As the voice for physicians in South Florida, the DCMA remains committed to reducing administrative obstacles to patient care. By championing these critical issues, the DCMA affirms its dedication to advocating for policies that protect the physician-patient relationship.

We encourage all stakeholders—healthcare providers, patients, and policymakers—to join us in demanding meaningful reforms. Together, we can shape a healthcare system where the focus remains where it belongs: on delivering quality care.

*Dr. Patricia Ares-Romero
is President of the Dade County
Medical Association.*



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FDA Approves First and Only Medication to Treat Liver's 'Silent Killer'

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently approved the first and only medication to treat metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH), formerly known as nonalcoholic fatty liver disease.

The most common and deadliest liver disease in the U.S., MASH is known as a "silent killer" because patients are typically asymptomatic until the disease has progressed to advanced stages.

When left untreated, MASH can result in cirrhosis, liver cancer or even decompensated cirrhosis, which requires a liver transplant. In addition, patients with MASH are more likely to develop cardiovascular disease and kidney disease.

The new drug, resmetirom, is an oral medication for patients who have a F2 or F3 fibrosis. Used long term in conjunction with a healthy diet and exercise, the medication alters the liver's fat metabolism. Studies revealed that resmetirom reduced fat content and fibrosis in 23% to 30% of patients. Side effects with resmetirom included nausea and diarrhea.

"Having this medication is great news since MASH is the deadliest form of liver disease," said Dr. Sonja Olsen, a board-certified gastroenterologist with Tampa General Hospital (TGH) Digestive Health Center.

Recently, the American Association of Clinical Endocrinology (AACE) and the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD) revised guidelines to recommend screening for MASH in the following patients:

- All patients with diabetes
- Patients with two or more cardiovascular risk factors, such as hypertension, diabetes, dyslipidemia and sleep apnea
- Patients with elevated liver chemistries
- Patients with hepatic steatosis found



Dr. Sonja Olsen

on imaging

Dr. Olsen is a strong advocate for patient screenings. "Because symptoms don't surface until it's too late, getting at-risk patients screened is critical," she said.

Screening starts with an ultrasound or liver tests. From there, physicians can calculate the FIB-4 score, which has been shown to correlate with fibrosis. This is a simple formula using the patient's age, AST, ALT and

platelet count to help determine the likelihood of advanced fibrosis.

- Patients with a FIB-4 score greater than 1.5 should be referred for additional testing to determine the degree of liver scarring.
- Patients with stage 3 or 4 fibrosis need to be screened for liver cancer and establish care with a gastroenterologist or hepatologist.

As the only transplant hepatologist in both Palm Beach and Martin counties, Dr. Olsen offers the FibroScan, a noninvasive test that measures liver fat content. The FibroScan test is available at TGH Digestive Health Center locations in West Palm Beach and Palm Beach Gardens.

With more than a decade of experience in providing world-class digestive and liver care, Dr. Olsen specializes in liver disease and disorders, including those related to MASH. She is a member of the American Gastroenterological Association and the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases.

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

For patient referrals, please call (561) 739-4TGH (4844) or visit TGHDigestiveHealth.com.

Legislative Preview: Hospitals' Priorities for Advancing Florida's Health Care System

The 2025 regular legislative session does not start until March 4, but there are interim committee meetings already underway, and bill filing is ongoing. In addition, with Gov. Ron DeSantis calling for a special legislative session before March to address several issues relevant to hospitals, including immigration and hurricane recovery, the hospital industry is already engaged, raising their collective, united voice to continue advancing policy priorities needed to support modern, accessible health care for all Floridians.

Florida is diverse, and no hospital serves the same community. That's why regulatory flexibility, not one-size-fits-all mandates, are essential to support their work to meet their communities' care needs. They also need stable, predictable, and fair reimbursement and for their payer partners to adhere to clear, transparent, and reasonable standards for authorization and for payment.

Building on the state's landmark health care investments during the 2024 legislative session, chiefly with the robust Live Healthy legislative package, Florida's hospitals are united around several key policy priorities to continue improving Medicaid hospital reimbursements and enhancing outcomes for children and adults, strengthening and supporting our health care workforce, increasing payor accountability, enhancing behavioral health care, and reforming the medical malpractice system.

Below is a sample of the policy needs the Florida Hospital Association is prioritizing for 2025 to continue strengthening and advancing Florida's world-class health care system.

First is strengthening the Medicaid program to reflect the resource-intensive care and services hospitals provide to patients with complex needs. From increasing Medicaid payments to more closely and accurately reflects the costs of care for adults with complex medical needs to supporting hospital care coordination teams that are managing medical and social services for Medicaid patients with significant needs, the Medicaid system needs to be modernized to keep up with modern and sophisticated health care delivery.



BY MARY C. MAYHEW

Second, with Medicaid and commercial health insurance plans delaying payment of \$3.8 billion in claims beyond 30 days, enforcing prompt payment of clean claims is a priority for hospitals. As individuals, we don't have the option of not paying our rent, car payments, or utility bills beyond the billing cycle, and if we do, there are fines and penalties for late payment. It is only fair that health insurance companies promptly remit payment for covered and authorized services already provided to patients.

Third, as we work to invest in the future health care workforce by continuing to grow funding for graduate medical education, we can also do more to encourage existing physician talent to practice in Florida. Capping the non-economic damages in medical malpractice claims is critical to bring down the exorbitant costs of medical malpractice premiums that discourage physicians from practicing in Florida and constrain patients' access to care. In addition, without caps on non-economic damages, physicians in certain high-risk specialties like obstetrics are less likely to practice in the state.

Not addressing the medical malpractice crisis will only worsen the existing physician shortage, estimated at 18,000 too few physicians by 2030. Texas' experience is illustrative. When it implemented comprehensive tort reform in 2003, including caps on non-economic damages, it experienced a 44 percent increase in the number of physicians actively practicing in the state.

Florida's hospitals are indispensable for the state to prosper, to thrive, to attract the best and brightest, and to be the economic powerhouse that it is. When lawmakers support hospitals, they are supporting a strong economy, healthy children and seniors, a present and productive workforce, and the opportunity for every resident to succeed and thrive. Together, we can make Florida a national leader for health care access and outcomes.

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



Cleveland Clinic Gut Insights: Exploring the Latest in Gastroenterology

March 17-18, 2025
Margaritaville Hollywood Beach Resort, Hollywood, FL

This two-day course is designed to provide the most current knowledge and best practices in the field of gastroenterology, covering a variety of topics and disorders that affect the digestive system. The program consists of six sessions, each focusing on a different area of gastroenterology: IBS/motility, pancreas, obesity/endoscopy, cancer, hepatology/liver transplant and IBD.

Experts will share their insights and experiences on the latest advances and challenges in their respective fields. Panel discussions and Q&A sessions will allow attendees to interact with presenters on topics of interest, such as understanding esophageal disorders, chronic bloating, endobariatrics, hereditary polyposis, bowel ultrasound in IBD, and many more.

Registration and info at www.ccfcmc.org/GUT2025

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Audrey Brown Named Chief Executive Officer of the Promise Fund

Promise Fund announced that Audrey Brown has been named Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the organization.

With over 20 years of experience in the health care and insurance industry, coupled with her advocacy experience, Brown is a dedicated and proven leader. Before joining the Promise Fund, she served as president and CEO of the Florida Association of Health Plans, Inc. Prior to that, her extensive career included leadership roles with the Florida Office of Insurance Regulation, AvMed Health Plans, and the Executive Office of Governor Jeb Bush, reflecting her dedication to driving meaningful impact in Florida's health care marketplace.



Audrey Brown

Tampa General Announces Melissa Golombek as Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

Tampa General Hospital (TGH) announced it has appointed Melissa Golombek as executive vice president and chief operating officer. Golombek most recently served as the vice president of the Muma Children's Hospital at TGH and the TGH Women's Institute. She joined TGH in 2020 as the Senior Administrator of the Muma Children's Hospital at TGH and the TGH Women's Institute. Before joining TGH, Golombek served in multiple senior leadership roles nationwide, including Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital, Northwestern University Health System and TMC Health. Her experience in health care leadership spans nearly 20 years. Golombek received her doctorate in nursing practice from the University of Central Florida.



Melissa Golombek

Good Samaritan Medical Center Names Austin Champoux Chief Operating Officer

Good Samaritan Medical Center names Austin Champoux, MHA, MIB, to the position of Chief Operating Officer (COO). Champoux returns to Palm Beach Health Network and Good Samaritan Medical Center, where he previously held the position of Administrative Fellow, before his promotion to Associate Administrator. Over the course of his career, Champoux has played a key role in strategic planning for new services. He returns to Good Samaritan Medical Center from Palmetto General Hospital in Miami where he has been serving as the hospital's COO. In addition, he served as the COO of North Shore Medical Center in Miami, and as the Assistant Chief Executive Officer of Shore Point Health on the west coast of Florida. Champoux holds a Masters in both healthcare administration and international business from the University of Florida as well as Bachelor of Science in business administration.



Austin Champoux

Ben Spence Named Lee Health COO

With nearly 30 years of experience serving in a variety of roles at Lee Health, Ben Spence was named Chief Operating Officer to lead Lee Health into the future. Spence first joined Lee Memorial Health System in 1995 as a reimbursement clerk in the financial services department. For the past ten years, he has served as Lee Health's Chief Financial and Business Services Officer. Earning his Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from The Ohio State University, Spence dual-majored in finance, as well as real estate and urban analysis. In 2010, he completed his Master of Science in Health Science with a concentration in Health Services Administration at Florida Gulf Coast University. He currently is a member of the Healthcare Financial Management Association and the American College of Healthcare executives, as well as Vice President of the Horizon Council.



Ben Spence

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

Holy Cross Health Board of Directors Re-elects Chair and Vice Chair and Appoints Three New Board Members

For the second consecutive year, Rudy Molinet, RN, MPH, FACHE, has been named chair and Karen O'Byrne, CPA, MBA, as vice chair of the Holy Cross Health Board of Directors. In addition, the board has announced that Tamecka McKay, MPA, ITIL, CGCIO; Sybil Alfred, MBA; and Ahmed Ameen Waheed, M.D., have joined the board.

Rudy Molinet, RN, MPH, FACHE, Chief Executive Officer, Artemis Synergies Consulting has been re-elected Chair of the Holy Cross Health Board. Under Molinet's leadership working with the executive leadership team during the past year, Holy Cross has experienced tremendous growth in their ambulatory footprint, with several new locations and new providers joining the health system. He previously served as vice chair of the Board and serves on all Board committees as an ex-officio member. Molinet is board-certified in healthcare management as a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

Karen O'Byrne, MBA, Managing Director, Warburg Pincus has been re-elected Vice Chair of the Holy Cross Health Board. She continues as a member of the Board's Executive and Finance Committees. O'Byrne joined Warburg Pincus in 2022 and is a CFO Advisor on the Value Creation team. Previously, she was the President and Chief Executive Officer at Motus LLC, having previously served as its Chief Financial Officer. O'Byrne was the Chief Financial Officer of Modernizing Medicine (ModMed®) and Campus Management, and held the lead finance role in the Web Hosting unit of Verio, Inc.

Tamecka M. McKay, MPA, ITIL, CGCIO, will serve on the Holy Cross Health Board of Directors compliance committee. As the chief information officer and director of information technology (IT) for the City of Fort Lauderdale, she focuses on driving innovation, digital transformation and service delivery excellence by overseeing the management, strategy and execution of IT services. McKay previously worked in IT and information systems for Broward County Public Schools and the Town of Davie and taught computer networking classes at ITT Technical Institute.

Sybil Alfred, MBA, will serve on the Quality & Safety committee. While earning her Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, she began working as a program advisor in the executive education department of FAU College of Business, where she has remained for the entirety of her career. Over the course of nearly 24 years, Alfred was promoted first to associate director and now to her current position of director. She is the first woman of color to serve as a director in the FAU College of Business.

Ahmed Ameen Waheed, M.D., will serve on the Board's quality & safety committee. A board-certified nephrologist, Dr. Waheed became the president-elect of the medical staff at Holy Cross Health in December 2024, where he is also Chief of Medicine. Additionally, he's a partner at National Kidney Partners and affiliate assistant professor at the University of Miami's Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine.



Rudy Molinet



Karen O'Byrne



Tamecka M. McKay



Sybil Alfred



Dr. Ahmed Ameen Waheed

Michael Nachev Accepts New Role as Chief of Staff at Lee Health

Lee Health is pleased to announce the promotion of Michael Nachev to Chief of Staff. Nachev previously served as the Vice President of Government Relations. Nachev currently serves as Chair of the Big Brothers Big Sister of the Suncoast Corporate Board of Directors. He is the immediate past Chair of the Florida Gulf Coast University Alumni Board of Directors and served on the FGCU Foundation Board. He is a graduate of College Leadership Florida and an active member of the Leadership Florida organization. He was appointed by the Governor to serve on the Florida Greenways and Trails Council and served from 2019 to 2022. Michael also serves on the Sanibel Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors as Secretary and Treasurer. Michael serves on the Florida Tax Watch Board of Directors and is a member of the executive committee.



Michael Nachev

Broward Health Foundation Announces Mark Kent as New Chair of Its Board of Directors

The Broward Health Foundation is pleased to announce the appointment of Mark Kent as the new Chair of its Board of Directors. Kent will guide the Board in enhancing philanthropic support for the Broward Health Foundation's critical programs and services. Kent has made a lasting impact with significant contributions, including a generous \$500,000 donation to cover housing expenses for Broward Health's Graduate Medical Education residents from Meharry Medical College in the 2023 academic year. Kent's commitment to philanthropy began as a teen, inspired by his church, St. James Lutheran, which helped Cuban families relocate to the U.S. He furthered his efforts by volunteering on mission trips to Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras and other locations. He has contributed over \$10,000,000 to various charity's, in addition to serving on multiple charitable boards.



Mark Kent

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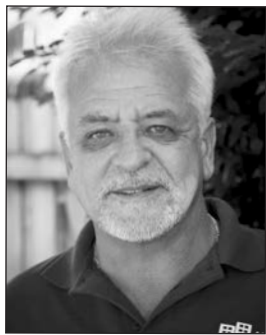


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What You Can't See Can Hurt You!

Managing Indoor Air Quality in Your Home and Business

HVAC systems, consisting of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning components, are crucial for maintaining indoor comfort in residential and commercial buildings. However, these systems can also contribute significantly to indoor air quality (IAQ) problems if not properly maintained, engineered and managed. Understanding the various aspects of HVAC systems which impact air quality is essential for improving health outcomes and enhancing overall comfort in indoor environments.



BY MICHAEL TEBOR,
ASCS, CIE, CMR -
STATE LICENSED
MRS#1924

and mildew within the ducts and filters, further worsening air quality.

The condition of the HVAC system itself is also a significant factor in indoor air quality. Over time, dust, dirt and debris can accumulate within the system, including in ductwork, coils, and blower compartments. This accumulation not only reduces the system's efficiency but also serves as a breeding ground for bacteria, mold, and other harmful microorganisms. These

contaminants can be released into the indoor air, causing health problems for occupants. Regular maintenance, including cleaning of the system and ductwork, is essential to prevent these issues from developing. In addition to dirty systems, duct leakage poses another challenge in humid climates.

Ducts designed to distribute conditioned air throughout a building can develop leaks due to wear and tear, poor installation, or corrosion. In humid environments, leaked air can draw in moist outdoor air and push conditioned air out, reducing the system's effectiveness, increasing humidity levels indoors, and causing condensation. This can create an environment conducive to mold growth and other IAQ issues. Additionally, leaky ducts can pull in dust and other outdoor pollutants from attics and basements which can exacerbate air quality problems.

Proper functioning of an HVAC system is vital to maintaining a healthy indoor environment. A well-maintained system ensures that filters are clean, ductwork is sealed, and the system operates at peak efficiency. Regular preventive maintenance, including scheduled inspections and servicing, can help identify potential issues before they become significant

problems. Technicians can evaluate air filters, clean coils, assess duct integrity, and check for any signs of moisture or mold accumulation to ensure that systems are running effectively. It's essential to use the correct types of filters for specific applications.

High-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters, for example, can capture smaller particles compared to standard filters. Using filters with the appropriate MERV (Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value) rating can significantly enhance indoor air quality by trapping a larger percentage of airborne contaminants.

It is also essential to balance the building's ventilation needs with energy efficiency. A system that works too hard can lead to increased wear and tear and energy costs, while one that does not provide adequate ventilation can compromise indoor air quality.

Scheduled professional assessments can ensure that the HVAC system is not only functioning correctly but also that all components are clean and free from harmful contaminants. This proactive approach can save building owners from expensive repairs down the line and can extend the lifespan of the HVAC system. Additionally, well-maintained systems can operate more efficiently, thereby lowering energy consumption and utility bills.

Building occupants can also take steps to enhance indoor air quality by maintaining their HVAC systems. Simple tasks such as regularly checking and replacing air filters, monitoring humidity levels, and using exhaust fans in moisture-prone areas like kitchens and bathrooms can have a substantial impact. Keeping the area around outdoor air intake vents clear of debris and pollutants is equally important for ensuring only clean air is drawn into the system. Moreover, adopting a comprehensive indoor air quality management plan can provide long-term benefits. This plan may include improving ventilation rates,

using air cleaners, using ultra-violet (U.V.) light sanitizers, and investing in humidity control systems to mitigate the effects of outdoor pollutants. It is also beneficial to integrate smart technology that monitors air quality in real time, allowing for adjustments as needed to maintain ideal conditions.

In summary, while HVAC systems are designed to create a comfortable indoor environment, they can also contribute to indoor air quality problems if not properly maintained. Issues such as inadequate outdoor air intake, inefficient air filtration, dirty systems, and duct leakage, especially in humid environments, are all factors that can severely impact IAQ. A clean, well-maintained and functioning HVAC system is essential for ensuring healthy indoor air quality. Regular inspections, filter changes, and maintenance practices are crucial for preventing the buildup of contaminants and ensuring that the system operates effectively.

By taking a proactive approach to HVAC maintenance, building owners and occupants can significantly improve their indoor air quality, resulting in healthier, more comfortable living and working environments.

Michael Tebor is Vice President of Air Duct Aseptics, a NADCA certified air duct cleaning company with more than 30 years' experience specializing in providing Certified Duct Cleaning and indoor air quality solutions to Florida's top health care facilities. Michael is a Certified Air Systems Cleaning Specialist (NADCA), a Certified Indoor Environmentalist (ACAC) and a Certified Mold Remediator (ACAC). He is also a state licensed Mold Assessor. The company's skill sets, experience and multi-disciplinary approach to problem solving sets it apart in the industry. Michael Tebor can be reached at 888-707-7763 or visit www.ADAflorida.com.



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Cover Story: Mourning a Hospice Advocate: VITAS® Healthcare Honors the Carter Legacy

Continued from page 1

Key lessons learned from President Carter's end-of-life journey:

- Hospice is a choice, and advance care planning is a gift. Discussing and documenting goals and wishes allows patients to articulate care preferences, easing the burden on loved ones.

- Hospice is not only for the final days. It focuses on comfort, symptom management and support for patients with a life expectancy of six months or less, regardless of timeframe.

- Choosing hospice does not mean giving up hope. It shifts focus from curative treatment to comfort, tailored to maintain quality of life care.

- The hospice journey is unique. Each patient's needs and symptoms differ, and lengths of stay vary significantly.

President Carter's early enrollment in hospice care allowed him to fully benefit from the comprehensive support and services for nearly two years. By identifying his

end-of-life goals and wishes well in advance, he demonstrated that hospice can provide months of comfort, symptom management and family support, maximizing quality of life.

Research by NORC at the University of Chicago shows that longer hospice stays lead to better outcomes, including higher patient satisfaction, better pain control and fewer hospitalizations. Patients receive holistic care from an interdisciplinary team trained in comfort, symptom relief and emotional support, ensuring dignity during life's final chapter.

The hospice community is grateful for President Carter's advocacy and his efforts to improve healthcare access for all Americans.

To learn more about advance care planning, download the free "Thinking About Hospice" discussion guide for families at www.vitas.com.

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Cover Story: Transforming Nursing for Better Outcomes

Continued from page 1

not just for nursing students and new graduates,” she says. “Each unit in our hospital is privileged to have a dedicated Clinical Nurse Educator. These educators combine competency-based education and didactic training to ensure our nurses deliver the most up-to-date, evidence-based care to our patients. Competency-based education continues well beyond nursing school graduation.”

For nursing students, this involves mastering essential competencies determined by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). The AACN has defined ten core competencies for nurses, tailored to different educational levels—entry-level for registered nurses and advanced practice for graduate students. These competencies aim to prepare students for the realities of healthcare practice.

Unlike traditional nursing programs that are credit-hour based, CBE focuses on students proving their mastery of these competencies. “Students move forward by demonstrating competencies through instruction and remediation,” says Dr. Longo. Although many nursing schools won’t fully abandon conventional grading and coursework, integrating competency-based principles is expected to enhance the educational experience.

Addressing Critical Healthcare Challenges

CBE is particularly relevant in addressing two critical issues: the nursing shortage and the need for improved patient outcomes.

“We want nurses to come out of school ready for practice, with the competencies required to deliver quality care,” Dr. Longo states. Beyond technical skills, CBE emphasizes critical thinking, which equips nurses to make sound decisions in complex and dynamic clinical environments.

Traditionally, competency in nursing was associated with performing specific tasks, such as IV insertions or wound care. However, CBE expands the definition to include the knowledge, persona, and decision-making processes behind those skills. “It’s not just about checking off a skill,” Dr. Longo emphasizes. “It’s about demonstrating readiness for practice holistically.”

Shifting from Traditional Education

The transition to competency-based education began in earnest in 2021 when the AACN introduced its new Essentials framework. While many nursing schools are still developing their CBE curricula, the goal is to ensure students are well-prepared to meet the demands of diverse healthcare settings.

CBE also transforms classroom learning. Traditional lectures are giving way to active, problem-solving approaches. For instance, students learn from case scenarios that align with real-world patient situations that encompass not just the medical aspects of care, such as lab values and treatments, but also the social and personal aspects.

“This focus on critical thinking prepares students to

adapt to varied and individualized patient needs,” Dr. Longo explains. By emphasizing competencies like person-centered care, students learn to approach patients as individuals whose care requirements are shaped by their unique circumstances, families, and resources.

Preparing Leaders and Thinkers

Leadership and adaptability are integral to CBE. Leadership, a key competency, involves more than managing nurses—it encompasses understanding organizational systems, driving improvements, and navigating complex healthcare environments.

“We ensure students are not only clinically proficient but also prepared to lead and work effectively within healthcare systems,” Dr. Longo explains. This comprehensive preparation extends to fostering critical thinking in students, enabling them to approach problems with confidence and creativity.

Leveraging Technology for CBE

Technology is vital in implementing CBE at the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing. Simulation labs with state-of-the-art technology allow students to practice and demonstrate competencies in a controlled environment.

“Simulation allows students to engage in scenarios that mirror real patient care situations,” says Dr. Longo. The college has recently updated simulation labs on its Davie and Boca Raton campuses, further enhancing students’ access to advanced tools that support their education.

Improving Retention in Nursing

One of the indirect benefits of CBE is its potential to address nursing turnover. Many new nurses leave the profession within their first two years, often due to inadequate preparation for practice challenges.

“If we prepare students for real-world situations, they’ll feel more confident and satisfied in their roles,” Dr. Longo notes. By equipping nurses with the skills and resilience to navigate the complexities of healthcare, CBE aims to improve retention rates and build a more stable nursing workforce.

The Future of Nursing Education

As nursing schools continue their journey toward implementing CBE, the focus remains on improving patient outcomes. By emphasizing holistic preparation—critical thinking, leadership, and adaptability—CBE ensures that nursing graduates are ready to deliver high-quality care in today’s diverse and demanding healthcare settings.

Dr. Longo’s insights highlight how competency-based education is not just an educational shift but a transformative approach to building a skilled, resilient nursing workforce prepared to meet the challenges of modern healthcare.

For more information, visit www.fau.edu/nursing.

Cameron G. Duncan, Ph.D., Named Dean of FAU Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing

Florida Atlantic University has named Cameron G. Duncan, Ph.D., DNP, APRN, FNP-C, PMHNP-BC, CNE, FAANP, as the new Holli Rockwell Trubinsky Eminent Dean of the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing. Prior to joining FAU, Dr. Duncan served as the interim dean of the Orvis School of Nursing at the University of Nevada, Reno, where he previously served as the director of the Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Program since 2017. In his new role at FAU, Dr. Duncan will work closely with faculty, staff, and local community partners to further enhance the college’s clinical, educational, and research initiatives. His extensive background in academic achievement, clinical practice, and scholarship, complement the college’s strengths in research and caring science.



Dr. Cameron Duncan

Beyond his administrative achievements, Dr. Duncan brings a distinguished record of teaching excellence at both public and private institutions across Nevada, Arizona, and California. He has been a pioneer in implementing innovative policies and programs that enhance the quality of education, including the redevelopment of Nevada’s largest Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner program. His work modernized the curriculum, introduced year-round admissions, and provided flexible learning pathways to support the success of working students. In 2016, he opened the Duncan Family Healthcare facility in Reno, which was the first Advanced Practice Registered Nurse clinic in northern Nevada. The facility focuses on mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, mood disorders, schizophrenia, PTSD, substance use disorders, and personality disorders. Duncan earned his BSN at the University of Nevada in 2010. He then earned his first MSN, specializing in organizational leadership in health care organizations in 2012 at Grand Canyon University. In 2014, he completed his second MSN to become a family nurse practitioner and earned his DNP degree, both at the University of Arizona. He later specialized in mental health, completing a post-master’s certificate in 2015, becoming a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner, also at the University of Arizona. Duncan was awarded a Ph.D. in 2022 at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He also is board certified as a psychiatric nurse practitioner and a family nurse practitioner and is a certified nurse educator.

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Lewis S. Nelson, MD, Named Dean of FAU Schmidt College of Medicine

Florida Atlantic University has named Lewis S. Nelson, M.D., as the new dean of the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine. Dr. Nelson previously served as professor and inaugural chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine and chief of the Division of Medical Toxicology and Addiction Medicine at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School in Newark, and chief of the Emergency Department at University Hospital of Newark, a public safety net hospital.

Dr. Nelson has more than 30 years of academic and clinical leadership experience with a proven record of fostering innovation, research, and clinical excellence. During his eight-year tenure at Rutgers, the department has evolved to include five fellowship training programs, a top-rated clinical clerkship, and pioneering clinical programs. Dr. Nelson successfully increased clinical volume by 11%, doubled the size of the faculty, expanded the residency program by 40%, secured \$3 million in federal research grants, and markedly boosted the department's clinical revenue.

Dr. Nelson is board certified in emergency medicine, medical toxicology, and addiction medicine. His research and scholarship focus on the medical and social consequences of substance use, including opioid overdose and withdrawal, alcohol withdrawal, and alternative pain relief strategies. His numerous activities have had a significant impact on



Dr. Lewis S. Nelson

health policy, clinical care, and education across the entire spectrum of learners.

Before joining Rutgers, Dr. Nelson spent more than 20 years at New York University School of Medicine, where he was a professor of emergency medicine, vice chair for academic affairs, and director of the medical toxicology fellowship program. He received his M.D. degree from the State University of New York Health Science Center in Brooklyn, and an MBA from Brandeis University with a focus on health policy. He completed his residency training

in emergency medicine at Mount Sinai School of Medicine where he also served as chief resident. He also completed a fellowship in medical toxicology at New York University School of Medicine.

Throughout his career, Dr. Nelson has actively engaged with several organizations closely tied to academic medicine. He served as a director of the American Board of Emergency Medicine for nine years and represented them on the American Board of Medical Specialties Health Policy and Strategy Committee and the National Academy of Medicine Health Policy Fellowship Program. He also served as president of the American College of Medical Toxicology (ACMT) and as a board member of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education. He currently holds the position of past president of the Association of Academic Chairs in Emergency Medicine.

Holy Cross Health Internal Medicine Residents Match with Subspecialty Fellowships

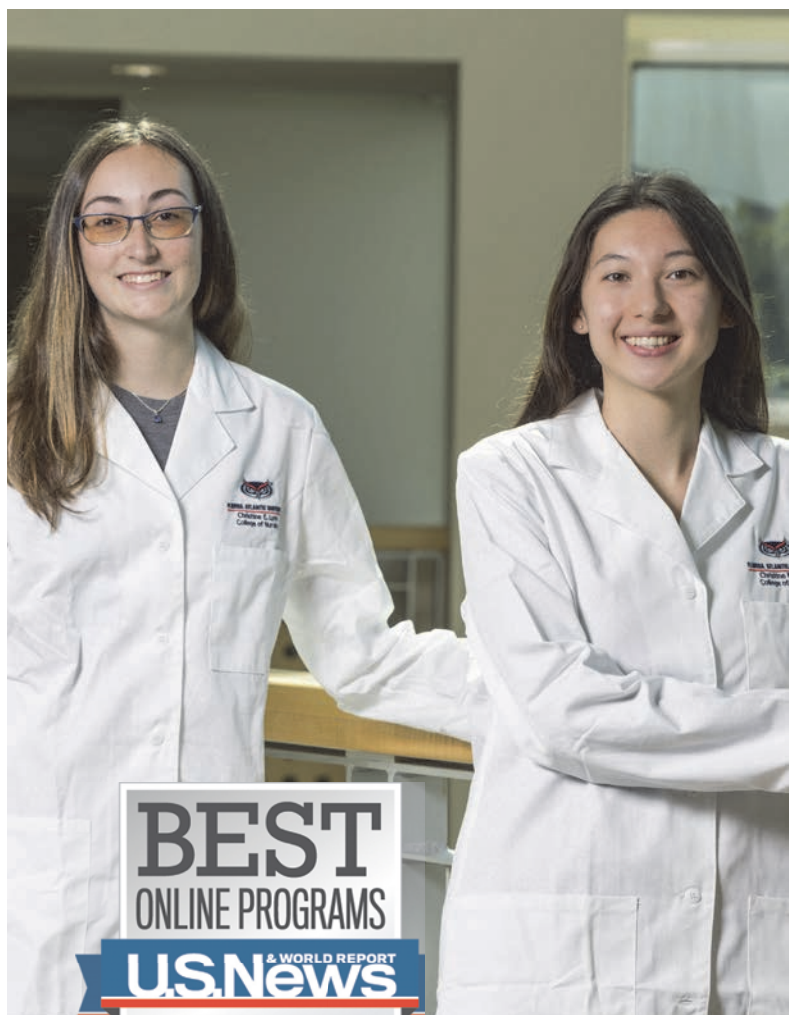
Holy Cross Health is beaming with pride to announce that seven physicians who completed the University of Miami at Holy Cross Internal Medicine Residency Program have been matched with Internal Medicine (IM) subspecialty fellowships throughout Florida and in Colorado.

"We applaud this group of outstanding doctors who have been accepted into programs that will further educate them on their specific areas of interest," said Nemer Dabage, M.D., FACP, Program Director of the University of Miami at Holy Cross Hospital Internal Medicine Residency. "They will gain valuable experience and touch the lives of many patients in positive ways. We are blessed to have had them as part of our program, and we are excited to see them grow in their chosen field."

Two doctors matched nearby at University of Miami/Jackson Health System to pursue specialty fellowships — Aakash Padodara, M.D., for clinical nephrology and Nathalie Wachter, M.D., for clinical endocrinology.

Danielle Henry, M.D., Don Woody, M.D., and Luis Penaranda Bolano, M.D., will all be pursuing fellowships in rheumatology — Dr. Henry at University of Colorado School of Medicine in Denver; Dr. Woody at HCA Healthcare/USF Morsani-Bayonet Point in Hudson, FL; and Dr. Penaranda Bolano at Mayo Clinic School of Graduate Medical Education in Jacksonville, FL.

Additionally, Alyssa Benjamin, D.O., is headed to Florida Atlantic University Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine in Boca Raton, FL for a subspecialty in geriatric medicine and Natasha Mederos Rocha, M.D., matched in clinical gastroenterology at University of Florida College of Medicine in Jacksonville, FL.



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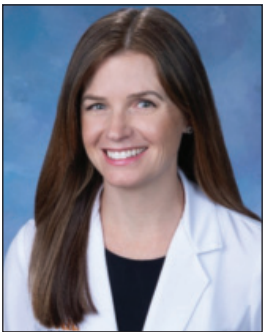
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Incorporating Community Into Healthcare Education

Healthcare education continues to evolve as the demands of a rapidly growing medical landscape continue to shape future providers. As we face a growing, aging population, technological advancements, and the shifting dynamics of patient care, it is imperative that healthcare education adapts to reflect this transition. More specifically, Physician Assistant/Associate (PA) programs must equip students with not only medical knowledge and clinical skill set, but also the ability to critically think through the nuances of healthcare administration and challenges of modern medicine. We prepare our students to consider how not every patient will present with textbook findings, making it essential for them to think critically as a clinician, adapt their skillset, and alter their workup accordingly. The ability to consider atypical presentations and “think outside the box” is vital to avoid missed or delayed diagnoses, ultimately ensuring optimal patient outcomes.

As most PA students begin their journey in healthcare prior to the start of PA school, focusing PA education on evidence-based medicine is of utmost importance but, patient centered healthcare is also imperative.

This certainly doesn’t exclude the soft skills one will learn in regards to empathy, bedside manner and establishing a rapport with patients. At South



BY LYSA DIGGINS, MMS, PA-C, AND
TIFFANY PERRY, MMSC, PA-C

University West Palm Beach Physician Assistant Program, our PA program goals include “fostering a culture of inclusivity and equity for students, faculty and staff by means of education and resources” and “providing opportunities for local community service and outreach that fosters a commitment to reducing health disparities.”

Throughout our program, students have numerous opportunities to learn and implement these skills through lab courses, applied learning experiences, as well as our community outreach initiatives. In addition, our graduate Capstone project is built upon a desire to represent and meet the needs of the local communities we aim to serve.

We select diverse cohorts of students

to attend our program, whom express an interest in working with underserved communities and exhibit leadership qualities.

Early in the didactic phase of our program, students experience various patient encounters through our unique Applied Learning Experience course where they are able to obtain a medical history, perform physical exams and document the encounter including their physical exam findings. Students also participate in the Back-to-School Palm Beach County event annually where they are able to perform physical exams on pediatric patients in surrounding communities.

Through these community programs, PA students are not only practicing their bedside manner and physical exam skills, but they are thinking critically and developing interpersonal skills when discussing plans of care.

The PA students may also be challenged depending on the presentation of symptoms or an asymptomatic patient presentation. Either way, these programs ensure exposure to encounters our PA students can reflect upon as they embark on their professional career as healthcare providers.

In September 2024, the South

University West Palm Beach, Physician Assistant Program was recognized by the Palm Beach County Office of Community Revitalization, as an Outstanding Community Impact and Partner Award recipient. This recognition highlights only one way in which the program continues to support the local community and value the integration of students into their communities at the forefront of our educational curriculum.

Going forward, the future of healthcare as we know it depends on the quality of education we provide to the next generation of clinicians. Much of this education must happen outside of the classroom, and we are eager to support those initiatives at South University.

By embracing new technologies, diverse teaching methodologies, and a strong emphasis on critical thinking, we can prepare future providers to excel in dynamic clinical environments. It is our responsibility as clinicians to ensure healthcare education remains a cornerstone of quality patient care for future generations.

Lysa Diggins is Program Director - South University, West Palm Beach Physician Assistant Program.
Tiffany Perry is Assistant Director of Clinical Education- South University, West Palm Beach Physician Assistant Program.

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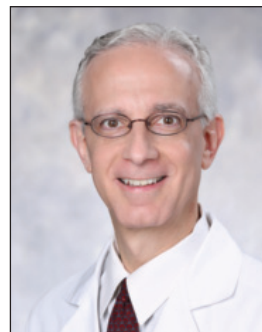
Cardiology

Cleveland Clinic Florida's Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Center: *A Leader in Innovation, Expertise, and Patient-Centric Care*

Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital stands out as one of Florida's premier referral centers for hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM) care. Its Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Center, recognized as one of only two HCMA-designated Centers of Excellence in Florida, exemplifies the highest standards of innovation, expertise, and patient care in a condition that impacts roughly 1 in 500 people. With approximately 50 such centers nationwide, this designation underscores Weston Hospital's leadership in advancing HCM treatment and outcomes.

Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy is a complex and often misunderstood condition that requires highly specialized care. At Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital, patients have access to a multidisciplinary team of experts skilled in diagnosing, managing, and surgically treating HCM. These specialists leverage cutting-edge imaging technologies, genetic testing, and the latest clinical research to tailor individualized treatment plans for every patient. From medications and non-surgical interventions to advanced surgical procedures performed by cardiac surgeons with extensive experience in HCM, the care model is comprehensive and unique among Florida institutions.

The Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Center of Excellence at



BY DR. CRAIG ASHER

Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital follows the four pillars of HCM care: symptom management and prevention, family screening, risk stratification for sudden cardiac death, and patient education and support.

But what truly sets Weston Hospital apart is its commitment to innovation and patient-centric care. The team's integration of traditional therapies with emerging treatments ensures patients not only benefit from proven approaches but also gain access to the latest breakthroughs in cardiology. Moreover, the hospital's collaboration with the Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Association reflects its dedication to remaining at the forefront of HCM care, research, and advocacy.

For individuals and families navigating the challenges of HCM, finding a trusted partner in care is vital. The Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Center of Excellence at Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital offers not just expertise but also hope, empowering patients with the knowledge and resources needed to live healthier, fuller lives.

Visit consultqd.clevelandclinic.org to learn more about the Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Center of Excellence. Dr. Craig Asher is a cardiologist at Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital.

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Jamie
Matters
Most

Jamie, Age 6
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Deacon, who had heart failure and has Barth syndrome, with his sister



Jules, who had heart failure, with his wife

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MHS.net/Heart

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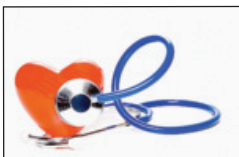
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Cardiology

Cover Story: Reversing Heart Failure with Barostim™ Technology: “This Implant Has Saved My Life”

Continued from page 1

improve heart function and increase blood flow, reduce shortness of breath and control fluid build-up in the body, says Dr. Patel, a board-certified and fellowship-trained cardiothoracic surgeon at Jupiter’s Robson Heart & Vascular Institute. But some patients never respond to medications and must accept a lifestyle defined by limited activity.

“For some reason, the heart muscle is weakened in patients with heart failure, and that leads to difficulty breathing, exercising and an overall decrease in stamina and ability to enjoy things in life,” Dr. Patel explains.

“Baroreflex activation therapy” is how CVRx, the Minnesota healthcare technology company that invented Barostim, describes the implant’s goal. It addresses congestive heart failure and a low or reduced ability of the heart to pump oxygenated blood to the rest of the body.

“The Barostim device basically tricks your body into thinking that the arteries are not so tight,” says Dr. Patel. “Its presence loosens the arteries in the body, allows blood to flow more freely and eases patients’ symptoms.”

How Barostim works

During an outpatient procedure, the device is implanted into a patient’s neck on

the carotid artery. In a healthy body, specialized pressure sensors called baroreceptors on the carotid artery send information to the brain to regulate blood volume and blood pressure. But in patients with heart failure, those sensors underperform, causing blood vessels to tighten when they should allow blood to flow freely. Barostim’s battery-generated electrical impulses tell the brain that blood volume and pressure have returned to normal, allowing the patient’s blood to flow freely again.

In early November, Herrmann was Dr. Patel’s first Barostim patient in an outpatient procedure that kept him at the hospital for only about four hours. Recovery typically stretches 4-5 days before a return to normal activities.

“Within 2 hours of coming out of anesthesia, I felt 10 years younger,” Herrmann says of his ongoing recovery. “Within just a few weeks, I’ve gotten 30%-40% of my energy back, and I can’t wait until they dial up the device at my next visit.”

Herrmann has already resumed his bodybuilding routine (“I’m in better shape than most of the 30-year-old guys at my gym... I outlift them, out-endurance them... they can’t keep up”) and he looks forward to continued improvement as the implant is adjusted and regulated over the coming

months to match his body’s cardiac capacity. With prior authorization, the device is covered by many insurance carriers and Medicare.

Who is the ideal candidate?

Patients who should be evaluated for Barostim include those who have lived with and been treated for heart failure for a long time without results, says Dr. Patel. Most have taken heart medications but still experience low energy or struggle to catch their breath with even minimal exertion.

Herrmann says he learned about Barostim as part of his legal research for healthcare clients. A friend connected him to his Jupiter team, Dr. Patel and interventional cardiologist Dr. Michael Sabah.

Says Herrmann: “I kept telling myself, this device can’t be this good, and if it is this good, how far away am I going to have to travel to get this treatment? I was thinking Miami? New York? Boston? San Francisco? And yet I ended up right here at Jupiter Medical Center with this amazing team.”

*For information about cardiac care,
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Institute at Jupiter Medical Center
at (561) 263-3767.*

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¹ Bozkurt, B., et al. (2025). HF STATS 2024: Heart Failure Epidemiology and Outcomes Statistics An Updated 2024 Report from the Heart Failure Society of America. *Journal of Cardiac Failure*, Volume 31, Issue 1, 66 - 116.

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Broward Health is Transforming Cardiovascular Care with Investments in Technology

The addition of pulsed field ablation ushers in a new era in atrial fibrillation treatment

With the goal to expand cardiovascular care through clinical excellence and innovative research, Broward Health is leading the way in transforming cardiovascular care in South Florida with a relatively new, innovative procedure to treat atrial fibrillation (AFib) called pulsed field ablation (PFA). This leading technology at Broward Health Medical Center can result in more precise, safer treatment and quicker recovery time for patients with this potentially dangerous heart rhythm disorder.

A recent study by UC San Francisco revealed that nearly 10.5 million Americans — three times the previous estimate — are living with AFib. This rapid and irregular heartbeat disrupts the rhythm of the heart and increases the risk of stroke, heart failure and even sudden death. With the rise of this condition in patients, medical professionals are urgently working to introduce better treatment options.

“We’re seeing an increase in AFib cases, especially as our population ages and other health issues, such as hypertension and diabetes, become more com-

mon,” said Jose L. Baez-Escudero, M.D., Broward Health’s first systemwide chief of cardiology. “It is critical that we offer our patients the latest and most effective treatments available, including PFA, to help reduce these risks and safely improve their quality of life.”

PFA successfully uses high-voltage electrical pulses to selectively target the tissue responsible for the irregular heartbeat. PFA delivers short bursts of energy to disrupt the heart’s abnormal electrical signals while minimizing damage to surrounding tissues and may result in fewer complications and a quicker recovery time for patients.

A Vision for the Future of Heart Health

Dr. Baez brings notable experience and a bold vision to Broward Health. His goal is to expand the hospital’s cardiovascular services and build a comprehensive electrophysiology program that provides patients with the latest and most effective treatment options for a wide range of heart conditions, including AFib.

As part of his vision, Dr. Baez is also

focusing on enhancing Broward Health’s infrastructure. Upgrades to the cardiac catheterization labs and electrophysiology rooms are already underway.

“We’re committed to making Broward Health the leading destination for heart care in South Florida and beyond,” Dr. Baez said. “This means expanding our team of specialists, growing our capabilities and investing in a robust cardiology fellowship program with new subspecialties to ensure that our patients have access to the best possible care, whether it’s through new technologies like PFA or other advanced arrhythmia treatments.”

Investing in Education and Cardiovascular Care

Dr. Baez is passionate about advancing the next generation of cardiologists.



Dr. Jose L. Baez-Escudero

Broward Health’s fellowship programs are set to increase with new subspecialty tracks dedicated to interventional cardiology, electrophysiology and heart failure. Dr. Baez looks to increase the volume of doctors, build the arrhythmia program and offer new programs, such as structural heart disease, with focused specialists and cardiogenic shock program for patients with severe heart failure. He wants to expand the electrophysiology

service line with electrophysiologists who provide a full array of arrhythmia services at all Broward Health hospitals. He looks to elevate research and work with the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education to expand the current general fellowship by offering additional subspecialty cardiology fellowship programs with additional interventional cardiology and eventually electrophysiology training.

“At Broward Health we already have a robust cardiology service line and great

Continued on following page

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Broward Health Cardiovascular Care

Continued from previous page

cardiac surgeons who provide a broad spectrum of services within cardiac surgery,” Dr. Baez said. “We are taking the additional step to build and organize multi-disciplinary teams for specialty programs, as well as subspecialty service lines within cardiology.”

A Healthier Future for South Florida

With a growing population and one that is aging, there is an increasing need for specialized heart care. Broward Health’s efforts to expand services and introduce the latest technologies are more important than ever.

“Our goal is to improve and expand our cardiovascular care to improve our community’s heart health by offering innovative treatments and high-quality care to help patients live longer, healthier lives,” Dr. Baez says. “The addition of pulsed field ablation as well as left atrial appendage occlusion devices directed at stroke prevention and the expansion of services is huge, as the prevalence of arrhythmias has continued to increase over the last few years. If we grow those programs, then we’ll be able to also feed into the other subspecialties.”

Cover Story: KIDZ Medical’s Pediatric Cardiology Expertise

Continued from page 1

dren’s hospitals, not only by referring young patients who need surgical intervention, but also by being part of the care team to help ensure that patients can experience the best possible outcomes.

“We treat post-operative patients after discharge, tailoring their medication to maximize their treatment,” Dr. Aldousany said, noting that roughly one-third of congenital heart patients require more than one surgery.

Using their highly specialized training along with the most modern medical technologies, KIDZ Medical’s pediatric cardiologists are able to provide integrated yet individualized pediatric cardiac medical care for patients with hypertension, heart damage due to infections or viruses, abnormal heart rhythms, or endocarditis (inflammation of the heart lining and heart valves.) Specialists also treat congenital heart disease, which is caused by the abnormal development of a baby’s heart in the early stages of pregnancy.

Just as adult cardiology patients require a specific type of care, so do pediatric patients, according to Dr. Aldousany. Pediatric cardiac care begins with an assessment that includes a physical examination and family’s medical history, and may include an EKG, an echocardiogram, and occasionally, a Holter

monitor, an event monitor, or an exercise stress test. KIDZ Medical’s offices also are equipped to perform most diagnostic tests during a visit, usually eliminating the need to go to the hospital for outpatient testing, and cardiac findings and plans for follow-up are discussed with families in-depth.

“A pediatric heart doesn’t contract the same way that an adult heart does, so it is critical, especially in newborns, that these patients are not treated too aggressively when they do not need aggressive treatment,” Dr. Aldousany explained. “Their hearts are immature and may respond badly, causing convulsions or worse.”

“Our team here at KIDZ is very good at making the proper diagnosis, testing children with CT scans or MRIs to visualize 3D or 4D pictures of the heart and working with our surgeons to maximize outcomes,” he said.

At times, the KIDZ Medical team even goes a step beyond to help a child in need.

“We had a mother come in the other day with a sick child, and they hadn’t eaten for days,” said Dr. Aldousany. “We made sure they left our office with plenty of food.”

To learn more about KIDZ Medical’s pediatric cardiology care, visit <https://www.kidzmedical.com/pediatric-services/cardiology>.

E-mail Your Editorial Submissions to
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YOUR HEART COULD NOT BE IN BETTER HANDS

The Robson Heart & Vascular Institute at Jupiter Medical Center is transforming cardiovascular care. At the forefront of innovative heart and vascular treatments we take a multidisciplinary approach combining expertise with leading-edge technology to provide personalized care. Our compassionate team includes cardiologists, interventional and structural cardiologists, cardiac electrophysiologists, cardiac surgeons, and an experienced support team. Modern technology and minimally invasive techniques offer patients the latest treatment options including:

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- Barostim™ for Heart Failure
- Cardiac robotic surgery
- Advanced cardiac surgery including off-pump bypass surgery

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 JUPITER MEDICAL CENTER



Delray Medical Center First Hospital in Palm Beach County to Offer Concomitant Atrial Fibrillation Ablation and Left Atrial Appendage Closure Procedure

Delray Medical Center is the first hospital in Palm Beach County to offer a procedure to treat a patient with non-valvular atrial fibrillation (AFib), using a combination of advanced technology to destroy targeted areas in the heart associated with abnormal heart rhythms and concurrent implantation of a left atrial appendage closure device.

The first minimally invasive surgery at the hospital combining the two treatments in a single procedure was performed by Yoel Vivas, M.D., a cardiologist and board-certified clinical cardiac electrophysiologist, who serves as the Director of Delray Medical Center's Electrophysiology Department.

For the procedure at Delray Medical Center, Dr. Vivas used the hospital's FARAPULSE™ Pulsed Field Ablation System to ablate the patient's problematic heart tissue and avoid damage to surrounding structures. The system, which received approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in January 2024, relies on tissue-selective, non-thermal electric fields to destroy the heart tissue.

As part of the same procedure, Dr. Vivas placed an umbrella-shaped device, known as a WATCHMAN™ implant, in the patient's left atrial appendage through a catheter inserted into a large blood vessel, sealing the opening to this area and preventing blood clot formation. Over time, new heart tissue grows over the implant and permanently seals off the left atrial appendage.

Jupiter Medical Center Achieves Milestone in Heart Health

Jupiter Medical Center proudly announces the successful completion of its first Transcatheter Pulmonic Valve Replacement (TPVR), a revolutionary and minimally invasive option for patients with congenital heart disease. This milestone positions Jupiter Medical Center as the first facility in Palm Beach County to offer this advanced procedure, providing local patients with a closer, more accessible alternative.

The procedure was performed by a highly skilled team led by Augusto Villa, M.D., Interventional Cardiologist and Medical Director of the Structural Heart Program, alongside Arthur Katz, M.D., a cardiovascular surgeon.

The TPVR procedure utilizes the Harmony™ Transcatheter Pulmonary Valve (TPV) System, which is delivered via a catheter inserted through a vein and guided to the heart. Once positioned, the valve expands and begins functioning immediately. This advanced technique is designed to delay the need for open-heart surgery, and results in shorter recovery times, reduced hospital stays, and an overall enhanced patient experience.

Dr. Villa stated, "We are thrilled to bring this level of cardiovascular innovation to our community. Our goal is to enhance the quality of life for our patients by offering state-of-the-art procedures right here in Jupiter."

We See Expertise

Precision. Teamwork. Resilience. Leadership. You'll find it all and more at Broward Health. Every day, our clinical teams utilize their skills and work together to help patients live better, healthier futures. To learn more about the personalized treatment you can trust for your patients, visit [BrowardHealth.org](https://www.browardhealth.org).

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Memorial Cardiac and Vascular Institute Celebrates Impressive Growth, Expansion

BY VANESSA ORR

In 2025, the Memorial Cardiac and Vascular Institute's Total Heart Center will mark its 10th anniversary performing adult heart transplants, but that's not the only reason that they're celebrating. This past year was a remarkable year for Memorial with more procedures performed than ever before—and they've got even bigger plans for the future.

"Our volume of growth was unprecedented in 2024; our surgeons performed 854 cardiac surgeries, which is a 12 percent growth over the previous year, and our structural heart surgeons performed 155 procedures, which is a 25 percent growth since last year," said Memorial Cardiac and Vascular Institute Vice President Michele Slane, R.N., B.S.N. "These numbers reflect not only our capabilities, but the growing trust of the community."

Slane adds that the adult heart transplant program also excelled, with surgeons performing 43 transplants in 2024, more than double the amount from the previous year. To mark the 10th anniversary of the program, a celebration will be held on Feb. 17, 2025 with previous transplant patients as well as those awaiting surgery. The center has performed nearly 150 transplants since its inception.

Each year, Memorial clinicians see more than 50,000 patients for different cardiac and vascular issues, and perform more than 10,000 procedures a year. The center excels in the areas of adult congenital heart disease (ACHD), arrhythmia, cardiology, electrophysiology, heart failure, heart imaging, heart surgery, heart transplant, cardiac rehabilitation, and also offers a Women's Heart Health program. The center is the market leader in Broward County for percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) and cardiac surgery, and also ranks in the top decile for highest patient satisfaction scores.

"Our high market share reflects our team's hard work, collaboration and unwavering commitment to patients," said Slane, adding that the center's multidisciplinary approach contributes to the institute's success.

Memorial's Cardiac and Vascular Institute is also committed to the future of cardiac and vascular care and has established a graduate medical education cardiology fellowship, which is now in its third year. A cornerstone of the institution, the fellowship enables the health system to nurture the next generation of

cardiologists and fortifies its commitment to excellence for years to come.

Memorial has also earned numerous accreditations in the past year. Its Advanced Heart Failure Program was recently reaccredited by the American College of Cardiology and the Joint Commission recently recertified its Ventricular Assist Device for the 10th consecutive year.

"As the only hospital in South Florida accredited for adult congenital heart disease, we give hope to all of these patients who in the past would not have lived past age 20," said Slane. "Now they are living full lives; we are actually following more than 2,500 adult congenital patients in our health system."

Memorial Regional Hospital has also been recognized with the Center of Excellence Gold Level ELSO Award for Excellence in Life Support from the Extracorporeal Life Support Organization (ELSO). The hospital provides advanced therapy using an ECMO (Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygen-



Michele Slane

ation) machine to temporarily replace the function of the heart and lungs of critically ill patients recovering from severe lung damage or heart failure. Memorial's outcomes are even better than ELSO's benchmarks and it is sought out by other hospitals to treat their ECMO patients.

Memorial Cardiac and Vascular Institute is also on the leading edge of innovative procedures to help heart patients; for example, utilizing transcatheter aortic valve replacement, or TAVR, to provide a less-invasive procedure than aortic valve replacement surgery. The center will also be introducing pulmonary valve replacements in the near future for patients with congenital heart disease.

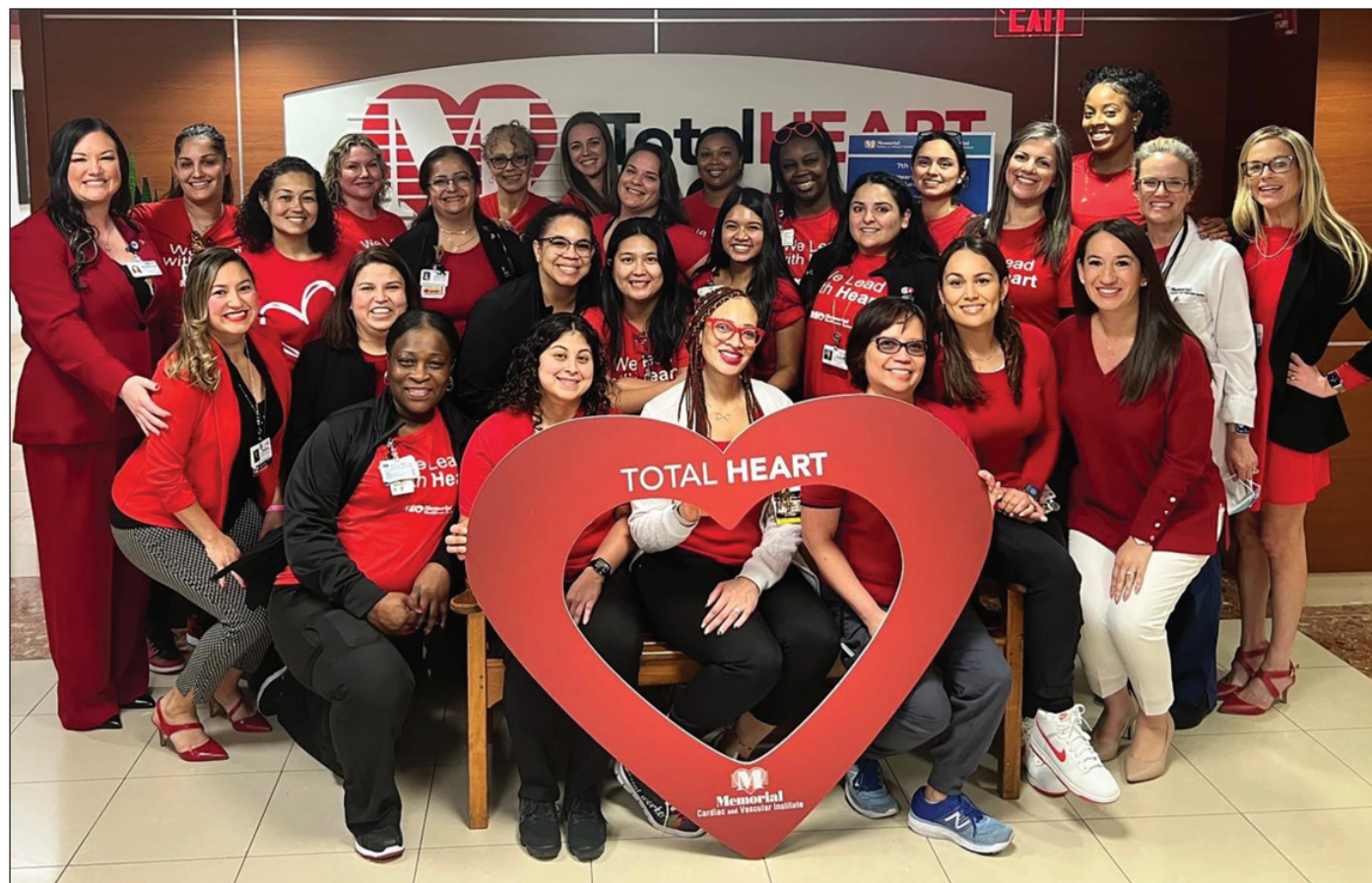
"For more than 15 years, we have maintained a 3-star rating—the highest rating available—from the Society of Thoracic surgeons," said Slane. "This level of consistency speaks volumes about our commitment to quality and safety in cardiac surgery and to our

patients." She adds that the center is currently in the process of earning a Vascular Accreditation from the American College of Surgeons as well.

As Memorial's programs continue to grow, future plans include the opening of a \$14 million "one-stop-shop" on the campus of Memorial Hospital West. The more than 20,000 sq. ft. building, which is slated to open in November, will provide a comprehensive range of services that patients can access in one location.

Memorial leadership is also exploring the possibility of expanding a tower at Memorial Regional, the flagship for the healthcare system, in order to construct new operating rooms and private rooms. When that project is finished in a few years, the cardiac and vascular institute's Total Heart Center will double in size, providing more room for heart failure, transplant, valve, and adult congenital heart disease patients.

To learn more about the Memorial Cardiac and Vascular Institute, visit www.mhs.net/services/heart-and-vascular-institute.



Total Heart Center staff

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UHealth Cardiovascular Division Expands and Advances in Cardiac Electrophysiology Research and Care

New specialists, innovative technologies and personalized medicine bring academic-level care to South Florida patients.

BY KIMBERLY BOBSON FELDMAN

To meet the increasing need for academic-level heart care, the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine at UHealth—University of Miami Health System and the Miller School of Medicine has expanded with innovative therapies and new services while adding physicians and staff to its regional facilities.

“We are continuously recruiting talented faculty, physician-scientists and support staff to deliver the finest patient care, offer innovative diagnostic and therapeutic technologies, conduct leading-edge research and provide top-class education,” said Yiannis Chatzizisis, M.D., Ph.D., professor of medicine and chief of the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine.

New Physicians

The division will serve patients from UHealth’s satellite network from Kendall to West Palm Beach, including the new UHealth Doral recently opened and UHealth SoLé Mia, scheduled to open in 2025. The talented roster of new specialists includes:

Omar Wever-Pinzon, M.D., associate professor of clinical, section chief, Heart Failure, Mechanical Circulatory Support, and Heart Transplantation University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Hospital/Miami Transplant Institute

Beteal Ashinne, M.D., M.P.H., who focuses on coronary artery disease, lipidology, preventive cardiology, echocardiography and nuclear cardiology. Dr. Ashinne is a foundational member of the division’s comprehensive Preventive Cardiology program.

George Degheim, M.D., a general car-



Dr. Yiannis Chatzizisis (left) and Dr. Nikolaos Spiliadis performing a procedure in the UHealth Cardiac Catheterization Lab

diologist and echocardiography specialist.

David Weininger Cohen, M.D., a clinical cardiology and imaging specialist with experience in echocardiography, will join the division this summer.

Maria Delgado-Lelievre, M.D., is an assistant professor of medicine and founder of UHealth’s Comprehensive Hypertension Center.

Pedro Cox, M.D., M.P.H., associate professor of interventional and structural cardiology, is medical director of the UHealth Structural Heart Disease program.

Nikolaos Spiliadis, M.D., assistant professor of interventional and structural cardiology at the Miller School, has performed leading-edge procedures to help patients with structural heart disease, hypertension and other conditions.

Thanh Duong-Wagner, M.D., a general cardiology specialist with expertise in cardiovascular imaging, including 3D,

transesophageal and stress echocardiography. She practices general cardiology at UHealth’s multispecialty clinic at West Palm Beach.

Pedro Covas, M.D., a specialist in structural heart imaging with a focus on echocardiography and cardiovascular computed tomography, will return this summer to UM, his undergraduate alma mater.

Personalized Treatment

For people with irregular heart rhythms, the best course of treatment depends on the patient. This is the primary focus of UHealth’s cardiac electrophysiology team of specialists. Nationally renowned faculty members are leading multiple national research studies and employing the latest tools to customize and develop new treatments for patients who need care for abnormal heartbeats and other disorders related to the electrical biology of the heart.

“Together with a team of nurse practitioners, nurses and dietitians, we work with patients to customize a treatment plan to help patients who are overweight and obese lose weight, optimize blood pressure treatment, reduce alcohol intake for those patients who drink alcohol regularly, optimize blood sugar control for patients with diabetes and direct patients with obstructive sleep apnea to our sleep specialists for treatment,” said Raul Mitrani, M.D., director of cardiac electrophysiology and professor of clinical medicine.

Coupled with groundbreaking advancements such as the extra-vascular ICD—championed by Litsa Lambrakos, M.D., associate professor of medicine in clinical cardiac electrophysiology, who was first in Florida to implement—UHealth’s commitment to transforming patient care in cardiac arrhythmias is unmatched.

In a review published online in the journal *Circulation: Arrhythmia and Electrophysiology*, Dr. Jeffrey Goldberger, M.D., M.B.A, professor of medicine and biomedical engineering at the Miller School, and his coauthors examined the field’s latest clinical trials for catheter ablation. To better help patients achieve optimal outcomes, the team called for future work that advances treatments to be tailored for age, body composition, risk for stroke and other factors.

This research is just one of several federally funded research projects the team is currently involved in.

For more information, visit: <http://umiamihealth.org/cardiovascular>

Memorial Cardiac and Vascular Institute to Host Cardiac and Vascular Care Symposia

Memorial Cardiac and Vascular Institute will host three upcoming learning opportunities in Hollywood. Each will provide information and best practices to cardiac and vascular caregivers about current topics and trends within their area of specialization.

8th Annual Total Heart Symposium Saturday, February 15, 2025 Memorial Regional Hospital Conference Center

This event will feature presentations from Memorial clinicians on topics specific to adult congenital heart disease, heart transplantation, and heart failure care. CEUs, CMEs, and CEPTCs will be offered for MD, APP, RN, RT, Clinical Exercise Physiologists, and Pharm D. For more information or to become a sponsor, connect at TotalHeartCenter@mhs.net or (954) 265-7750.

Memorial Healthcare System & UPMC Procirca Winter Adult ECMO Academy Thursday, February 20- Friday, February 21, 2025 Memorial Regional Hospital Conference Center

This simulation course is designed for the bedside ECMO caregiver, including physicians, physician assistants, perfusionists, nurses, nurse practitioners, ECMO specialists, and respiratory therapists. It will offer high-fidelity simulation training that provides a well-rounded look at caring for an adult ECMO patient. Attendees will troubleshoot ECMO scenarios while learning cannulation techniques. For more information, contact Erin August at eaugust@mhs.net. Register at <https://cce.upmc.com/memorial-healthcare-system-upmc-procirca-winter-adult-ecmo-academy-2025>

Cardiovascular Symposium Friday, February 28- Saturday, March 1, 2025 Memorial Regional Hospital Conference Center

This event will provide actionable information about emerging trends in cardiovascular medicine. It will focus on the prevention and treatment of hypertension and dyslipidemias, stable and unstable CAD, atrial fibrillation and PVC-induced cardiomyopathy, advanced heart failure, cardio oncology, cardio obesity, vascular disease, catheter-based interventions, and adult congenital heart disease. For further information, contact Anthony Vempala at avempala@mhs.net or (954) 265-5112.



Profiles In Cardiology

GOOD SAMARITAN MEDICAL CENTER

Brijeshwar Maini, MD

Brijeshwar Maini, M.D., FACC, is a structural interventional cardiologist on staff at Good Samaritan Medical Center and Delray Medical Center. A physician, academician, inventor with multiple global patents and entrepreneur with multiple FDA approved cardiovascular devices, Dr. Maini has dedicated his career to advancing cardiovascular medicine.

Dr. Maini previously served as National and Florida Medical Director of Cardiology for Tenet Healthcare, where he developed cutting-edge interventional and structural heart programs. He was instrumental in establishing a state-of-the-art structural heart program at Delray Medical Center and led numerous groundbreaking research trials in cardiovascular interventions. As a Clinical Professor of Medicine at Florida Atlantic University's Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, Dr. Maini has trained future cardiologists, along with being widely published, has received accolades for program excellence. A pioneer in minimally invasive cardiac procedures, Dr. Maini continues to improve patient outcomes, mentor the next generation of cardiovascular specialists and drive preventative cardiovascular care in South Florida.



Narayn Pillai, MD, FACC

Narayn Pillai, MD, FACC, is a distinguished general and interventional cardiologist in West Palm Beach, Florida, known for his expertise in diagnosing and managing heart and vascular diseases. He is board-certified in cardiology, interventional cardiology, nuclear cardiology, and echocardiography. Dr. Pillai has earned a reputation for compassionate patient care and commitment to advancing cardiovascular health. He specializes in the radial approach for cardiac catheterization, performing the majority of his procedures through the arm allowing faster recovery time and reducing complication rates. He was instrumental in bringing shockwave intravascular lithotripsy to Good Samaritan Medical Center which uses sound waves to break up calcium deposits in heavily calcified coronary arteries by creating microfractures before stenting. He has extensive expertise in peripheral endovascular interventions, successfully treating conditions that affect arteries and veins. Dr. Pillai earned his medical degree from JIPMER in Pondicherry, India. He completed his fellowship in Cardiology at UMass Memorial Medical Center, Cardiac Imaging fellowship at Yale New Haven Medical Center, and Interventional Cardiology fellowship at University of Cincinnati. Dr. Pillai spent three years in academia at University of Cincinnati, where he taught residents and cardiology fellows.



Dr. Malissa Wood Honored with Prestigious 2025 Bernadine Healy Leadership in Women's Cardiovascular Disease Award

Recognized nationally for her leadership and service to the field of cardiovascular disease in women, Dr. Malissa Wood, vice president and chief physician executive for the Lee Health Heart Institute, has been named the winner of the prestigious 2025 Bernadine Healy Leadership in Women's Cardiovascular Disease Award from the American College of Cardiology (ACC). Dr. Wood joined Lee Health in 2023. She has been



instrumental in expanding the cardiology service line across both acute and ambulatory care settings. Under her leadership, the Lee Health Heart Institute has reinforced its status as the premier center for cardiovascular care in Southwest Florida. Dr. Wood joined Lee Health after a tenure at Massachusetts General Hospital, where she served as Associate Chief of Cardiology and co-director of the Corrigan Women's Heart Health Program. She also held the Cathy E. Minehan Chair for Cardiovascular Disease in Women and was an associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. Dr. Wood received her Doctorate of Medicine from the University of Missouri Kansas City, and she completed both her Internal Medicine and Cardiology training at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center/Harvard Medical School, where she served as chief medical resident. Her research endeavors focus on the cardiovascular health of athletes and high-risk populations. Dr. Wood has also been an instrumental part of the Happy Heart Trial. She has worked with the U.S. Olympic Committee and elite athletes from Harvard University.

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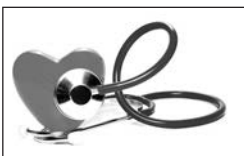
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Profiles In Cardiology

MEMORIAL REGIONAL HOSPITAL

Ama Annor, MD

An advanced imaging cardiologist, Dr. Ama Annor appreciates how her specialty enables her to piece together the patient's story.

"Echocardiograms, cardiac CTs, and MRI all paint a detailed picture of different parts of the heart, enabling us to diagnose and treat cardiovascular disease," said Dr. Annor, who came to Memorial Healthcare System in 2024 following advanced cardiovascular imaging fellowship training. "The images also help patients better understand their situation, often empowering and motivating them to make lifestyle changes or take medications."

A native of Ghana whose parents were healthcare professionals, Dr. Annor says that while a person's diet, exercise, and whether they smoke are significant determinants of heart health, socioeconomic status and health literacy also play important roles, since social support and knowledge often provide the impetus required to commit to change.



Annie Ho, MD

While Dr. Annie Ho is a fellowship-trained cardiologist, there lies within her the spirit of a teacher, a vocation she pursued while becoming a physician. The South Florida native taught biology for a year at her alma mater, Everglades High School, after earning an undergraduate degree and before beginning medical school. "I knew the experience would make me a better doctor. Teaching is patience and ingenuity, and everyone learns differently, so I developed styles and techniques to best deliver knowledge," said Dr. Ho.

Today that approach manifests itself in the education she is able to provide patients, fellows trained through Memorial's Graduate Medical Education program in cardiology, and as a professor at Florida International University.

The eldest of four children in her family - she jokes that she was teaching even as a child - Dr. Ho is also a lifelong learner that keeps up to date on advancements in cardiology and is excited about the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) innovations on the future of medicine.



MEMORIAL DIVISION OF CARDIAC SERVICES

Anand Desai, MD

A fellowship-trained, adult cardiologist at Memorial Cardiac and Vascular Institute, Dr. Anand Desai believes being open-minded and flexible helps him guide patients to better outcomes.

"I listen to my patients and tailor care to best fit their needs," said Dr. Desai, whose own father was an interventional cardiologist while he was growing up. "Some have difficulty maintaining an exercise program, others have dietary sensitivities, or issues with certain medications. It's important to adjust to their sensitivities."

Ethnicity also plays a role in the diagnostic process, with Hispanics, African-Americans, and South Asians more predisposed to coronary artery disease, which Dr. Desai primarily treats, along with congestive heart failure, than Caucasians. In those cases and others, the Indiana University grad focuses on educating those in his care about the risks of their condition and ensuring compliance with prescribed medications.



Fergie J. Losiniecki, MD, FACC, FHRS

The working rhythm of the electrophysiology lab, which can appear chaotic but is actually a highly-coordinated environment, is what initially drew Dr. Fergie Losiniecki to become a cardiac electrophysiologist, a sub-specialty where less than 10% of the operators are board-certified women.

"Patients and other physicians are often surprised to see a woman working in this space," said Dr. Losiniecki, whose fellowship training at the Medical University of South Carolina provided expertise in complex catheter ablation, lead extraction, and cardiac pacing. "I'm grateful for the training that allows me to perform procedures that enable medically-complex patients to live better lives, even if that took some pioneering of uncharted territory for someone like me." Dr. Losiniecki notes that hers is one of the few medical specialties where physicians are able to lessen the amount of medication a patient requires. A South Floridian by way of Ecuador and Argentina, she joined Memorial Healthcare System in 2024.



MEMORIAL DIVISION OF CARDIAC SURGERY

Juan Plate, MD

Dr. Juan Plate is a cardiothoracic surgeon and chief of Adult Cardiac Surgical Services at Memorial Cardiac and Vascular Institute. He is also actively involved in cardiothoracic research.

"I knew I wanted to pursue a career in medicine from a very young age," said Dr. Plate. "It was important to me to help people, and I later discovered how much impact I could have in cardiology. It's a constantly-evolving field that consistently delivers new tools and ways to treat the many areas of the heart."

While technology and innovation continue to move his specialty forward, Dr. Plate also values the patient and family-centered care Memorial is known for. He says the approach is the cornerstone of his practice and involving all those closely connected to the patient helps ensure comfort with the direction of the care plan.



Michael Cortelli, MD

Dr. Michael Cortelli is a cardiovascular and thoracic surgeon and chief of Memorial Cardiac and Vascular Institute. His areas of specialty include minimally invasive surgical ablation of atrial fibrillation, mitral valve surgery, and mechanical circulatory support.

Like many physicians, Dr. Cortelli was inspired to pursue a career in medicine after seeing what a family member experienced while he was a child. "My father had heart disease at a very young age, so in the back of my mind I was always interested in cardiac care," said the fellowship-trained physician. "I love coming to the operating room, doing surgery, and taking care of patients. This is what I was meant to do."

On his approach to patients, Dr. Cortelli says, "I'm going to take care of them like they're one of my family members. If I recommend surgery or another treatment option, they should know it's the same opinion I would give to my mother or father."



JOE DIMAGGIO CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

David Drossner, MD

Dr. David Drossner is a pediatric and fetal cardiologist that has built his practice on the relationships, support, and expertise he can provide families coping with various forms of congenital and acquired cardiovascular issues, including those associated with genetic and lipid disorders.

"With prenatal screening, I'm able to provide diagnosis, treatment, and assistance before a child is born," said Dr. Drossner, medical director of fetal cardiology for Memorial Healthcare System's north region. "It's incredibly rewarding to work alongside families as they strive to give their children the healthiest, happiest lives possible."

Dr. Drossner says communication is at the core of the relationships he builds, with reassurance, guidance and compassion softening sometimes difficult conversations. "I treat every patient and family with the same care and openness I'd want for my own family, if the roles were reversed."



Katelyn Snyder, MD

Dr. Katelyn Snyder is many things: a pediatric and fetal cardiologist, mechanical engineer, and medical director within Memorial Healthcare System. But it's a non-professional designation, mother, that best helps her understand and relate to patients.

"The shared experience of being pregnant and having a baby matters," said Dr. Snyder. "While my kids didn't have congenital heart issues, the emotions, anxiety, and post-partum feelings are common ground in our relationship."

That relationship, and the trust that's built during pregnancy and after the child is born, enables the doctor to have the hard conversations about cardiac issues that are identified through screening in utero. That early diagnosis is invaluable, providing the time to understand complexities, prepare, and make decisions about pre and post-natal care. "I've known these women longer than their baby has been alive. We've shared moments in life and become friends," said Dr. Snyder.





Profiles In Cardiology

MEMORIAL CARDIAC AND VASCULAR INSTITUTE

Namita Joseph, MD

While much of the work Dr. Namita Joseph does treating patients with advanced or end-stage heart failure involves highly technical medical and device therapies, it is the empathy gained from seeing her own family members struggle with life-changing illnesses that enables her to be a guiding light for patients.

"I've experienced the same fear and uncertainty, and work very hard to mitigate concerns about their diagnosis, the trajectory of the disease, affording medications, and whether they can return to work," said Dr. Joseph. "Part of my approach is to establish trust that helps redirect that energy."

The connections she is able to build make having hard conversations about the reality of a patient's situation, which most often involve the need for mechanical heart pumps and the likelihood of transplant, a little easier. "It's important to convey the seriousness of what they are facing with a balance between providing too much information or not enough. I try to meet the patient where they are at and with what they can handle at that time."



ST. MARY'S MEDICAL CENTER

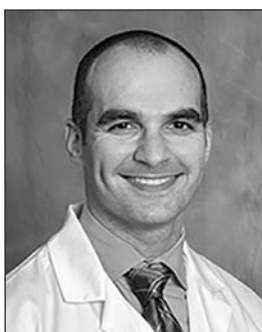
Elliot Pearson, MD

Dr. Elliot Pearson is a pediatric cardiologist affiliated with Palm Beach Children's Hospital at St. Mary's Medical Center. Since joining Kidz Medical Services and the Children's Hospital in 2015, Dr. Pearson has been dedicated to providing exceptional care to his young patients. He is board-certified in pediatric cardiology and general pediatrics.

Dr. Pearson earned his Bachelor of Science in Neuroscience and Behavioral Biology from Emory University before pursuing his Doctor of Medicine with Research Distinction at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. He completed his residency at Holtz Children's Hospital at Jackson Memorial in Miami, Florida, followed by a fellowship in pediatric cardiology at Duke University Medical Center in Durham, NC.

Before earning his medical degree, Dr. Pearson gained valuable research experience as a Neurobiology Research Assistant at Florida Atlantic University and as a Molecular Biology Research Assistant at Massachusetts General Hospital. With over a decade of clinical experience and numerous accolades, he brings a wealth of expertise and passion to his field.

Dr. Pearson's favorite part of his work is building meaningful connections with children and their families.



Lauren A. Huntress, MD

Dr. Lauren A. Huntress is a vascular surgeon on staff at St. Mary's, and West Boca Medical Centers. She has been with the Palm Beach Health Network since 2023, joining the

Prime Vascular Institute, a vascular and endovascular surgery practice founded by Dr. Joseph

Ricotta. Dr. Huntress graduated with her Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry and Hispanic Studies from Boston College and earned her Master of Biomedical Sciences from University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. In 2018, she graduated from Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School earning her Doctor of Medicine, where she also completed her Integrated Vascular Surgery Residency. In 2022, she became a Registered Physician in Vascular Interpretation (RPVI) for performing, reading, and interpreting vascular ultrasound.

Dr. Huntress is Board Certified by the American Board of Vascular Surgery. Her favorite part of being a vascular surgeon is providing comprehensive medical and surgical care for a wide variety of complex pathologies and giving patients back their quality of life.



PALM BEACH GARDENS MEDICAL CENTER

Emilio L. Garcia, MD

Dr. Emilio L. Garcia is a fellowship-trained, quadruple board-certified specialist in cardiology, internal medicine, interventional cardiology, and nuclear cardiology. He is proud to serve patients at Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center and Good Samaritan Medical Center.

Dr. Garcia earned his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Miami and completed his medical degree at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. He went on to pursue a cardiology fellowship at the University of Florida College of medicine, where he honed his expertise in treating a wide range of cardiac conditions, including coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, and cardiomyopathy.

Dedicated to educating patients about their health, Dr. Garcia prioritizes compassion and comprehensive, patient-centered care. He emphasizes the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles to empower his patients in taking charge of their cardiac health.



Neerav Shah, MD

Dr. Neerav Shah is board certified in cardiology and interventional cardiology, with more than 22 years of experience. Dr. Shah received his medical degree at the University of Miami and completed his internship and residency at the University of Alabama-Birmingham. He completed both his Cardiology and Interventional Cardiology fellowships at the University of Miami in Florida.

Dr. Shah has maintained fellowship with the American College of Cardiology and Society for Cardiovascular Angiography Interventions. He has held a variety of leadership positions at Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center, including chairman of interventional cardiology and chairman of cardiology.

Dr. Shah's main interests are complex coronary intervention and peripheral vascular intervention.



WEST BOCA MEDICAL CENTER

Oral A. Waldo, MD

Dr. Oral A. Waldo is a cardiologist serving patients at West Boca Medical Center, Delray Medical Center, Good Samaritan Medical Center, and Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center. He holds a Bachelor's in Biological Science and a Master's in Biomedical Science from Florida Atlantic University. He earned his Doctor of Medicine from Howard University College of Medicine and completed his internal medicine residency and cardiovascular diseases fellowship at the prestigious Mayo School of Graduate Medical Education.

Board-certified in internal medicine, as well as general and nuclear cardiology, Dr. Waldo has a background in education, having served as a teaching assistant at Florida Atlantic University, an adjunct professor at Broward Community College, and a MedStar tutor at Howard University College of Medicine.

Dr. Waldo finds great joy in connecting with his patients, helping to relieve their symptoms, and offering them hope.

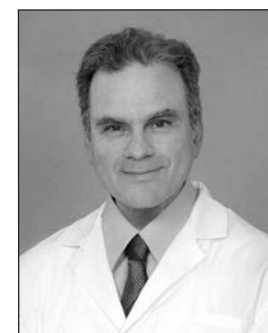


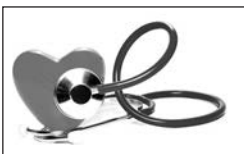
Ronald M. Gabor, MD

Ronald M. Gabor, M.D., is a board-certified cardiologist with the American Board of Internal Medicine and has been serving the Boca Raton community since 1999. Specializing in preventive cardiology, valvular heart disease, and heart failure, Dr. Gabor is committed to providing personalized care to his patients. He is on staff at West Boca Medical Center and Delray Medical Center.

Dr. Gabor earned his medical degree from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, where he also completed his residency and internship in internal medicine. He completed his cardiology fellowship at the University of Miami and Jackson Memorial Hospital.

Recognized as a Castle Connolly Top Doctor, Dr. Gabor is fluent in English, French, and Hungarian, ensuring accessible care for a diverse patient population.





Profiles In Cardiology

DELRAY MEDICAL CENTER

Tilak Pasala, MD

Dr. Tilak Pasala serves as the Medical Director of Structural Heart Disease at Delray Medical Center, specializing in advanced catheter-based treatments for complex valvular disorders. A nationally recognized authority in structural cardiology, Dr. Pasala has authored over 50 peer-reviewed articles, 12 book chapters, and served as principal investigator in more than eight medical device trials.

He is an expert in transcatheter procedures, including TAVR, TEER (MitraClip and TriClip), Watchman, Amulet, and other cutting-edge techniques for mitral, tricuspid, and pulmonary valve disease, as well as PFO and ASD closure. Dr. Pasala also excels in complex coronary and peripheral interventions, including stent placement, atherectomy, and circulatory support.

Previously, he held leadership roles at Hackensack University Medical Center and AdventHealth Orlando and trained fellows as a program director. Dr. Pasala's advanced training includes fellowships at Case Western Reserve University, the University of Utah, and Hackensack University Medical Center.



Michael Schechter, MD

Dr. Michael Schechter, M.D., is a board-certified interventional cardiologist at the Advanced Heart and Vascular Institute in Boca Raton, Florida and on staff at Delray Medical Center. With specialized expertise structural heart disease, including transcatheter aortic valve replacement, transcatheter mitral valve repair, ASD closure and left atrial appendage occlusion. Dr. Schechter delivers advanced care to patients with complex cardiovascular conditions.

Dr. Schechter completed his internship in internal medicine from the VA Caribbean Healthcare System in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He continued his post graduate training at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston for his residency in internal medicine, and fellowships in cardiovascular disease, and interventional cardiology (coronary, peripheral, structural). He also specializes in cardio-oncology, completing that fellowship at MD Anderson Cancer Hospital.

A graduate of the Universidad Central del Caribe School of Medicine, Dr. Schechter also holds a bachelor's degree in biology and nutrition from Cornell University.

Dr. Schechter also holds an appointment at FAU School of Medicine as visiting Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine in Cardiovascular Disease.



BAPTIST HEALTH SOUTH FLORIDA

Makoto Hashimoto, MD

Makoto Hashimoto, M.D., is an internationally renowned cardiac surgeon on staff at Florida International University (FIU) and Baptist Health South Florida. Dr. Hashimoto is professor and director of robotic cardiac surgery at FIU Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine. He sees patients at Baptist Health Miami Cardiac & Vascular Institute, located at Baptist Health Baptist Hospital, and performs surgeries at Baptist Hospital and Baptist Health South Miami Hospital. Dr. Hashimoto is the first physician to be jointly recruited by the two institutions which highlights their shared commitment to advancing health care in South Florida and attracting top-tier talent from around the globe. Dr. Hashimoto specializes in robotic and minimally invasive cardiac surgery procedures, which provide a safer, more advanced alternative to open-heart surgery, allowing patients to recover faster and resume their normal activities sooner.

Before joining FIU and Baptist Health, Hashimoto served as director of the Center of Minimally Invasive Cardiac Surgery and Robotic Cardiac Surgery at Sapporo University. Hashimoto earned his medical degree at Shimane University School of Medicine and a Ph.D. in Medical Science at Sapporo Medical University, both in Japan. He completed two cardiac surgery residencies and two cardiovascular fellowships. He is fluent in English, Japanese and Finnish, and has published numerous scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals.



Joseph McGinn, III, MD

Joseph McGinn III, M.D., is a cardiothoracic surgeon with Baptist Health Heart & Vascular Care, specializing in adult cardiac surgery. Dr. McGinn joins his father, Joseph McGinn, Jr., M.D., who is the chief of cardiac surgery at Miami Cardiac & Vascular Institute. The pair do work together occasionally to perform minimally invasive cardiac surgery including the CABG (Coronary Artery Bypass Grafting) procedure, which improves blood flow to the heart by rerouting blood around blocked or narrowed coronary arteries. Dr. McGinn also treats damaged valves by performing replacement surgery.

Before joining Baptist Health, Dr. McGinn completed his cardiothoracic surgery fellowship at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson, Mississippi. He earned his medical degree at The Commonwealth Medical College in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and completed his general surgery residency at the Hofstra Northwell School of Medicine in Uniondale, New York. Dr. McGinn is a frequent podium presenter at Surgical Society meetings across the country, and his research has been published in the Journal of Thoracic Disease, Surgery, and SHOCK. He is a fellow of the American Association for Thoracic Surgery and a member of the American College of Surgeons and the American Medical Association.



HOLY CROSS MEDICAL GROUP

Francisco Hidalgo, MD, FACC

Francisco Hidalgo, M.D., Fellow of the American College of Cardiology (F.A.C.C.), is a cardiologist with Holy Cross Medical Group since 2024, focusing on general cardiology, echocardiography, nuclear cardiology, valvular disease, coronary artery disease and heart failure. Fluent in English and Spanish. Dr. Hidalgo earned his Doctor of Medicine from Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia in Lima, Peru. In 2012, he immigrated to the United States for an internal medicine residency at Virginia Commonwealth University Health System in Richmond, Virginia. He then completed a cardiovascular disease fellowship at Westchester Medical Center/New York Medical College in Valhalla, New York and was simultaneously an instructor of medicine at the school. Prior to joining Holy Cross Medical Group, he worked as cardiologist and assistant professor at the University of Kentucky Hospital/ Gill Heart & Vascular Institute in Lexington, Kentucky and afterwards at ChenMed in Miami, Florida. Dr. Hidalgo is board certified in Cardiovascular Disease and Internal Medicine by the American Board of Internal Medicine. He is a diplomate of the National Board of Echocardiography, the Certification Board of Nuclear Cardiology and has a certificate from the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG).



Laura Fornos Verde, MD, MS, FACC

Cardiologist Laura Fornos Verde, M.D., M.S., Fellow of the American College of Cardiology (F.A.C.C.), recently joined Holy Cross Medical Group. Her focus areas include general cardiology, echocardiography, nuclear cardiology, valvular disease, coronary artery disease and heart failure. She is particularly interested in cardiovascular disease in women and preventive cardiology. A native of Brazil, she earned her Doctor of Medicine from Faculdade de Ciências Médicas de Santos in Santos and completed an internal medicine residency at Hospital Prof. Edmundo Vasconcelos in São Paulo. Prior to immigrating to the U.S., she worked as an emergency medicine, occupational health and internal medicine physician in Brazil. While enrolled in the Master of Science in Clinical Research program at Campbell University in North Carolina, Dr. Verde completed internal medicine residencies at Pitt County Memorial Hospital / East Carolina University at Brody School of Medicine in Greenville, North Carolina, where she later served as chief resident and completed a cardiology fellowship. She also taught classes at Campbell University School of Pharmacy and worked as a research assistant at Duke Clinical Research Institute. Prior to joining Holy Cross, Dr. Verde was a general cardiologist with Conviva Care Specialists. Fluent in English, Spanish and Portuguese, she is a member of the American College of Cardiology and American Society of Echocardiography.





Profiles In Cardiology

BROWARD HEALTH CORAL SPRINGS

Mohamed Osman, MD

Mohamed Osman, M.D., is an interventional cardiologist with the Broward Health Physician Group who serves as the medical director of the interventional cardiology program at Broward Health Coral Springs.

Dr. Osman performs minimally invasive procedures designed to improve the blood flow to the heart muscle and the vascular system, as well as minimally invasive cardiac valve procedures. He believes that the medical field provides a unique opportunity to help people and impact their lives in a very meaningful way. It's a field that requires many years of education and training, but it's definitely worth it. Board certified in cardiology, interventional cardiology and nuclear cardiology, Dr. Osman is fluent in both English and Arabic. He received his medical degree from Cairo University School of Medicine in Egypt. He completed an internal medicine residency at New York University, a cardiology fellowship at Good Samaritan Hospital in Ohio and an interventional cardiology fellowship at New York Medical College.



BROWARD HEALTH NORTH

Jonathan P. Nieves, MD

Jonathan P. Nieves, M.D., is a cardiac electrophysiologist specializing in the treatment of heart rhythm disorders using cardiac ablation procedures and implantable devices who recently joined the Broward Health Physician Group.

He has dedicated his career to empowering patients to live healthier and more fulfilling lives. What began with an innate curiosity about the human body and a profound desire to make a meaningful difference evolved into a deep commitment to providing compassionate care and advancing medical knowledge.

Dr. Nieves is board certified in internal medicine, cardiology and electrophysiology. He received his medical degree from Universidad Iberoamericana in the Dominican Republic, where he graduated cum laude. He completed an internship and residency in internal medicine at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, Florida. He then completed a general cardiology fellowship with the University of Miami consortium at JFK Medical Center in Atlantis, Florida, and finally a cardiac electrophysiology fellowship at Temple University Hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



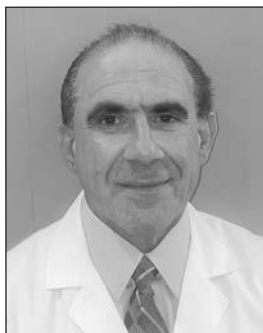
BROWARD HEALTH IMPERIAL POINT

Joel Gellman, MD, FACC

Joel Gellman, M.D., FACC, a Broward Health Physician Group cardiologist since 2010, is board certified in five specialties: cardiovascular disease, advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology, internal medicine, echocardiography and nuclear cardiology.

"My dad suffered from coronary artery disease for as long as I remember," said Dr. Gellman. "I became a cardiologist to treat people like him. I am blessed to practice both general and advanced heart failure cardiology, treating the sickest people as well as preventing serious cardiovascular disease in healthier people, and helping my patients live long, healthy lives."

The first board-certified advanced heart failure cardiologist in Broward County, Dr. Gellman completed fellowships in cardiology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in internal medicine at Harvard University and cardiovascular research at Yale University. He completed his internal medicine residency at the Massachusetts General Hospital and graduated with a medical degree from the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. He has been honored by the American College of Cardiology with the prestigious Merck Fellowship and the Centocor Career Development Award.



BROWARD HEALTH MEDICAL CENTER

Jose Baez-Escudero, MD

Jose Baez-Escudero, M.D., has spent over 20 years dedicated to advancing heart health. He currently serves as the first systemwide chief of cardiology and electrophysiology for the Broward Health Physician Group. "My goal is to contribute to positioning Broward Health as a leader in cardiology by strategically expanding specialty service lines to better serve our community," Dr. Baez said.

His vision includes building a team to offer modern electrophysiology services and expand the system's cardiac care. A native of Ecuador, Dr. Baez has a rich history of leadership, having served as chairman of cardiology and leading a cardiac fellowship program. He received his medical degree with a Valedictorian Honors Award from Universidad San Francisco de Quito and trained in internal medicine at Temple University in Philadelphia. He completed his cardiology fellowship at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston and a second fellowship in cardiac electrophysiology at the University of Chicago.



Alexander Justicz, MD

Alexander Justicz, M.D., is a board-certified cardiothoracic surgeon with the American Board of Thoracic Surgery. With over 40 years of experience, he currently practices with the Broward Health Physician Group. "My passion for cardiac care stems from a deep commitment to improving the lives of my patients," Dr. Justicz said. Specializing in adult cardiac surgery, Dr. Justicz performs a wide range of procedures, including aortic and mitral valve surgeries, TAVR, coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG), off-pump surgeries, the MAZE procedure for atrial fibrillation, TEER/MitraClip and aortic aneurysm surgery.

"I strive to combine compassion and innovation to provide the highest level of care," Dr. Justicz said. Dr. Justicz earned his undergraduate degree from Harvard University and graduated cum laude with his medical degree from Emory University School of Medicine. He completed his internship and residency in general and cardiothoracic surgery at Emory University-affiliated hospitals, followed by a fellowship in both cardiothoracic surgery and research.



JUPITER MEDICAL CENTER

David S. Weisman, MD, FHRS

Dr. David Weisman is a board certified, fellowship trained, cardiac electrophysiologist and medical director of clinical cardiac electrophysiology at Jupiter Medical Center's Robson Heart and Vascular Institute. He is an integral part of a multidisciplinary team of experts utilizing leading-edge technology to provide personalized treatment plans for each patient. He received his medical degree from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, completed his residency at Wake Forest University School of Medicine, Winston-Salem, NC, and his fellowship training at Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia, PA. Dr. Weisman is experienced in a variety of minimally invasive procedures, he was one of the first in the country to develop a technique offering patients ablation procedures without fluoroscopy. He believes it is of the utmost importance to limit radiation during cardiac procedures and has made this the cornerstone of his practice.



Vivek Patel, MD, FACS

Dr. Vivek Patel is a board certified, fellowship trained, cardiothoracic surgeon at Jupiter Medical Center's Robson Heart and Vascular Institute. He believes in utilizing the newest techniques and minimally invasive procedures to allow his patients to live to their best potential. He received his medical degree from Sri Ramachandra Medical College and Research Institute in Chennai, India, his cardiothoracic surgery training took place at Strong Memorial Hospital, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY and his fellowship in aortic surgery took place at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Pittsburgh, PA. Prior to joining Jupiter Medical Center he served as an Assistant Professor of Surgery at UT Health East Texas and Director of Cardiothoracic Surgery. Dr. Patel is experienced in the minimally invasive treatment of a variety of cardiothoracic disorders as well as cardiac robotic surgery procedures. He believes his primary responsibility is to protect his patients and provide care that will improve their quality of life.



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Urologist William J. Tingle, MD, FACS, Joins Baptist Health Urology

Board-certified urologist William J. Tingle, M.D., FACS, has joined Baptist Health Urology. He has more than 30 years of experience in his field and specializes in the treatment of kidney stones, benign prostatic hyperplasia, erectile dysfunction, voiding dysfunction and prostate cancer.

Prior to joining Baptist Health, Dr. Tingle was a urologist at Florida Urology Specialists in Sarasota, FL.

Dr. Tingle earned his medical degree at the University of Florida College of Medicine in Gainesville. He remained at the University of Florida to complete a general surgery internship and a urology residency at UF Health Shands Hospital.



Dr. William J. Tingle

Cleveland Clinic Welcomes New Concierge Physicians in Stuart

Evgeny "Gene" Goldman, M.D., is a concierge medicine physician at the Cleveland Clinic Family Health Center in Stuart. He earned his undergraduate degree in health science from Purdue University before obtaining his medical degree from St. Matthew's University School of Medicine. Following medical school, he completed his family medicine residency at Columbus Regional Hospital, where he had the privilege of training at Fort Benning Martin Army Hospital. He further specialized by completing a primary care sports medicine fellowship at the University of Mississippi.

Dr. Goldman previously served at Halifax Health in Daytona Beach, where he was core faculty for the family medicine residency program and an associate professor at the Florida State University School of Medicine. He also held the position of team physician for the Cincinnati Reds' minor league affiliate before relocating to South Florida and continuing his focus on primary care.

Concierge medicine physician Monica Brown, D.O., has also joined the medical staff at the Cleveland Clinic Family Health Center in Stuart.

Dr. Brown began her academic journey at the University of Southern California, where she majored in psychology. Her passion for understanding the human mind and behavior eventually led her to pursue a medical degree at Nova Southeastern University in Florida. She then completed her residency at Wellington Regional Medical Center, solidifying her dedication to patient care and medicine.

For the past decade, Dr. Brown has focused her career on senior care and Medicare-age patients.



Dr. Evgeny Goldman



Dr. Monica Brown

Natalia Rincon Buendia, MD, MPH, Joins Baptist Health Miami Neuroscience Institute

Neurologist Natalia Rincon Buendia, M.D., MPH, has joined Baptist Health Miami Neuroscience Institute. She specializes in the treatment of epilepsy.

Dr. Rincon Buendia earned her medical degree at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine in Greenville after earning a Master of Public Health in Epidemiology degree at the University of Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine in New Orleans. She served as chief resident during a neurology residency at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, Jackson Memorial Hospital. Her post-doctoral training also includes a neurophysiology and epilepsy fellowship at Columbia University Irving Medical Center in New York, where she served as chief fellow.



Dr. Natalia Rincon Buendia

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- **Strengthen Local Health Professions**

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Maternal Fetal Medicine Physician Dr. Freddy J. Montero Joins Palm Beach Health Network Physician Group

Maternal Fetal Medicine Physician Freddy J. Montero, M.D., MBA, FACOG, joins the Palm Beach Health Network Physician Group. He is on staff at St. Mary's Medical Center.

Dr. Montero brings more than 20 years of experience practicing medicine, specializing in treating women with high-risk pregnancies. His fellowship in maternal fetal medicine was completed at New York Presbyterian Hospital, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City. He attended medical school and completed his internship in obstetrics and gynecology from Rutgers University, New Jersey Medical School in Newark. He completed his residency at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School in Boston.

He is a fellow of the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and a member of the following professional organizations: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine and Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine.



Dr. Freddy J. Montero

Cardiologist Joins Cleveland Clinic Tradition Hospital

Jaime Claudette Lewellyn, D.O., is a distinguished cardiologist with board certifications from the American Board of Internal Medicine and the American Board of Medical Specialties in interventional cardiology and cardiovascular medicine. Dr. Lewellyn earned her medical degree from Lincoln Memorial University, Debusk College of Osteopathic Medicine in Harrogate, TN. She completed a residency in internal medicine and a fellowship in cardiovascular disease at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center at Knoxville. She completed an additional fellowship interventional cardiology at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis, TN.



Jaime Claudette Lewellyn

Ngozi Anachebe, MD, Joins FIU Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine

Dr. Ngozi F. Anachebe has joined the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine as an associate professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and as an academic administrator in the Dean's office. She will see patients at the FIU Health Faculty Group Practice on FIU's main campus. Dr. Anachebe brings a wealth of experience in both clinical and academic medicine. She previously served as the inaugural vice dean for Educational Affairs and chief academic affairs officer at Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine, where she was also an associate professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Before that, she held key leadership roles at Morehouse School of Medicine, including senior associate dean for Admissions and Student Affairs and associate dean for Undergraduate Medical Education. Dr. Anachebe earned her medical degree from Morehouse School of Medicine and holds a Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Mercer University College of Pharmacy.



Dr. Ngozi F. Anachebe

Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital Welcomes GI Experts

Jeffrey Steiner, M.D., is a highly experienced and board-certified gastroenterologist with a specialization in managing a wide range of gastrointestinal conditions. He completed medical training at the American Medical Program of Tel Aviv University (formerly Sackler School of Medicine) in Tel Aviv, Israel, where he laid the groundwork for his distinguished medical career. Dr. Steiner completed his internship and residency in internal medicine, well as a fellowship in gastroenterology at New York University and the New York V.A. Medical Center, Bellevue Hospital Center.

Peter Yotseff, M.D., is a highly skilled and board-certified gastroenterologist with extensive training in pancreatico-biliary conditions. He earned his medical degree from Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, where he laid the foundation for his medical career. Dr. Yotseff completed his residency in internal medicine at the University of Illinois in Chicago, before advancing his expertise with two prestigious fellowships. Dr. Yotseff first completed a fellowship in gastroenterology at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia, followed by a specialized fellowship in pancreatico-biliary diseases at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA).



Dr. Jeffrey Steiner



Dr. Peter Yotseff

Tampa General Hospital's Dr. Peggy Duggan Honored as Chief Medical Officer to Know

Tampa General Hospital's (TGH) Dr. Peggy Duggan, executive vice president, chief physician executive and chief medical officer, has been named one of the nation's "Chief Medical Officers to Know for 2025" by Becker's Hospital Review. This recognition, marking her fourth consecutive year receiving this accolade, highlights Dr. Duggan's exceptional leadership, innovative approach to patient care and commitment to advancing the field of medicine in and beyond the Tampa Bay community.

At Tampa General, Dr. Duggan oversees all functions related to physicians and patient care, quality, safety and the patient experience. She also leads the research and academic health system's clinical and operational strategic pillar, which comprises 981 beds, six acute care hospitals, more than 150 care locations across Florida and nearly 15,000 team members and providers.

Dr. Duggan has implemented several innovative programs at Tampa General to enhance patient and team member safety and foster a compassionate internal culture. She introduced Schwartz Rounds to strengthen caregiver support and patient relationships. Notably, Dr. Duggan also revolutionized sepsis management at Tampa General by harnessing artificial intelligence and the system's Care Coordination Center data to create an early warning system, cutting the early sepsis death rate nearly in half and saving approximately 220 lives annually. This also led to the development of pathways for more efficient patient discharges.

Furthermore, Dr. Duggan led Tampa General to become the first academic health system and Level I Trauma Center to achieve both the Collaborative Just Culture Program® and Reliability Management Team™ qualifications required to become a Collaborative High Reliability Organization. She also spearheaded system-wide physician alignment, expanded service lines and oversaw a major overhaul of the system's 200-plus ICU beds.



Dr. Peggy Duggan

Interventional and Structural Cardiologist Tilak Pasala, MD, Joins Palm Beach Health Network Physician Group

Interventional and Structural Cardiologist Tilak Pasala, MD, FACC, FSCAI, MBA, joins the Palm Beach Health Network Physician Group. He is on staff at Delray Medical Center where he holds the title of Medical Director of Structural Heart Disease.

A nationally recognized authority in structural cardiology, Dr. Pasala has authored over 50 peer-reviewed articles, 12 book chapters, and served as principal investigator in more than eight medical device trials. He is an expert in transcatheter procedures, including TAVR, TEER (MitraClip and TriClip), Watchman, Amulet, and other cutting-edge techniques for mitral, tricuspid, and pulmonary valve disease, as well as PFO and ASD closure. Dr. Pasala also excels in complex coronary and peripheral interventions, including stent placement, atherectomy, and circulatory support.

Previously, he held leadership roles at Hackensack University Medical Center and AdventHealth Orlando and trained fellows as a program director. Dr. Pasala's advanced training includes fellowships at Case Western Reserve University, the University of Utah, and Hackensack University Medical Center.



Dr. Tilak Pasala



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Mount Sinai Medical Center is Integrating AI to Enhance the Patient Experience and Retain Expert Physicians

With healthcare systems across the country implementing artificial intelligence (AI) into their patient care models, Mount Sinai is committed to being at the forefront of these advancements. The medical center is constantly evaluating and implementing new systems and tools that augment the patient-centric care our physicians deliver each day, while creating a more efficient and streamlined approach to charting and communication.

Over the course of the last year, the medical center has launched several initiatives using AI that have collectively enhanced clinical documentation and patient communication processes while allowing physicians to focus on patients. These efforts have already shown a marked improvement in burnout rates, increased job satisfaction, and improved patient care.

Service lines such as Internal Medicine are utilizing Abridge, a technology that records and transcribes a physician's notes in real time. This tool allows for more accurate and detailed information while cutting down the amount of time spent charting—sometimes hours after a consultation. For this reason, Abridge helps curb physician burnout, empowering them to spend more time face to face with patients and less time back charting.

In addition, the medical center has also recently implemented AI to support clinicians when responding to in-basket mes-



BY ALON WEIZER, MD

sages from patients, via EPIC /MyChart, which not only helps with physician efficiency, but also improves the turnaround time for patients to get a response.

As a part of this continued technological augmentation, this past year Mount Sinai announced a new partnership with HealthSnap, a virtual chronic condition care management platform. HealthSnap uses real-time patient monitoring, allowing physicians to better assess and treat chronic conditions.

Additionally, HealthSnap provides centralized multi-channel communication through video, text, and email, making connecting with patients seamless and flexible. By using these tools, our

physicians can remotely assist patients, helping them manage their conditions more effectively and confidently.

Mount Sinai's AI integrations have already shown strong potential in combatting physician burnout by streamlining patient interactions and care and reducing administrative burdens. Addressing the complexities of physician burnout requires exploring many facets, and when leveraged correctly, AI can have a meaningful impact on provider retention, performance, and satisfaction.

*Dr. Alon Weizer is Chief Medical Officer,
Mount Sinai Medical Center.*

Palm Beach Children's Hospital is Now in West Boca

Some of the highest quality pediatric care in Palm Beach County is now available in two convenient locations: West Palm Beach and Boca Raton. As an extension of Palm Beach Children's Hospital at St. Mary's Medical Center, Palm Beach Children's Hospital at West Boca Medical Center is now accepting patients.

This partnership reaffirms the hospital's commitment to delivering exceptional care for sick and injured children in the community while leveraging the extensive expertise and support of the Palm Beach Health Network and Palm Beach Children's Hospital at St. Mary's Medical Center.

Comprehensive Pediatric Services

Palm Beach Children's Hospital at West Boca Medical Center will continue to provide essential pediatric care as the only inpatient pediatric department in South Palm Beach County, with:

- 24-hour Pediatric Emergency Department, staffed by dedicated pediatric ER physicians
- Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), the highest level of care in southern Palm Beach County
- Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU)
- In-house Pediatric Hospitalists and Neonatologists
- Inpatient and Outpatient Pediatric Rehabilitation Services (PT, OT, and Speech Therapy)
- Outpatient Surgery Center
- Hematology and oncology
- Infectious disease
- Nephrology
- Ear, nose and throat (ENT)
- Pediatric surgery

As part of the Palm Beach Health Network, families also gain access to a full spectrum of pediatric physician specialties, including anesthesia, cardiology, critical care medicine, emergency medicine, endocrinology, gastroenterology, neurology, orthopedics, pulmonary disease, spine surgery, trauma surgery, urology, and more.



*(l-r) Dr. Steven Schultz, CEO Jerad Hanlon, Susan Feldman, Shelby Mosos,
Dr. Tara Harris, Dr. Jorge Perez*

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

Holy Cross Health's Evening of Gratitude Shines Light on Donors



(l-r) Dr. Karan Munuswamy, Gordon Latz, Steve Mehallis, Laura Denoux, Rudy Molinet, and Rob Casalou

Holy Cross Health recently hosted its annual Evening of Gratitude, shining a light on donors who, in 2024, contributed over \$11 million for technology, equipment, programs and services to provide the highest quality patient care.

In addition to celebrating the milestone accomplishments of Holy Cross Health, the Harry T. Mangurian, Jr. Foundation was presented with the Remarkable Philanthropy Champion Award. It is presented annually to an exceptional individual—physician, donor, board member, or colleague—who demonstrates a significant philanthropic impact through generous contributions or their ability to inspire others to give.

"Our donors are truly remarkable," said Laura Denoux, Vice President and Chief Development Officer at Holy Cross Health. "It is through their support that we have accomplished so much this past year, from modernizing our facilities to introducing new programs and services. We are blessed to have the enduring support of the Harry T. Mangurian, Jr. Foundation, along with the generosity of all our supporters, enabling us to make a meaningful impact in the lives of those we serve."

In 2024, Holy Cross Health unveiled the newly renovated Harry T. Mangurian Jr. Foundation Surgical Suites. The Foundation's \$5 million gift funded the renovation of seven operating rooms, the storage room and a portion of the area where instruments are sterilized.

"Thank you, Holy Cross Health. On behalf of the board of directors of the Harry T. Mangurian Jr. Foundation, we are privileged to accept this honor and appreciate it very, very much," said Steve Mehallis of the Harry T. Mangurian Jr. Foundation, in accepting the award.

In addition to the surgical suites, the Harry T. Mangurian Jr. Diagnostic Imaging Center and Dorothy Mangurian Comprehensive Women's Center are named in honor of the family. The Foundation also sponsors the annual Holy Cross Health Golf Classic, which raises funds for the Partners in Breast Health program at the Holy Cross Health Dorothy Mangurian Comprehensive Women's Center.

Delray Medical Center Introduces Next Generation, Non-Invasive Treatment for Movement Disorders

Delray Medical Center announces the acquisition of the Exablate Prime system, a state-of-the-art technology that offers incisionless treatment for movement disorders such as essential tremor and Parkinson's disease. This advanced platform utilizes focused ultrasound guided by MRI to precisely target and remove affected areas in the brain, providing patients with a non-invasive surgery option.

"The precision and safety of the Exablate Prime system represent a significant advancement in neurosurgery," said Dr. Lloyd Zucker, Chief of Neurosurgery at Delray Medical Center. "By offering an outpatient, incisionless procedure, while utilizing some of the latest technologies, we can improve patient outcomes and reduce recovery times for those battling conditions like essential tremor."

The Exablate Prime system, developed by Insightec, has transformed the landscape of neurosurgical treatments by providing a non-invasive alternative to traditional brain surgery. Patients typically experience immediate therapeutic effects with minimal complications, allowing them to return home the same day.

This next generation system integrates intelligent algorithms, autogenerated patient reports, data management, and reporting power to allow for advanced and intuitive surgical planning and sonication, which all makes the process faster and more accurate.

Palm Beach County Commission Unanimously Approves \$10 Million for Health Care District's Crisis Center for Mental Health and Substance Abuse

The Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners has unanimously voted to approve \$10 million in federal funding from the American Rescue Plan Act to support the development of the Health Care District of Palm Beach County's state-of-the-art Crisis Center for Mental Health and Substance Abuse. This marks the first step in the development process of this critical facility.

"This facility will ensure 24/7 access to crisis support and sustainable mental health treatment for both adults and children – helping patients navigate crisis and build resilience for life," said Darcy J. Davis, Health Care District of Palm Beach County President and CEO. We are extremely grateful to the Board of County Commissioners and our community partners who voiced their support for this critical project. Together, we will support sustainable and effective behavioral health care for generations to come."

Designed to be a gold standard in psychiatric and clinical care, the Crisis Center will focus on specialized care and provide patients with seamless connections to long-term support services. No one will be turned away, ensuring that all community members have access to the resources they need, regardless of ability to pay. Planned features of the Crisis Center include:

- 24/7 crisis access point for first responders, health care providers, patients, and families
- Inpatient and outpatient psychiatric services for adults and children
- Rapid 23-hour observation and individualized treatment
- Specialized clinical care for substance use disorder, Baker Acts, Marchman Acts, and other emergent psychiatric needs
- Integrated primary care and pharmacy services
- Individual and group therapy services
- Connections to community resources, including housing, workforce, financial, and transportation support

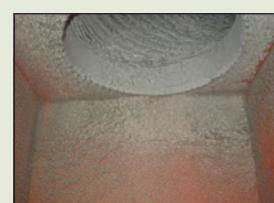
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A message from our President

Let Us Not Forget

During times of crisis, hospitals are frequently called upon to provide lifesaving services. From natural disasters to pandemics, hospitals met the challenges and their staffs, sometimes to their own personal detriment, were there to support their patients and communities.

Sadly, hospitals and healthcare workers are also easy political targets. Quickly forgotten are the crucial roles they played in their communities as both the provider of those lifesaving services and as major employers paying exceptional wages.

So, early in the second Trump Administration term, we are already hearing about efforts to challenge many hospitals' not-for-profit status (easy targets). So, let us talk about that, "Why is it important to know why some hospitals are not-for-profit corporations?"

Hospitals retain their not-for-profit status due to the critical role they play in delivering community-focused healthcare services and fulfilling charitable missions (think of the hospitals districts and our other hospitals with religious affiliations). So, here are some key reasons why our not-for-profit hospitals should maintain their status current status.

Not-for-profit hospitals are required to provide a cadre of Community Benefits. First, they must provide Charity Care. That care must be to uninsured or underinsured individuals regardless of their ability to pay. Second, they must also provide Community Health Programs. They invest in programs to address public health issues, such as disease prevention, health education, and screenings. In addition, they must provide Research and Education. Many not-for-profit hospitals support medical research and training for healthcare professionals, benefiting the broader healthcare system.

While earnings for for-profit hospitals are shared with owners and investors, not-for-profit hospitals reinvest surplus revenue into improving facilities, purchasing advanced technology, expanding services, and hiring staff. This reinvestment



Jaime Caldwell

directly enhances patient care and community health and has a multiplier effect as those revenues are reinvested in the community to the benefit of local businesses.

Not-for-profit hospitals also attack the problems associated Underserved Populations. I am most recently aware of Broward Health's new maternity care center that they built in Lauderdale Lakes where they are focusing on reducing premature births. In fact, with many not-for-profit hospitals, it is not uncommon to find then operating in underserved or economically disadvantaged areas where healthcare access is limited. Maintaining their status helps them focus on

serving vulnerable populations without the pressure felt by others to generate shareholder profits.

Maintaining their Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue status, qualifying hospitals must also provide quantifiable community benefits. I have had the pleasure of participating in this process for several of our member organizations and it is truly amazing the numbers and types of programs that have been created to address the healthcare needs of the medically disadvantaged.

We can also talk about not-for-profit hospitals providing programs that have previously been provided by the public health system thus reducing the financial burden on governmentally supported system. We saw that during the pandemic.

Not-for-Profit hospitals are going to have a challenging four years. Complaints about some not-for-profits not providing enough community benefits and, or perhaps providing what is felt to be excessive executive compensation has caused "tongues to wag". These are not things that Boards and oversight can't correct. We need to meet the challenges.

Revoking tax exemptions have the potential of shifting more costs to patients and taxpayers, with the potential of reducing access to care for those most in need.

Retaining the not-for-profit status allows hospitals to focus on their mission of improving community health, prioritizing care over profits, and addressing societal health inequities.

We will keep our eyes on this situation.

Accolades Accolades Accolades Accolades

VITAS Healthcare Receives the 2024 DAISY Health Equity Award



(l-r) Kris Halsey, Suzie Emiliozzi, Diane Deese, Ronnie Stumpf and Dr. B. David Blake from VITAS with AAMN President Dr. Jason Mott.

The American Association for Men in Nursing (AAMN) has selected VITAS Healthcare as the first hospice organization to receive the coveted DAISY Health Equity Award in the 25-year history of the DAISY Foundation. AAMN, in conjunction with the DAISY Foundation, bestows this award to an individual or team that goes above and beyond in caring for patients and families from underserved populations most impacted by health disparities.

West Palm Beach VA Community Living Center Awarded as Committed to Care Excellence

The West Palm Beach VA Health Care System (WPBVAHCS) announces the recognition of the Community Living Center (CLC) as Committed to Care Excellence by the Age-Friendly Health System.

The acknowledgment is based on a 4Ms framework: 1. What Matters: Health care goals and preferences across all settings of care; 2. Medication: Medication that does not interfere with what matters most to the patient; 3. Mentation: Prevention, identify, treat, and manage dementia, depression and delirium and 4. Mobility: Ensure the older adults move safely daily to maintain function and do what matters.

The recognition of practicing "What Matters" is a gap identified in healthcare by older patients in clinical interactions and settings.



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

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Saltz Michelson Architects (SMA) is an award winning architectural design firm founded in 1976 specializing in healthcare facilities. The firm's experience ranges from hospital design to traditional medical offices of all specialties and outpatient facilities such as women's centers, outpatient diagnostic centers, outpatient surgery centers, MRI centers, urgent care facilities, walk-in clinics, oncology centers, artificial kidney centers, and pediatric facilities. Our hospital experience includes renovation and modernization projects encompassing all areas of a hospital facility. Contact Charles A. Michelson, AIA, Principal, at (954) 266-2700 or email cmichelson@saltzmichelson.com or visit www.saltzmichelson.com

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Dabdoub Law Firm specializes in physician disability insurance claims, appeals, and litigation. Dabdoub Law has a track record of success in helping physicians get paid disability benefits. This includes winning a case for a liver transplant surgeon with their own occupation policy who was no longer able to perform liver transplants.

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FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

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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.

MIAMI DADE COLLEGE - MEDICAL CENTER CAMPUS

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.

SOUTH UNIVERSITY

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

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE FOR HEALTH SCIENCES

The University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USAHS) in Miami offers graduate degrees in physical and occupational therapy. The state of the art clinical simulation lab, on-site clinics, and a statewide network of fieldwork and clinical partners, provide valuable hands-on learning for students to succeed in today's healthcare workforce. Rolling admissions and a convenient trimester schedule offer flexibility. Founded in St. Augustine, Florida in 1979, USAHS has five campuses in California, Florida, and Texas. For more information visit usa.edu or call 1-800-241-1027

HEALTHCARE ACCOUNTING AND ADVISORY

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BDO, one of the nation's leading accounting and advisory firms, understands the unique accounting, financial, and advisory requirements that deserve experienced attention in the healthcare sector. The BDO Center for Healthcare Excellence & Innovation brings together healthcare professionals with the knowledge, expertise and necessary resources to help organizations of all kinds navigate risk, make informed investment decisions, and seize opportunities. With offices in South Florida and across the U.S., we stand ready to deliver fresh insights and help you prosper in this ever-changing healthcare environment. For more information, visit bdo.com or contact Angelo Pirozzi, apirozzi@bdo.com.

HEALTHCARE STAFFING

SAFEGUARD HEALTHCARE

Safeguard Healthcare, a hospital and healthcare staffing company based in South Florida, provides contracted healthcare personnel resources, as well as contract-to-hire, and permanent placements. Areas of Support include: Information Technology, Medical Records, Business Office, Nursing, Clinical Departments, Central Supply and Food Services. Email gthompson@safeguard-healthcare.com, (954)412-2075, or visit www.safeguardhealthcare.com

HEMECARE SERVICES

MORSE LIFE HOME HEALTH CARE

MorseLife, a recognized leader in exceptional healthcare, housing and support services for seniors in Palm Beach County, delivers home health care catered to individual needs enabling people to live as independently as possible. Assistance with personal care, homemaking, neighborhood errands and companionship is offered from one hour visits to 24/7 in-home, hospital, rehab centers, nursing homes and independent/assisted living settings. License #HHA21179096. Visit <https://morselife.org/home-health-care/> or call (561) 599-5770.

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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

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