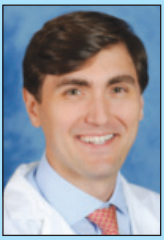


Salute to Nurses
Inside this issue

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THE REGION'S MONTHLY NEWSPAPER FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS & PHYSICIANS
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Salute to Nursing



Stephanie Paultre

From the Emergency Room to the Executive Suite: Stephanie Paultre's Path to Leadership

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

Stephanie Paultre's healthcare career has been shaped by personal experience, a passion for learning, and a natural ability to lead. Today, she serves as Director of Nursing at Memorial Healthcare System, where she impacts patient outcomes and supports the growth of her team.

Her leadership journey began during her time as an emergency department nurse.

"I wouldn't say I was initially inspired to pursue leadership—it happened naturally," Paultre says. "I was often placed in charge and thrived in the fast-paced, chaotic environment. When the opportunity to become a clinical manager arose, I embraced it. That's when my leadership journey truly began."

To strengthen her skills, Paultre pursued an Executive Master of Health Administration (MHA) from Florida Atlantic University. The program gave

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Uniting for the Future: How the Nursing Consortium of Florida Is Shaping the Profession Statewide

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

In a time of evolving healthcare needs and heightened demand for nurses, the Nursing Consortium of Florida is a unifying force helping to shape the future of nursing across the state. With nearly 80 organizational members—including hospitals, schools of nursing, and other nurse employers—the Consortium bridges the gap between academia and practice to address critical workforce challenges and spark innovation.



Dr. Maria A. Suarez



Dr. Carol Clarke

A Legacy of Collaboration

Founded in the wake of Hurricane Andrew in 1992 and formally established in 1997, the Consortium was born from nurse collaboration. "There were no systems back then, hospitals were independent, and most executive nurse leaders were transplants that didn't know one another," explains executive director Ralph Egües, now in his 20th year as the organization's executive director. "In the aftermath of the hurricane, these leaders

Continued on page 37

Broward Health's Nurse Residency Program 2.0

Technology, gamification and mentorship adds to attracting, training and retaining the next generation of nurses

As the nursing workforce continues to evolve, healthcare systems must develop innovative opportunities to continue supporting and training new graduates. At Broward Health, that shift is well underway with a redesigned Nurse Residency Program blending high-tech simulation, gamified learning and a robust mentorship model to empower the next generation of clinical professionals.



Meeting the Moment: A New Kind of Nurse

Across the nation, healthcare leaders are noticing a clear trend: new nurses entering the profession often have less interest in bedside roles. Many graduates struggle to adapt to fast-paced inpatient environments, resulting in early burnout and high turnover. In response to these challenges, Broward Health has established internal

Continued on page 38



Lizbeth Uzcatogui

Camaraderie, Support Critical When Dealing with Limb Loss or Difference

BY VANESSA ORR

According to the Amputee Coalition, approximately 5.6 million people in the U.S. have experienced limb loss or limb difference, either having been born with a difference in a limb or having one removed for medical reasons or trauma. While there is no national recognition day, Florida and several other states recognize Limb Loss and Limb Difference Awareness Month (LLLDAM) in April to help raise awareness, celebrate amputees' resilience and advocate for their needs.

"Education and awareness are critical," said Hanger Clinic Business Development Manager Lizbeth Uzcatogui, who serves as the AMPOWER® visitor/coordinator for southeast Florida. "This process is not easy. People feel lost and lonely, and getting them together with others who can help is critical."

"Whether a person woke up after an accident and their limb was gone, suffered from a disease for several years that resulted in amputation or had a baby that has a limb difference—it's hard to find the courage, resilience and strength you need to move forward," she added.

AMPOWER is a peer-to-peer support program that provides opportunities for peer mentorship, education and commu-

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE: Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce Health Care Heroes 2025 Official Program



SALUTE TO NURSES 2025

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Publisher’s Note

Superheroes in Scrubs:
A Salute to
South Florida’s Nurses

Nurses Week (May 6–12) is here, and it’s time to celebrate South Florida’s real MVPs—our sun-kissed, coffee-fueled, Croc-wearing superheroes in scrubs.

Nursing anywhere is tough, but in South Florida? That’s nursing on “expert mode.” Our nurses handle it all—from tourists with jellyfish stings to retirees with mysterious rashes—while navigating humidity levels that could wilt a cactus.

They’re more than healthcare pros. They’re therapists, translators, tech support, and occasionally referees when family drama breaks out in the waiting room. Bouncing between English, Spanish, Creole, and whatever dialect insurance companies speak, they comfort abuelitas, calm panicked patients, and somehow explain co-pays without bursting into tears.

And let’s talk endurance. Twelve-hour shifts? No problem. Patients Googling their symptoms? Handled with grace (and maybe a deep sigh). Nurses walk faster than most of us run and remember more birthdays, allergies, and blood types than their own PIN codes.

From Miami’s chaotic ERs to the laid-back clinics in the Keys, every nurse brings their own brand of magic. School nurses handle everything from belly-aches to glitter-glue disasters. Hospice nurses provide comfort during life’s hardest moments. And travel nurses show up from colder states wondering why they’re sweating at 7 a.m.

So how do we thank them? Start with real appreciation. A heartfelt note. A hot cup of coffee. Maybe a foot massage or a decent chair in the break room. And for the love of all things sterile, don’t just give them leftover sheet cake.

This Nurses Week, let’s raise a figurative (and literal) piña colada to the nurses of South Florida—the ones who show up, suit up, and save the day, all while dodging iguanas in the parking lot.

Happy Nurses Week! You keep us healthy, grounded, and only slightly sunburned—and for that, we love you.



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This year, we have strengthened our cardiac surgery program by welcoming top-tier surgeons with expertise in complex aortic surgery, minimally invasive

and robotic-assisted techniques. Our robotic heart surgery team, led by three highly skilled surgeons, brings a combined history of performing more than 1,000 successful procedures during their careers. As leaders of Florida’s highest-volume robotic heart surgery program, they use state-of-the-art technology to achieve the smallest incisions, reduced pain and faster recovery times. Our dedication to innovation is reflected in numerous first-in-man and first-in-Florida procedures, solidifying our reputation as a leader in transformative cardiovascular care.

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Rapid Adoption of DCD Heart Transplantation Expands Donor Pool

BY SHAWN ROBINSON
YANAN

Last fall the transplant team at Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital became the first in Florida's southern region to perform modern adult heart transplantation using a donation after circulatory death (DCD) heart, joining a growing number of U.S. centers to adopt this innovative approach.

"Organ procurement and preservation advancements have made it possible to safely use hearts retrieved from donors after circulatory death and achieve good outcomes on par with organs from donors who experience brain death," says cardiothoracic surgeon Nicolas A. Brozzi, MD, Surgical Director of Mechanical Circulatory Support at Weston Hospital.

Nationally there has been a rapid increase in the use of DCD hearts since the practice was reintroduced in the United States in 2019. According to Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) data, approximately 8% of heart transplants in 2022 involved DCD organs, increasing to 13% in 2023 and reaching nearly 18% in 2024.

"Using DCD hearts has expanded the donor pool for patients on the national waitlist, and in just a few short months we've seen a sizeable jump at our center in the volume of potential donor organs being offered and assessed," Dr. Brozzi reports.



Dr. Nicolas A. Brozzi

DCD versus DBD

While heart transplants were initially performed with DCD donor hearts, the field shifted to donation after brain death (DBD) organs in the early 1980s following the development of uniform brain death criteria and the increased risk of ischemic injury during organ retrieval associated with DCD hearts.

"Severe ischemic injury can result in loss of pump

and electrical function making the heart unsuitable for transplantation," Dr. Brozzi explains. "The development of machine perfusion for the dynamic preservation of organs, however, has renewed interest in the use of DCD hearts. This advanced technology circulates oxygenated blood or other fluids through the donor organ before transplantation."

The Transplant Center at Weston Hospital has transplanted machine perfused donor kidneys since its launch in 2013. More recently, the center established a machine perfusion program that has since performed more than 65 adult liver transplants employing a variety of advanced preservation techniques. "We have a very robust machine perfusion program, and now that technology and experience is being applied to heart transplantation," says Dr. Brozzi.

Heart recovery methods

When a potential organ donor has suffered a severe, irreversible brain injury or

devastating illness and is close to death, the donor family may choose to allow a natural death. Once life support is withdrawn and circulatory death is declared, a 5-minute standoff period is observed to monitor for signs of autoresuscitation of the heart before the donor's heart is recovered.

DCD heart procurement then can be performed either through ex situ normothermic machine perfusion (NMP) or normothermic regional in situ perfusion (NRP) followed by static cold storage (SCS). Both methods allow for heart reanimation and evaluation at the donor site to determine viability for transplantation.

"Machine perfusion keeps the heart beating and supplied with nutrients while in transport, so that when it reaches our hospital we can then reassess to determine if it's suitable for transplantation," describes Dr. Brozzi. "Visual inspection, coronary flow and lactate metabolism are used to reassess heart function and viability."

Patient outcomes

Studies have shown that the machine perfusion of DCD hearts can achieve similar patient and graft survival outcomes when compared to DBD organs preserved using SCS.

For example, results from the Donors after Circulatory Death Heart Trial, published in 2023, found that DCD hearts had a 94% survival rate, compared to 90% for DBD hearts. While the U.S.-based multicenter, unblinded, randomized, controlled

trial observed a higher incidence of primary graft dysfunction among recipients of DCD hearts, it did not affect patient or graft survival at 30 days or 1 year.

Researchers in another study used the OPTN/United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) registry to identify adult heart transplant recipients from 2019 to 2021 and found comparable mortality outcomes between DCD and DBD hearts. The national registry review also noted DCD donors tended to be younger and male while DCD heart recipients were more likely to have a lower UNOS status (3-6), indicating reduced medical urgency.

Looking ahead

Ongoing research continues to focus on improving organ procurement and preservation strategies, reducing ischemic times, and enhancing the viability of DCD hearts. In addition to tracking mid-term and long-term performance and outcomes of NMP and NRP recovery methods, investigators are looking at hypothermic machine perfusion options as an alternative preservation modality for DCD hearts.

"DCD heart procurement and transplantation has evolved quickly this past decade and the increasing demand for donor hearts will continue to drive research in the area of dynamic organ preservation," says Dr. Brozzi.

He notes that the use of DCD hearts has the potential to significantly expand the donor pool, and that improved organ preservation methods may allow the matching of organ donors and recipients across greater distances.



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Healthcare CFOs Share Investment Plans for 2025

After seeing an improvement in financial performance in 2024, the healthcare industry is ready to accelerate growth this year, pivoting towards new investments that could reshape patient care. According to BDO's 2025 Healthcare CFO Outlook Survey, which surveyed 100 healthcare CFOs after the presidential election in November 2024, providers are exploring opportunities around growth and expansion, technological innovation, and new service offerings, as they shift from defense to offense in 2025.

Based on our findings from the survey, here are the top three takeaways healthcare leaders should know to stay ahead in 2025:

1. 84% of healthcare organizations saw revenue growth, but low profitability highlights the need for cost containment.

The financial health of the industry has shown marked improvement heading into 2025: Just 11% of healthcare organizations reported they violated their debt covenants in the past year, down from 52% in 2023.

At the same time, 84% of healthcare CFOs report revenue increases over the past year, but just 43% report profitability increases — indicating that there's still



BY BRAD BOYD

room for financial improvement in 2025. This disparity underscores the complex balance healthcare organizations must strike between revenue generation and cost management.

The road ahead remains challenging, particularly for rural providers. Despite overall sector improvements, cash reserves remain below pre-pandemic levels, creating ongoing liquidity concerns, and under-resourced providers continue to struggle with maintaining financial stability. Moving forward, healthcare CFOs should prioritize initiatives that help shore up their financial foundations and improve liquidity.

2. Healthcare organizations are using artificial intelligence (AI) not just for administrative and back-office functions, but for enhancing patient care.

Current adoption rates show a significant commitment to AI-driven healthcare delivery, with 50% of organizations already leveraging AI for treatment plan generation and 49% for diagnostics and medical imaging. In 2025, an additional 42% of organizations plan to implement AI for treatment plan generation, and 48% say the same for diagnostics and medical imaging.

However, with proposed changes to the HIPAA Security Rule looming,

healthcare organizations face mounting pressures to keep patient data safe as AI can increase a provider's risk landscape. In response, 36% of organizations are enhancing cybersecurity measures and 29% are implementing risk monitoring and intelligence tools.

As healthcare organizations continue to adopt AI solutions for patient care, they need to prioritize investments strengthening their security environment. Otherwise, they could fall victim to a costly data breach.

3. Healthcare CFOs are investing in site-of-care transitions, including home health, telehealth/virtual health, and lifestyle/longevity centers.

Healthcare CFOs are strategically redirecting investments in 2025 toward differentiated care delivery models, marking a significant shift in patient access. The landscape reveals a strong push towards alternative care sites, with:

- 48% of CFOs increasing investment in home care services
- 45% increasing investment in telehealth and virtual health services
- 45% increasing investment in lifestyle and longevity centers

This pivot aims to enhance patient access and convenience while creating new revenue streams for providers. By meeting patients where they are, organizations are building a more patient-centric care model that aligns with individuals' needs.

While the expansion of alternative care

sites represents important progress in healthcare accessibility, organizations should proceed with caution. These delivery models should complement — not replace — traditional primary care services, which are both critical to improving patient outcomes and act as feeder services to specialty care, making primary care a crucial source of revenue.

As providers continue to explore alternative sites of care, they should work to strike the right balance between innovation in care delivery and maintaining robust access to primary care for their patients.

What's Next?

Healthcare organizations are seeing a wealth of new opportunities to grow, driven by technological advances, a shifting economic landscape, and evolving patient demand. While new opportunities in areas like AI and site-of-care transitions may help providers meet their growth goals, healthcare CFOs must stay vigilant of the evolving risk landscape to maintain financial stability and continue offering high-quality patient care.

Brad Boyd, Principal and National Co-Leader, The BDO Center for Healthcare Excellence & Innovation, can be reached at brad.boyd@bdo.com.

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(954) 989-7462 / skotelnik@bdo.com*

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NURSES WEEK 2025

A salute to our Memorial nurses: The care you give, making patients and their loved ones feel like family, creates a difference in their lives every single day. Thank you so much.



Nurses Make it Possible Every Single Day

Women Continue to Blaze New Trails, Shape Future of Health Care



BY TAREN O'BRIEN,
MSN, RN

National Hospital Week is an opportune time to reflect on how women have shaped health care in South Florida, starting with the Sisters of Mercy, who arrived in Fort Lauderdale in 1959 to operate Holy Cross Hospital. The Sisters of Mercy carried the torch originally lit by the Sisters of St. Joseph, forging a lasting legacy of trailblazing women in health care.

Back then, women accounted for only six percent of America's physician workforce, according to the American Medical Association. Thankfully, there has been significant improvement in the representation of women in medicine since that time. In these roles, women have made remarkable strides in shaping health care policies, advancing medical research and revolutionizing patient care, making the case for continued efforts to improve women's representation across all health care levels.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, about eight in 10 workers in health care occupations are women. While women are steadily gaining ground in the physician workforce, they continue to be underrepresented, accounting for only 44 percent of physicians across the U.S. health care industry. There is a bright spot for the next generation of women physicians. Women account for an increasing majority of students who apply to and graduate from medical school. What's more, according to previously released data from the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), in 2023-2024 women accounted for 54.6% of medical school students after having become a majority for the first time in 2019-2020.

Women in leadership roles are even more scarce. Holy Cross Health is proud to be making strides in this area with an executive team of 12 composed of 10 women who continue to drive community health initiatives, transforming patient care in ways that yield improved health outcomes and benefit entire communities. Holy Cross' Board of Directors now has eight women serving on the Board, one short of a majority. There are also many women in leadership roles at many levels of the ministry. The women of Holy Cross come from diverse backgrounds and life journeys. We are so proud of the diversity we embrace and celebrate at Holy Cross.

There have been many studies that underscore the importance of gender in care, with women often preferring to be treated by women doctors, just as men often prefer treatment by male doctors. This is particularly true when it comes to breast health, one of the areas where the community has benefited from women-led, women-focused advancements. The Holy Cross Partners in Breast Health program was established to provide breast health services to uninsured and underserved women, bridging a critical gap by offering outreach education, clinical breast exams, screening mammograms and diagnostic procedures to women who lack access to health care services. It addresses disparities in health outcomes, which makes for a healthier society overall.

The Partners in Breast Health program is part of the Community Health and Well-Being Department which partners with the Dorothy Mangurian Comprehensive Women's Center. This center is a direct result of women coming together to support initiatives that improve women's health. Beyond the physicians, nurses, hospital executives and others who make decisions about care delivery, more than 100 Broward County women each pledged \$5,000 to help establish this comprehensive, spa-like health care center designed for women by women that serves as a one-stop, state-of-the-art facility where women can receive services, treatment and care that meets their unique needs.

During National Hospital Week, Holy Cross Health celebrates the progress that has been made while acknowledging that there is more work to be done to address the gender imbalance that persists, an inequity that deprives communities of the profound influence that women have on shaping healthier lives. Building diverse leadership teams, dedicating resources to developing and mentoring women in their careers and expanding access to care are a step in the right direction.

Taren O'Brien is Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer at Holy Cross Health in Fort Lauderdale.



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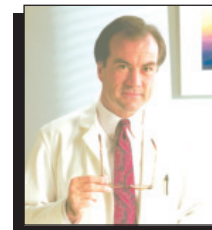


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Q&A with Dr. Thomas Utset-Ward, Pediatric Orthopedic Oncologist at Nicklaus Children's

What are the common cases you see?

I see a mix between benign and malignant tumors around a child's arms or legs. Patients will arrive with an abnormal lump and in many cases, we'll monitor the growth over time to ensure it does not grow too quickly or become cancerous. My first step is usually a biopsy and look at it under the microscope alongside our pathologists to find out exactly what it is. That helps decide what the right treatment and surgery will be. One tool we use at Nicklaus Children's to monitor these abnormalities is the EOS scan, which creates a comprehensive 3D image that is much more accurate than other scans like X-rays that require piecing multiple pictures together to approximate. It is especially helpful for patients needing routine check-ups as it offers shorter scanning times than traditional X-rays while producing a fraction of the radiation.



Dr. Thomas Utset-Ward

What was the journey to becoming a pediatric oncologist like?

I earned my medical degree at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine and a master's degree in business administration from the Vanderbilt University Owen Graduate School of Business in Nashville, Tennessee. I then moved on to complete a residency in orthopedic surgery at the University of Chicago and then pursued a fellowship in musculoskeletal oncology at Ohio State University and Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio. Along with my mentors at Nationwide Children's, we created a fellowship program and was the first-ever fellow in pediatric-specific orthopedic oncology.

What made you want to choose to be a pediatric orthopedic oncologist?

I was born and raised in Miami, in Little Havana and Shenandoah and was even at one point a patient at Nicklaus Children's Hospital. Early on in medical school, I was paired up with an orthopedic oncologist and it was like opening Pandora's box. I found my calling that same day and spent the rest of medical school in the orthopedic oncology clinic and doing science research in pediatric bone cancer. I pursued my residency in orthopedic surgery with the goal of becoming an orthopedic oncologist. I love working with children and their families. I enjoy the opportunity to have a long term, lifelong relationship with these children. Nicklaus Children's is one of a small handful of children's hospitals in the country that can meet the unique needs of kids with comprehensive, pediatric multidisciplinary sarcoma team.

Can you walk us through the process of planning surgery for bone cancer cases that would otherwise require limb amputation?

Planning a surgery starts with discussing options in great detail with patients and their families to ensure we're creating a treatment plan that works for their lifestyle and needs. I then implement virtual surgical planning techniques that aid my team and I in confirming whether the implant is the right fit, how it'll perform on the patient and how we can go into the operating room with clear direction on what steps need to be taken so there is minimal excess time spent in the room. Most of the aggressive and malignant tumors, will require surgery to remove all of the tumor to ensure the cancer does not come back. The traditional surgery was amputation, but we now primarily do limb sparing procedures that reconstruct a functional arm or leg, often times children can walk the same day as surgery. I work with engineers to create custom-made implants, the metal implants we use will even grow while the child grows.

What are some innovative processes and techniques you'll play a role in implementing in your role at Nicklaus Children's?

My job requires a lot of creativity to solve these pediatric-specific challenges. Many of the implants on the market are not the right size for kids or would stop the growth of the limb. My team and I are at times also engineers in creating a customized solution. Sometimes we can get the body to regenerate bone or keep the growth plates intact and incorporate a donor bone to rebuild a new bone. In addition to my role as a surgeon, I also serve as director of Surgical Innovation, where I lead the Nicklaus Children's 3D Printing and Modeling Program and champion the development and adoption of the latest advances in patient-specific surgical technology. This program uses virtual reality, augmented reality, virtual surgical planning, life-size 3D printed models and patient-specific surgical guides to increase surgical precision and tackle complex cases. This is the type of technology that is a step above robotics in operating rooms as the tools decrease the surgery time, improve the accuracy of the placement of an implant and ensure the customized implants are the appropriate fit for each patient.

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Marcus Neuroscience Institute to Host Brain and Spine Symposium

Marcus Neuroscience Institute, part of Baptist Health South Florida, at Boca Raton Regional Hospital, will host its Brain and Spine Symposium from May 15th through the 16th at the Boca Marriott Town Center in Boca Raton. The two-day educational event will highlight the latest advances in the field of neuroscience through lectures, interactive panel discussions, and case-based presentations.

In addition, experts will discuss best practices in the neuroscience field, including first-day presentations from the Institute's neurosurgeon and course director, Timothy O'Connor, M.D., on the latest in augmented reality, as well as a discussion and presentation about normal pressure hydrocephalus and shunts from neurosurgeon Frank Vronis, M.D.

The second day will include presentations from neurologist Sameea Husain, D.O., on the latest findings about Parkinson's Disease along with the newest treatments. Course director and Director of Cognitive and Behavioral Neurology Peter Gliabus, M.D., will discuss Frontotemporal Dementia and the effects it has on the brain.

Marcus Neuroscience Institute Brain and Spine Symposium is an educational event, and Baptist Health is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians. Faculty will include various specialties, neurosurgeons, experts in robotic spine surgery, cognitive and behavioral medical professionals in the region, and Marcus Neuroscience Institute's physicians.

The symposium will also welcome Deeptee Jain, M.D., orthopedic spine surgeon at the Center for Bone & Joint Surgery, to discuss interbody fusions and renowned neurosurgeon Philp Stieg, M.D., Ph.D., Chair and Neurosurgeon-in-Chief at Weil Cornell Medicine, on current approaches to the management of intracranial AVMs.

To learn more about the symposium and to register, visit <https://cmeonline.baptisthealth.net/brainandspine#group-tabs-node-course-default>

Florida Medical Association Annual Meeting: Strength in Unity and Leadership



BY PATRICIA ARES-ROMERO, MD

Every summer, the Florida Medical Association (FMA) Annual Meeting brings together physicians from every corner of the state, a powerful reminder of what can be accomplished when the house of medicine speaks with one voice. Delegations from county medical societies, specialty societies, and academic institutions convene to shape policy, discuss challenges, and reaffirm our collective commitment to advancing the practice of medicine and protecting the physician-patient relationship.

As President of the Dade County Medical Association (DCMA), I am proud to have led one of our dedicated delegations within the South Florida Caucus, one of the most dynamic regional groups represented at the FMA meeting. Our active participation is not only essential—it reflects our deep responsibility to the diverse, complex healthcare landscape of South Florida. We are the voice of one of the

most populous and medically active counties in the state, and our involvement ensures that the priorities of our physicians and patients are front and center in statewide advocacy efforts.

This year's FMA meeting will be held in Orlando and include an impressive slate of events and policy discussions. Through reference committees, we will examine and debate a range of physician-submitted resolutions, each aimed at guiding the FMA's legislative, regulatory, and organizational agendas. From combating scope-of-practice expansions that threaten patient safety, to supporting meaningful medical liability reform and protecting reimbursement for care, the issues at stake are critical to the future of our profession.

The FMA Resolutions Handbook, a collection of proposals distributed in advance of the meeting, reflects the concerns, innovations, and shared wisdom of Florida physicians. It serves as a living document, driven by grassroots involvement and reviewed through a transparent process, allowing every voice a chance to shape policy.

A highlight of the meeting is the annual Good Government Lunch, a highly anticipated event that brings together medical professionals and influential voices in Florida politics and healthcare. Speakers offer candid insights into the legislative process, healthcare trends, and the value of organized medicine's advocacy. Events like these underscore the need for physicians to remain engaged not only clinically, but politically, to ensure our patients' interests are protected.

We are witnessing a time in medicine when physician-led leadership is more necessary than ever. The FMA Annual Meeting exemplifies what can be achieved when we collaborate—not only as clinicians but as leaders, advocates, and policymakers. I commend the tireless work of the FMA, the strength of the South Florida Caucus, and the enduring commitment of the DCMA delegation for representing the values of our profession with integrity.

Let us continue to grow our delegation, strengthen our voice, and ensure that South Florida's physicians remain at the forefront of the conversation. We are stronger together, and the future of medicine in Florida is counting on us.

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

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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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Tampa General Community Event Highlights

Health Care Innovation, Vision for the Future

Tampa General Hospital (TGH) recently hosted “The Power of Academic Medicine” at the Kravis Center Cohen Pavilion. The community was invited to learn about the latest developments in how the academic health system is expanding patient access to groundbreaking care in the Palm Beaches and on the Treasure Coast. As guests entered the Cohen Pavilion’s ballroom, an immersive tech playground offered them the opportunity to explore and experience the state-of-the-art technology Tampa General is implementing to enhance patient care. These advancements included:

- **Symani Surgical System** - the first FDA-approved robot that performs microsurgery.
- **TGH at Home**, a hospital at home program - leverages innovative technology to deliver high-quality acute care in the comfort of patients’ homes.
- **Tampa Medical & Research District** - positions Tampa as a destination for clinical care, academics, cutting-edge research, life sciences, biotech and job creation.

Shortly after Ashleigh Walters, a former WPTV news anchor, greeted guests, Tampa General President and CEO John Couris joined her on stage for an interview. He shared his vision for the future of the academic health system as it continues to expand in Palm Beach County. “Our approach is focused on innova-



Ashleigh Walters, a former WPTV news anchor, and Tampa General President and CEO John Couris

tion, creating a smart hospital, reducing redundancy, streamlining efficiency, enhancing the patient experience and ultimately improving outcomes,” said Couris. “We accomplish this through strategic partnerships both in Tampa and across the state.”

Strategic partnerships have been the hallmark of Tampa General’s growth and

expansion in Palm Beach County. “We’re partnering with the best physicians and practices here in the Palm Beaches to expand the community’s access to academic medicine,” Couris added. Currently, Tampa General has more than 75 providers in 13 medical specialties, practicing in 20 locations.

Couris discussed Tampa General’s

recently announced partnership with Mass General Brigham (MGB). The two hospitals’ first joint venture in Palm Beach County is to create a 20,000-square-foot radiation oncology center at Legacy Place in Palm Beach Gardens.

“The power of MGB is connecting with the power of Tampa General and USF Health Morsani College of Medicine,” noted Couris. “Together, we believe the value proposition we’re going to create will be unmatched locally, nationally and globally.”

In addition to MGB, Couris also touched on Tampa General teaming up with the Health Care District of Palm Beach County to provide strategic, operational and administrative support to Lakeside Medical Center. Located in Belle Glade, Florida, Lakeside is the Health Care District’s public teaching hospital. Together, the two organizations will work to enhance quality and increase access to care in rural areas of Palm Beach County.

The remainder of the evening featured in-depth discussions with Tampa General physicians, highlighting groundbreaking projects currently underway at the academic health system.

For more information about the providers and services Tampa General offers in the Palm Beaches and on the Treasure Coast, please visit TGH.org/ThePalmBeaches.

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Advanced Treatment Discovery and Florida Medical Research Talent Face an Increasingly Bleak Future

In fiscal year 2024, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) budget was \$47 billion; approximately 83% went “to more than 300,000 researchers at more than 2,5000 universities, medical schools, and other research institutions.”¹

- The top ten recipients received over \$600 million from the NIH.

Top Ten Recipients of NIH Funding, 2024

University	Funding
Johns Hopkins University	\$857,947,550
University of California, San Francisco	\$814,929,934
University of Michigan at Ann Arbor	\$733,944,984
Washington University	\$732,416,824
University of Pennsylvania	\$691,186,108
University of Pittsburgh at Pittsburgh	\$661,207,841
Massachusetts General Hospital	\$655,235,087
Yale University	\$645,860,184
Columbia University Health Sciences	\$639,122,474
Stanford University	\$613,087,148

NIH successes are diverse from advancing understanding of disease morphology, to new clinical treatments and prevention applications.

Jaime Caldwell, President of the South Florida Hospital and Healthcare Association, believes “investing in NIH research is not just funding science; it is funding hope, innovation, and the future of public health. Universities and hospitals in South Florida are actively involved in the discovery of needed healthcare treatments and cures. Cutting these grants means cutting the lifeline of discoveries that save lives.”

Exemplifying the value of the organization and the investment of taxpayer dollars:

- The rapid development of COVID-19 vaccines and test kits. “A Commonwealth Fund study estimates that, through November 2022, COVID-19 vaccines prevented more than 18.5 million U.S. hospitalizations and 3.2 million deaths and saved the country \$1.15 trillion.”²
- NIH funded studies in cancer research and treatment is instrumental in the 33% drop in the cancer death rate, saving an estimated 4.1 million lives from 1991 to 2021.³

The level of future financial support from NIH is uncertain and could plummet under current national policy leadership. The potential adverse result: elimination of research targeting advanced therapeutics and the loss of top scientific talent from leading academic medical centers and biotechnology organizations.

At peril is research into such advanced technologies as gene therapy and gene edit-

ing. Without NIH funding, transformative and potentially curative treatment pathways for difficult-to-treat disorders may evaporate.

Impact on Florida

National Institute of Health (NIH) grants for Florida entities totaled \$869 million in 2024.⁴ Overall, sixty-seven entities received NIH funding.

- The University of Florida (\$267M) and the University of Miami (\$192M) account for over 50% of the total NIH allocation.
- Grants to South Florida (Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach counties) entities exceeded \$252M.
- Eleven entities received over \$600,000. (See the following table.)

South Florida Entities Receiving Over 600,000 in NIH Grants, 2024

ORGANIZATION	FUNDING	CITY
University of Miami	\$192,038,508	Miami
Florida International University	\$39,669,186	Miami
Florida Atlantic University	\$6,374,501	Boca Raton
Nova Southeastern University	\$4,345,411	Ft. Lauderdale
Stemsynergy Therapeutics, Inc.	\$1,060,173	Miami
Engineering Resources Group, Inc.	\$1,047,828	Pembroke Pines
Infotech Soft, Inc.	\$1,013,264	Miami
Stinginn, LLC	\$999,969	Miami
Colliga Apps Corp.	\$903,228	Miami
Aventusoft, LLC	\$864,759	Boca Raton
Von Medical, Inc.	\$693,385	Weston
Other	\$3,217,601	
Total	\$252,227,813	



BY RICHARD KLASS

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

1 U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, National Institutes of Health, budget.
2 Meagan C. Fitzpatrick et al., “Two Years of U.S. COVID-19 Vaccines Have Prevented Millions of Hospitalizations and Deaths,” To the Point (blog), Commonwealth Fund, Dec. 13, 2022.
3 American Cancer Society, Cancer Facts and Figures, 2024
4 NIH RePort, Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tools

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Let's Connect: ACHE of South Florida Spotlight

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ACHE of South Florida Member Spotlight: Arlen "A.J." Ross

BY LOIS THOMSON

As a youngster, Arlen "A.J." Ross knew what he wanted to do as a career, and it was NOT go into healthcare. "Growing up, my mother was a pharmacist, and my father was in healthcare administration. I told both of them I would never follow in their footsteps," Ross said, then added with a chuckle, "Lo and behold, I almost identically followed the pathway my father set."

That pathway has Ross currently established as Director of Business Operations for Baptist Health, Palm Beach Market. Of his responsibilities, he said, "I do a little of everything for Baptist in the North Region, from emergency medical services outreach to all of our fire rescue and EMS agencies, to integration for the North Region, to different operations and special projects. Literally, it depends on the day and what is needed to be accomplished." He said he's also currently serving as interim director for environmental services, transport services, telecommunications, and linen services.

Ross' father was a hospital administrator in New York (and was an EMT), who had the responsibility for ambulatory services, including the Emergency Department and Ambulance Services. Ross himself began working in fire rescue as a critical care paramedic firefighter – "exactly what I told my father I would not do" – then worked in a hospital as a paramedic. After furthering his education, he went into different operational aspects and worked his way up to his current position.

So while Ross in essence followed his father's career path, it was also Ross' father who introduced him to the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE). "Being a healthcare administrator, my father had always recommended, 'If you're going to further your career you're going to go down certain pathways, and joining ACHE gives you the resources and the ability to connect with others and network.'" Ross has found that to



Arlen Ross

be true. One person with whom he has networked is Haroula Norden, the immediate past president of the organization and with whom he previously worked at Memorial Health System.

Along with Norden, Ross said, "There have been many others as well who I've been able to connect with, and if ever you have any questions, you're able to reach out to those networks for answers, because someone is going to know, or know someone else who can assist you in moving on to that next level."

Ross, who joined ACHE in 2017, is currently serving as programming chair-elect for the organization. He said the committee is looking to expand education opportunities for the membership at large, "everything from virtual education where we're able to do everything via Zoom; or in person, where you're able to network face-to-face."

This work will continue next year when he moves up to programming chair, and Ross said, "As we move forward, we're adapting to anything the membership as a whole would like." He said the newest element this year has been the change in adapting to doing virtual credits, and so far, the members seem to be in favor.

His answer as to whether he would encourage others to join ACHE is, "in a heartbeat. The ability to network and have a vast array of people at your fingertips who are able to assist in your career pathway – whether that's in the private sector or public sector – there's someone, somewhere, who has probably done what you're looking to do, and you're able to work with them to see what your next steps would be and have that mentorship and guidance."

Ross added that as he felt more comfortable in his role and his leadership abilities, he became a mentor both locally and with the national chapter, which enabled him to connect and share insights with other ACHE members throughout the nation. "Now I have a network of colleagues across the country."

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Palm Health Foundation Salutes Nurses Who Make Dreams Possible



When illness takes hold, the future can seem out of reach. Keosha Barry, LPN and chronic kidney disease clinic coordinator at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital, inspires the children in her care to rise above their challenges and not let their disease define them.

"Working at the kidney disease clinic is my chance to give back—to prevent my children's kidney disease from progressing, build relationships as they grow, and encourage them to excel in school, go to college, and follow their dreams."

Keosha is realizing her own dream of becoming an RN after receiving a nursing scholarship through The Debra Coffman Howe Nursing Scholarship Fund at Palm Health Foundation, fulfilling an aspiration nearly 20 years in the making.

"An act of kindness allowed me to chase my dream. Doing the same for my patients is paying forward a gift of humanity."

Learn how you can make dreams possible by supporting nursing scholars. Visit PalmHealthFoundation.org/Scholarships to learn more or contact Carrie Browne at CarrieB@phfpbc.org.

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National Nurses Week

Nurses Week is celebrated from May 6-12, 2025, and South Florida Hospital News and Healthcare Report would like to salute nurses across the U.S. and the world. The following nurses are some of South Florida's best!

MEMORIAL REGIONAL HOSPITAL SOUTH

Jacqueline Benitez, MSN, RN, MBA



Jackie Benitez has been described by her superiors as a "transformational nurse leader" that has made significant improvements in interdisciplinary communication and teamwork in the past year. That's music to the ears of Benitez, who has made those two areas a focus of her efforts as director of nursing. "I'm passionate about bringing people together to work collaboratively and deliver the safest, highest quality, patient-centered care. One way we're doing this is by working together to identify and overcome workflow barriers for staff," she said.

A Memorial Healthcare System employee for more than 25 years, Benitez began as a home health aide and has held positions as a patient care assistant, healthcare unit secretary, registered nurse, clinical nurse manager, nurse manager, and now director. She says the journey has enabled her to understand each of those roles, its workflow, processes, and operations.

"Twenty-five years in, my heartbeat is still nursing, and my motivation and passion keeps me going."

Thais Azevedo, RN, BSN, MHA, CCM



As director of case management at Memorial Regional Hospital South, Thais Azevedo is always focused on patient safety. It has been the primary motivation behind the restructuring of that department within the hospital. "There's really nothing greater than caring for somebody and helping them improve their quality of life as that process unfolds in front of you," she said.

Azevedo's innovative approach has resulted in kudos from her supervisors and the development of systems and processes that have improved outcomes for patients and staff at the Hollywood facility, a 280-bed hospital that is home to the Memorial Rehabilitation Institute.

"I choose to become a nurse because I love helping others and the community," said Azevedo. "There's just something so special about taking care of other people and, for me personally, it's fulfilling. It definitely feels like this is my purpose."

MEMORIAL HOSPITAL MIRAMAR

Jeena Easow, BSN, RN IV



After more than 24 years as an ICU nurse, including the last nine within Memorial Healthcare System, Jeena Easow has fully embraced mentoring newer nurses.

"I love teaching clinicals, about inpatient care, and new technologies," said Easow, who has been a charge and resource nurse, as well as a member of the Rapid Response team. "I take my time with them, encouraging them to remain positive and learn everything they can."

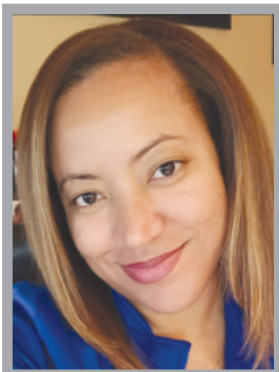
From an early age Easow knew she wanted to help others, with her desire to become a nurse inspired by family members that were already working in healthcare in India. "I've never had another job in my life, so I know it was my purpose to be a nurse," said the 2024 Memorial Excellence Award winner. "I'm thankful to be part of this healthcare system and want to keep growing and giving back to patients and coworkers."

MEMORIAL HOSPITAL MIRAMAR

Tiffany Hinds, MHSc, BSN, RN

Tiffany Hinds has been a nurse for more than 20 years, most of that time with Memorial Healthcare System. Having worked in three of the system's six hospitals since 2005, she most appreciates the environment that has been created for nurses. "The people and culture are what make an enjoyable workplace, and what we have here isn't evident other places I've been. Memorial is great about growing its own leaders."

Tiffany is in a leadership role as nurse manager for emergency services in Miramar. A strong believer in professional growth, and a mentor to less experienced nurses, she reminds herself and others to always remember why they originally got into healthcare. "The desire to help people is the driving force," said the graduate of Florida Atlantic and Nova Southeastern universities. "Patients depend on us, and we all play a part in getting them back to their optimum health."



MEMORIAL REGIONAL HOSPITAL

Macie Shea, RN

It was a passion for patient care that motivated Macie Shea to become a nurse and begin that part of her healthcare journey nearly three years ago. Since that time, she has become a valued member of Memorial Regional's surgical services department, serving as a resource nurse for robotics, gynecological procedures, and kidney transplants.

"Macie's dedication to patient care and commitment to Memorial Regional Hospital have fueled her professional growth in our department," said Prisca Duclos, director of Surgical Services Clinical Operations. "We're proud to have Macie as part of the team."

Shea's connection to Memorial actually dates back to 2017, when she was a volunteer in the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU). She then pursued an education in surgical technology and became a sterile processing technician prior to beginning nursing school.



Tove Carlsson, BSN, RN

Tove Carlsson has been a nurse in cardiac units since 2016, first in her native Sweden and continuing in the U.S. She joined Memorial Healthcare System after relocating to South Florida in 2023.

"My passion is cardiac surgery. It constantly challenges you to use all your clinical skills and we're critical to the care team," she said.

Carlsson enjoys working bedside and feels supported by fellow nurses and doctors. She was the first nursing fellow hired for cardiac surgery's highly complex step-down unit, which includes heart transplant recipients, and has thrived in that role.

In addition to providing exceptional clinical care, Carlsson is co-chair of one of 6 North's Shared Governance groups, the Positivity Committee, and has led fundraisers to improve morale and unite day and night shift nurses.



Our Nurses Are Invaluable

At Jupiter Medical Center, we acknowledge the invaluable contributions of our nurses. As frontline caregivers, nurses play a vital role in delivering world-class care. During National Nurses Week, we take a moment to honor the exceptional dedication and compassion of all nurses. To our nurses: thank you for your unwavering commitment to excellence and for being the heart of Jupiter Medical Center. You make a difference!



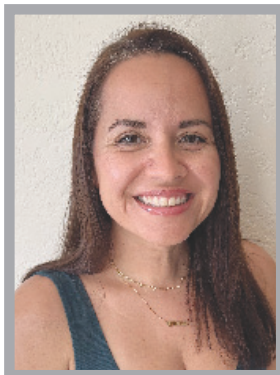
CELEBRATING NATIONAL NURSES WEEK - MAY 6-12, 2025

JOE DIMAGGIO CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Maryliz Melius, BSN, RN, CPN

Maryliz Melius has been in pediatric nursing at Memorial Healthcare System since 2006, with her most recent clinical role in oncology. "I loved the relationships I was able to form with cancer patients and families and how intimately we knew each other. We're part of their lives during horrible, dark times, but that's where you can have the most impact. I had one mom of a patient that passed away thank me for loving her child as much as she did." For the past two years, Melius has worked as a quality specialist developing processes that improve the lives of patients and fellow nurses. "Our focus is always on getting better. It's a different kind of role I now have, more in the background than at the bedside, but it's a great opportunity to make things easier for everyone."

Known by some as "Quality Mary," Melius has earned praise for bringing nursing expertise and prior management experience to the projects she works on, often with front-line staff through a shared governance model.



Sheree Saddler-Smith, MSN, RN, NE-BC

The administrative officer's role on the night shift at any hospital not only requires a depth of clinical knowledge, but the ability to communicate and provide support in difficult circumstances. Whether that's for a family in crisis or internal team members coping with stressful situations, Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital AO Sheree Saddler-Smith is able to relay essential, often time-sensitive, information in a gentle, reassuring way. "Sheree guides with care, supports fully, and mentors kindly," said Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital Chief Nursing Officer Jineal Shinn. "She is a servant leader who prefers to fly under the radar, always putting others first."

Saddler-Smith, who was a pediatric intensive care nurse before becoming a clinical leader, says lessons learned from great teachers helped her become the clinician she is. "One of the most defining aspects of my practice is the foundation built by the great leaders and mentors who've poured into me," she said. "They've reminded me time and again that serving others is a sacred privilege, but also that rest is a divine gift."



MEMORIAL HOSPITAL PEMBROKE

Melanie Alexander-Heusner, RN

A longtime administrative officer at Memorial Hospital Pembroke, Melanie Alexander-Heusner is the go-to person for issues that need to be addressed. "The AO is usually the first call made, whether that involves patients/families, staff/physicians, or just about any department in the house. We are the support patients, families and staff can count on."

A true believer that the 'Memorial Way is the best way,' Melanie focuses on upholding the system's high standards and being accountable for what takes place between her hospital's four walls. "That's my building, those are my people, and I take personally what happens here. We have proven policies and procedures and I use them to guide me."

Just a few months short of her 25th anniversary with Memorial Healthcare System, Melanie credits the many nurse leaders that encouraged her development over the years. She says they recognized leadership and administrative potential in her and provided the former emergency nurse opportunities to grow and advance.



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MEMORIAL HOSPITAL PEMBROKE

Shea Peddy, RN

Ask some of those who know her best and you'll hear that Shea Peddy embodies many of the characteristics that make nurses impactful. It begins with a focus on providing safe, high-quality care to patients,

which includes significant amounts of empathy and compassion, during some of their most difficult times. Peddy is a critical thinker, resilient, and able to bring a calming presence to stressful situations.

An important part of a telemetry unit, Peddy is also an effective communicator that makes sure patients understand their plan of care. She advocates for them and works closely with multi-disciplinary teams to meet needs in a timely manner. A true team player, Peddy has more recently developed leadership skills as a charge nurse and is currently pursuing her clinical ladder to foster additional growth.



MEMORIAL HOSPITAL WEST

Michelle House, RN, MSN

A clinical manager on a medical/telemetry unit, Michelle House knows exactly what motivates her each shift.

"It's knowing my work contributes to improving patient outcomes and supporting my team," said House, a nurse since 2006. "Whether it's mentoring a colleague, advocating for better care, or comforting a patient, I find fulfillment in the ability to lead with purpose and make a lasting impact."

House says her nursing journey has been filled with learning, challenges, and rewards, and includes a commitment to growing within the profession. Since joining Memorial Healthcare System in 2012, she has become a certified stroke nurse, earned her BSN and MSN, served on Shared Governance committees, been a charge nurse, clinical manager, and now aspires to be a nurse manager.

"I have a strong passion for leadership, teamwork, and patient care," she said. "It's very fulfilling to see nurses you've supported grow in their roles and witness the positive outcomes of patient recovery."

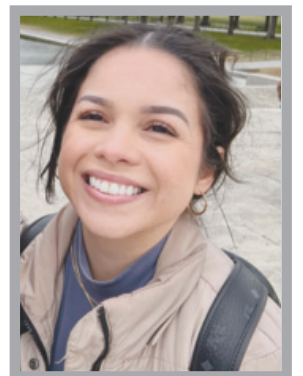


Tania Osejo, BSN, RN

Tania Osejo started her career in healthcare as an international patient coordinator, but always knew nursing would be in her future.

"Nursing wasn't just a career, it was a calling, and every obstacle I overcame helped me grow, not only as a healthcare professional, but as a person," said Osejo. "It taught me to be resilient, empathetic, and most importantly, that the hardest moments in life often lead to the most profound growth."

Osejo began her career at Memorial Hospital West as a nurse resident and has excelled in the time since, demonstrating a commitment to high-quality care and collaborating with interdisciplinary teams to deliver the best patient outcomes. In addition to providing excellent clinical care, Osejo has also taken on leadership roles, chairing the hospital's Shared Governance Unit Based council and serving on a number of committees.



No matter where, no matter when, you show up.

At every touch point, you bring hope and healing to those you serve, no matter where you find them in their care journey. Thank you for showing up in every way for our patients.

Happy Hospital Week May 11-17



LISBET HEALTH

Selina Tran, RN, BSN

Selina Tran, RN, BSN, is an invaluable asset to the Wellington community. Her decade of experience in senior care, particularly in Assisted Living and Memory Care, is evident in her unwavering commitment to providing exceptional resident care at Lisbet Health.

As a leader, she fosters a welcoming and hospitable environment. Selina's unique blend of administrative expertise and nursing background ensures the highest standards of care.

Furthermore, her dedication extends beyond her role at Lisbet Health, as she facilitates a crucial Alzheimer's Support Group, empowering caregivers with knowledge and support, demonstrating her profound commitment to the well-being of the community.



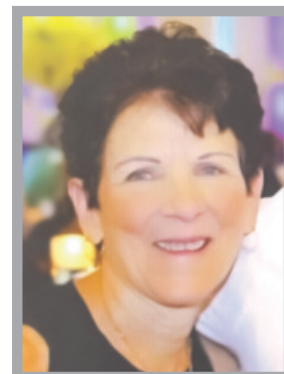
Mary Cenname, RN

Mary Cenname is celebrating 25 years at Jupiter Medical Center. Mary joined the nursing profession in 1993 with most of her career spent in ICU. What started as a float to ICU in 1995 turned into a passion for not only nursing but the Intensive Care Unit. Her love for nursing inspired her daughter's passion who also has worked at Jupiter Medical Center for 15 years. In her spare time that is not spent with her 3 children or 6 grandchildren Mary attends events associated with the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN). Her positive go with the flow attitude has inspired a whole new generation of nurses and she is seen as a mentor here as Mama Mary.

Luellen Hatcher, BSN, RN, CPHQ

I became an RN in 1977 and received my BSN from FAU in 2004. For my first 19 years at JMC I worked in Critical Care, Nursing Supervision, and Interventional Radiology. Twenty years ago, I made the difficult decision to leave direct patient care moving to Quality Improvement. I soon realized that I was still contributing to patient care, by supporting bedside nurses and physicians in a different way. The nursing profession allows us many opportunities to effect positive outcomes in patient's lives.

"I enjoy being part of the JMC organization that is recognized as the "Best" and provides world class care! JMC gives me the opportunity to gain experience and advance my career in a supportive environment." Reflecting over my 47 years, I love being a nurse! I have appreciated all the mentoring, teamwork, friendships, and varied roles nursing allows.



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OUR

NURSES

OUR

CHAMPIONS

2025

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THE POWER OF NURSES

This National Nurses Week, we celebrate the power of nurses – the compassion, strength and unwavering impact you bring to every patient, every day. At the University of Miami Health System and around the world, your dedication uplifts families, your care brings healing and hope and your presence makes an extraordinary difference. Thank you for all that you do.



UMiamiHealth.org

MOUNT SINAI MEDICAL CENTER

Lucy Levin, RN

Lucy Levin, RN, goes above and beyond in her role, making sure every patient feels at home. Originally from New York, Lucy graduated with a degree in nursing from the University of Miami in 2024 and started working at Mount Sinai Medical Center shortly thereafter. Her vocation to nursing began when she attended a health fair and had the opportunity to speak with many healthcare professionals.



In just seven months of working at Mount Sinai, Lucy has already earned a DAISY Award for her exceptional care in helping a patient recover from a 19-day infection. The DAISY Award is a prestigious recognition program that honors nurses across the country through nominations from patients, families, and colleagues whose lives they've touched. Over 4,000 hospitals nationwide participate in program, with Lucy being one of the deserving recipients.

Her attentiveness to patients' needs, ability to complete tasks efficiently, excellent communication skills, and innate kindness are qualities that make her stand out. Lucy's commitment to making patients feel seen, safe, and heard, combined with her determination to ensure they experience a speedy and positive recovery, truly defines her as an outstanding nurse.

Since coming to Mount Sinai, Lucy has quickly become a valued member of the team. Her dedication to both her patients and her colleagues reflects the high standards she holds herself to in her career.

HOLY CROSS HEALTH

Marixsa Estrella, RN

Marixsa Estrella, RN, BSN, Endoscopy Manager is a valued and integral member of the endoscopy team at Holy Cross Health for 6 years. She is a true servant leader and team player who leads by example and proactively looks for opportunities to improve. Her efforts have led to tremendous growth in the department, resulting in the ability to treat more cases and meet the needs of new physicians. Estrella is respected by both physicians and colleagues as a resource to everyone. She has a reputation of offering to help, staying late to complete cases, and doing whatever is needed and asked of her. The physicians rely on Estrella for difficult cases and appreciate her expertise. In addition to her superb technical skills, she is a warm, compassionate and caring person who continually goes the extra mile to assist patients, family members and co-workers in any way that she can.



Carol Katzell, RN

Carol Katzell, BSN, RN, is a respected Patient Safety Officer and member of the Risk Management Team at Holy Cross Health. Her goal is to achieve Zero Harm to patients, colleagues and the community. Katzell has been devoted to nursing for more than 40 years, 21 of them at Holy Cross. She is a fearless, loyal leader who has implemented innovative ways to improve patient safety and doesn't hesitate to speak up in high-stakes meetings or initiate challenging conversations. Her professionalism, passion, dedication, excellence and knowledge are an inspiration to those around her. In 2024, the Boca Raton resident was named Leader of the Year. She received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton and has experience in post anesthesia, critical care, endoscopy and outpatient surgery, as well as a surgical clinical reviewer for the American College of Surgeons National Surgical Quality Improvement Program. She is a master trainer for Team STEPPS (Strategies and Tools to Enhance Performance and Patient Safety) and chairs several committees including the Patient and Colleague Safety Committee, Fall Prevention Committee and Alarm Management Committee.



(Salute to Nursing, continued on page 29.)

RECOGNIZING THE BEST OF THE BEST IN THE HEALTH CARE COMMUNITY



26th ANNUAL HEALTH CARE HEROES AWARDS LUNCHEON

Save
the
Date

MAY 15, 2025
JUNGLE ISLAND
11:15 AM - 1:30 PM

AWARD CATEGORIES:

- HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL
- NURSE
- INDIVIDUAL OF MERIT
- ORGANIZATION/PROGRAM
- FIRST RESPONDER
- YOUTH VOLUNTEER
- EQUITABLE ADVISORS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

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\$115 per person | \$1,000 table of 10

Contact: Tania Valenzuela at tvalenzuela@miamichamber.com, call 305-577-5491 or visit www.MiamiChamber.com

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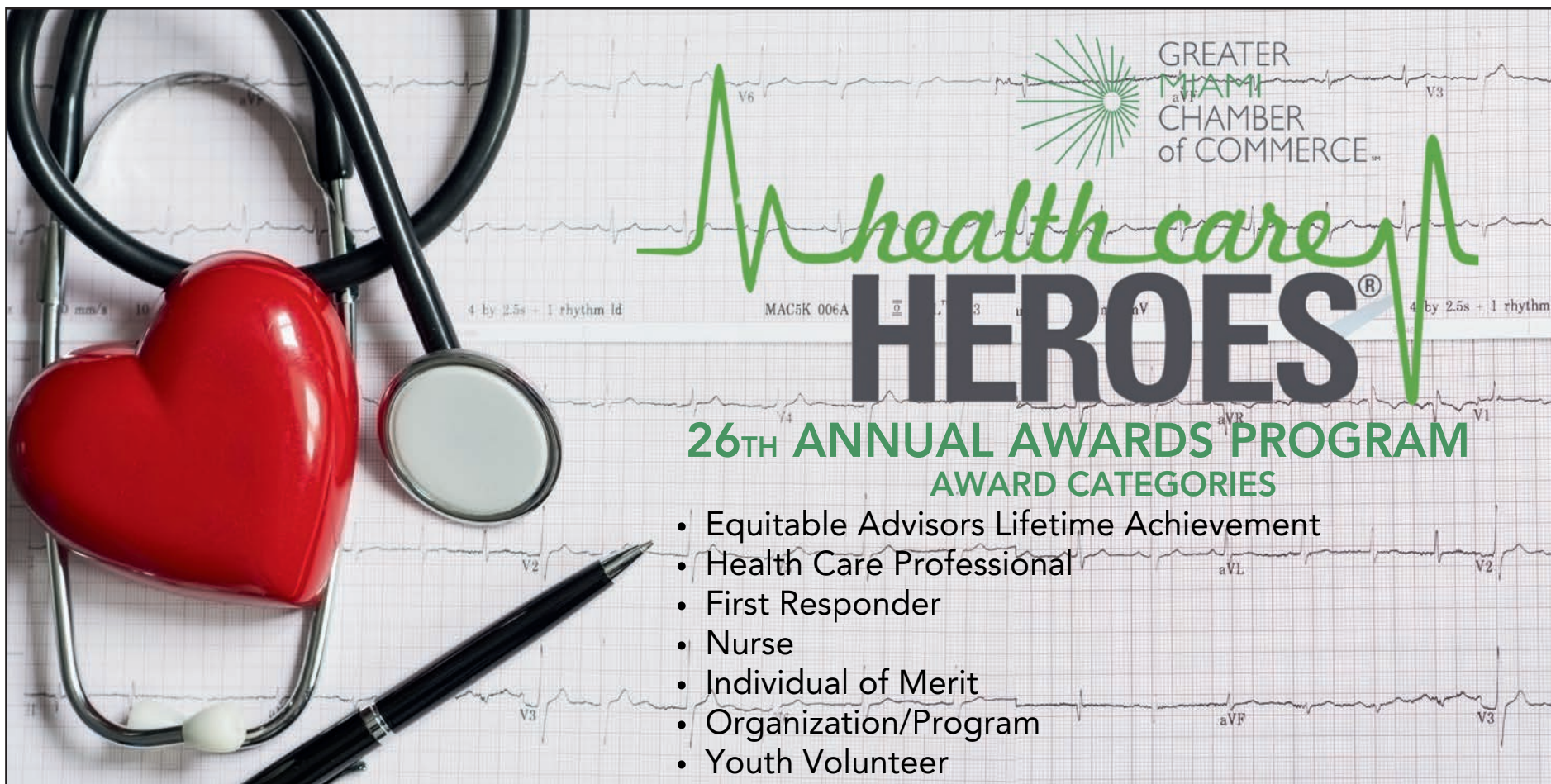


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Health Care Heroes® Awards Program celebrates 26 years of recognizing and honoring the tremendous efforts, dedication and achievements of our healthcare professionals, first responders, institutions and volunteers as well as others who have contributed to the health care delivery system and overall welfare of South Florida and its residents.

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MAY 15, 2025

TO HEALTH CARE HEROES SUPPORTERS:

South Florida is rapidly emerging as a global hub for top-quality healthcare, and the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce has been at the forefront of industry's evolution. Our annual Health Care Heroes celebration stands as a testament to the visionary leaders who have contributed to this remarkable growth and continue to shape a promising future for our region.

For over two decades, Health Care Heroes has been the premier community gathering honoring our local healthcare professionals. At this event, we recognize the exceptional contributions of physicians, nurses, researchers, institutions, volunteers, and many others, alongside key stakeholders from hospital systems, physician groups, managed care providers, biomedical innovators, and service suppliers—key pillars of the healthcare economy.

There may be no industry evolving as rapidly as healthcare, and no local economy better positioned to harness the power of that change. South Florida is also uniquely vulnerable to business and regulatory movement due to our unique population. That's why it's more important than ever for the healthcare leaders of South Florida to find common ground and work together in ways that benefit all our neighbors. That work starts with close, collaborative relationships that celebrate our shared success at events like Health Care Heroes.

This year, we are proud to commemorate the 26th anniversary of the Health Care Heroes® Awards program, which honors the tireless dedication and outstanding achievements of our healthcare professionals and first responders. The luncheon will celebrate those who have made significant contributions to healthcare delivery and the overall well-being of South Florida's residents.

We are thrilled to celebrate this incredible journey and rewarding partnership between Equitable Advisors and the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce for 26 consecutive years. Consistent partners like Equitable Advisors and presenting sponsor AvMed are the foundation for us to strengthen and grow our healthcare community.

Each year, we see a growing number of exceptional nominees, and the caliber of talent continues to make it increasingly difficult for our judges to select one recipient from each category. This is a testament to the relentless pursuit of excellence that defines this honor and, indeed, the mission of healthcare in South Florida and around the world.

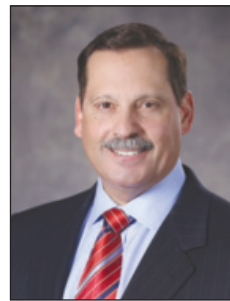
Thank you for being part of this exciting and transformative journey. We look forward to celebrating our collective successes at this year's event



Eneida O. Roldan, MD, MPH, MBA
Chairman, Healthcare Committee
Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce

Sincerely,

Luis G. Chiappy, CFP, CLU, ChFC, LUTCF
President, Southeast Complex
Senior Manager, South Florida Branch
Equitable Advisors, LLC
Founding Sponsor, Health Care Heroes®



JUDGES

Loreen Chant
President
Health Foundation of South Florida

Rocio Diaz, MBA
Healthcare Market Director -
Florida and Puerto Rico
Genentech

Zuanel Diaz, PhD
Assistant Vice President,
Interprofessional Education,
Baptist Health Academics
Baptist Health South Florida

Kim Griffin-Hunter
Managing Partner South Florida
Deloitte

Ryan R. Hawkins
President & CEO
Jessie Trice Community Health System

Bridget Pelaez, MSN, MA, FNP-BC, EMT-P, CEM
Senior Director, Disaster
& Emergency Preparedness
Jackson Health System

Jacqueline Perez
Manager, Consumer Sales & Retention
Individual & Family Plans
AvMed

Congratulations to all the nominees of the Greater Miami Health Care Heroes Awards

Nicklaus Children's would like to extend heartfelt congratulations to:

INDIVIDUALS OF MERIT

Carolyn W. Domina, MSN, ARNP, CNOR, CAN-BC
Nursing Advisor,
Nicklaus Children's Hospital

Jose Perdomo
SVP, Operations & Infrastructure
Nicklaus Children's Health System

ORGANIZATION/PROGRAM

**Nicklaus Children's
Behavioral Health Program**

HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

Ali Mandsourwala, CEO/Owner
Accessible Home Health Care of Aventura
and Nicklaus Children's Board Member

NURSES

Jorge A. Valdes, DNP, CRNA, APRN, FAANA
Dean & Fellow, FIU Nicole Wertheim
College of Nursing & Health Sciences
Nicklaus Children's Affiliate Member



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Children's**

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EQUITABLE ADVISORS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT

WILLIAM W. CULBERTSON, IV, MD

Lou Higgins Chair in Ophthalmology, Bascom Palmer Eye Institute
University of Miami Miller School of Medicine

A recognized pioneer in vision correction surgery and world-renowned expert in corneal disease, William W. Culbertson, M.D., holds the Lou Higgins Chair in Ophthalmology at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, which has been named the best ophthalmology program in the U.S. for 21 consecutive years. A faculty member of the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine since 1978, Dr. Culbertson is recognized as one of the world's most skilled refractive and cataract surgeons.

With more than 40 years of experience in corneal diseases and surgery, Dr. Culbertson has provided crucial research that has contributed to the expanded use of lasers in eye care. He participated in the first nationally organized study of refractive surgery. With an innovative team of ophthalmologists at Bascom Palmer, he has co-developed a femtosecond cataract laser that has sharpened standard cataract surgery by using a laser to make bladeless incisions in the cornea, which are far more precise than those in traditional cataract surgery. The femtosecond cataract laser stands among the most significant advancements in cataract surgery in the last 55 years.

Dr. Culbertson's unique contributions to the field of ophthalmology include the first description of floppy eyelid syndrome, a disorder of unknown origin characterized by a loose upper eyelid that everts with papillary conjunctivitis. He also identified the herpes class virus as a cause of acute retinal necrosis, a devastating infection that causes inflammation and even tissue death in the retina. Dr. Culbertson's pioneering work includes the first successful posterior lamellar endothelial transplantation, a procedure that replaces the cornea's innermost layer with healthy donor tissue. His work represents genuine hope for people with corneal endothelial

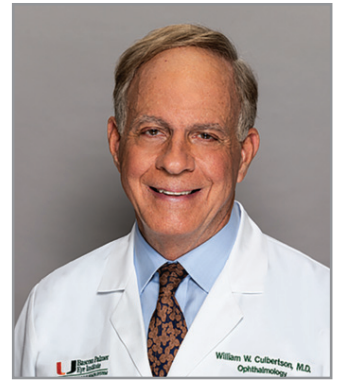
dysfunction, a condition that can lead to complete vision loss.

Dr. Culbertson holds two U.S. patents; one for his method for creating incisions to improve intraocular lens placement and one for his method for patterned, plasma-mediated modification of the crystalline lens.

A member of the Ophthalmology Times editorial board, Dr. Culbertson's professional achievements are global in scale and have been rewarded with well-deserved recognition from the most influential organizations in ophthalmology. The American Academy of Ophthalmology presented him with the prestigious Senior Honor Award and Life Achievement Award, and he has received the Lifetime Award from the International Society of Refractive Surgery, the Victor Curtin Award, and the Swedish Ophthalmological Society.

His expertise has been memorialized through named lectures worldwide, including Bascom Palmer's Edward W.D. Norton Lecture, the Proctor Foundation O'Connor Lecture, Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children's Lloyd Morgan Lecture, Laval University's Jean Lacerte Lecture, and Vanderbilt's Snyder Lecture.

He has served as president of the American Uveitis Society and is a member of the board of directors of the Cornea Society and Miami Lighthouse for the Blind. At Bascom Palmer, he founded the Uveitis Clinic, the Laser Vision Center and the clinic at the Ocean Reef Club. His commitment to advancing the field is further demonstrated by his role as director of Bascom Palmer's cornea and refractive surgery service, a facet of care that helps restore vision to thousands of people each year.



"Dr. Culbertson's leadership in the field of ophthalmology is extensive and precisely correlates with his steadfast belief that healing is a talent that must be shared to best impact humanity. In short, Dr. Culbertson helps create a clearer, more vibrant world for people with vision problems."

Eduardo C. Alfonso, MD
Kathleen and Stanley J. Glaser Chair in Ophthalmology
Director, Bascom Palmer Eye Institute
University of Miami Miller School of Medicine

HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

SIR GAETANO CIANCIO MD, MBA, FACS

Chief Medical Officer
& Chief Academic Officer
Miami Transplant Institute/
Jackson Memorial Hospital;
Brandon and Kyle Simonsen
Professor of Surgery & Urology
UM Miller School of Medicine

A native of Roccapiemonte, Italy, Dr. Ciano has dedicated his career to transforming lives by providing the gift of life to adult and pediatric patients in need of kidney transplants. Dr. Ciano migrated to Venezuela and then the U.S. to pursue his medical career. As he refined his specialty, he was captivated by the profound impact of transplantation—providing not just a new organ, but the extraordinary gift of renewed life.

Dr. Ciano's most significant contributions focus on surgically treating kidney cancer once it has spread to the inferior vena cava, and in optimizing the immunosuppression protocol after kidney transplant. In his role as chief medical officer and director of the Kidney and Kidney-Pancreas Transplant Program at the Miami Transplant Institute (MTI), he has steered the institute to become a national leader in making life-saving kidney transplant procedures available to those facing end-stage kidney disease; the institute has performed almost 10,000 kidney transplants since 1988. Dr. Ciano has helped establish kidney transplant programs and organ donation programs and performed urologic and oncological surgeries in Latin American, the Caribbean, the Middle East and West Africa. He has established transplant programs in Peru and Nigeria, a laparoscopic donor nephrectomy program in Puerto Rico, and performed the first kidney living-kidney transplant on both donor and recipient with the Haiti Transplant Program.

He has performed several of the world's first transplant surgeries, including the first-ever multivisceral transplant of six organs, and the first successful simultaneous kidney-pancreas transplant. In 2018, Dr. Ciano performed the first kidney transplant of a Hepatitis C positive donor into a negative Hepatitis C recipient. Dr. Ciano has trained many professors, residents, fellows, and medical students from around the world. His dedication to teaching has been recognized with multiple awards.



"For over four decades, Dr. Gaetano Ciano has been known as a trailblazer in kidney transplantation and advanced oncology surgery. Because of his contributions, countless lives have been undoubtedly saved - not just in Miami-Dade County, but throughout the world."

Luke Preczewski
Vice President,
Transplant Services
Jackson Health System

ARMEN HENDERSON, MD, MBA

Founder, Dade County Street Response
General Internal Medicine Faculty
Member, UM Miller School of Medicine

As the founder of Dade County Street Response (DCSR), Dr. Armen Henderson has created a model that addresses immediate health concerns and builds a framework for resilient, informed, and healthier communities while reducing excess costs at emergency rooms and hospital systems. DCSR brings medical services out of hospital settings and into communities experiencing housing instability, low wages, and limited healthcare access. This innovative, street medicine approach meets people where they are with compassion and continuous, free medical care, disaster relief, and preventive care. DCSR's care model integrates medical services with case management, legal advocacy, and medical education. DCSR's Doctors Within Borders clinic in Liberty City is a trusted medical resource during times of crisis and a unique training center for medical students and residents, offering services that extend beyond basic medical needs to include community support and outreach. DCSR's Disaster Relief Team has led the charge in preparing and protecting underserved communities before, during, and after environmental disasters. Dr. Henderson's responsibilities include serving as the director of health programs with Dream Defenders, where he champions initiatives focused on health equity and social justice. His leadership underscores a strong commitment to addressing the root causes of health disparities through disaster preparedness, street medicine, gun violence prevention, and social determinants of health inequities.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Henderson has been on the front lines, actively responding to the needs of Miami's most vulnerable residents, particularly those who are unhoused. Dr. Henderson was named the Florida State Gun Violence Prevention Fellow with Doctors for America, acknowledging his impactful efforts to reduce violence and promote community safety. He holds a distinguished position as a National Medical Association Climate and Health Equity Fellow, where he integrates climate resilience with health advocacy.



"Dr. Henderson exemplifies what it means to be a health care hero—seeing beyond symptoms to the broader context of community well-being and acting on behalf of those who are often overlooked. Dr. Henderson's work is an inspiring reminder that a more equitable and healthier future is necessary, possible, and attainable."

Loreen Chant
President and CEO
Health Foundation
of South Florida

HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

ALI MANDSOURWALA
Chief Executive Officer/Owner
Accessible Home Health Care
of Aventura



"Ali Mandsourwala's leadership is rooted in compassion, vision, and a deep commitment to service. His impact extends far beyond home health care — through his tireless dedication to emergency medical staffing for the state, community partnerships, and philanthropic work, he has elevated Accessible Home Health Care of Aventura and touched countless lives across the broader healthcare landscape. It's a privilege to work alongside someone whose integrity and purpose inspire those around him every day."

Joshua Laurence
Chief Growth Officer
Accessible Home Health Care
of Aventura

Under the leadership of Ali Mandsourwala, Accessible Home Health Care of Aventura (AHHC) has become a trusted provider of high-quality, compassionate home care for over 15 years. With a team of 175–200 caregivers, AHHC serves more than 100 clients, offering a full range of services — from daily home health care to emergency on-call staffing. The agency is dedicated to supporting independence, safety, and overall well-being for patients in the comfort of their homes. Mr. Mandsourwala's commitment to community health extends beyond day-to-day care. During the COVID-19 pandemic, AHHC partnered with the Florida Department of Emergency Management (FDEM), mobilizing over 600 medical and nonmedical personnel for 17 missions across the state. Their work played a vital role in Florida's vaccination efforts. In 2022, he expanded the agency's reach by partnering with the Oregon Health Authority, deploying approximately 150 medical professionals to behavioral health and residential treatment facilities across the state. His leadership also guided emergency response efforts during natural disasters, including the rapid deployment of 100 medical personnel to shelters in Lee County within 24 hours of Hurricane Ian, and 25 personnel to shelters in Putnam County ahead of Hurricane Nicole. He has since expanded Accessible Home Health Care beyond Aventura, opening offices that now serve Broward County, the Palm Beaches and Treasure Coast, and Southwest Florida from Collier and Lee Counties to Sarasota County. Mr. Mandsourwala serves on the boards of the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind, Nicklaus Children's Hospital Foundation, Entrepreneurs' Organization (EO), and It's For the Kids Foundation, and is a proud supporter of the Miami Walk to End Alzheimer's. His dedication to service, both in health care and in the community, continues to make a meaningful and lasting impact.

NURSES

ADEMOLA "AYO" AKINKUNMI, BSN, MHA, PMP, FACHE
Director, Patient Care Services of Medical-Surgical and Telemetry Division
Jackson Memorial Hospital



"Ayo Akinkunmi has made a profound and lasting impact on healthcare in South Florida through his innovative leadership, dedication to patient care, and commitment to addressing the unique needs of the local community. His ability to lead with innovation, compassion, and vision exemplifies his commitment to going above and beyond his scope of work."

Jennifer Lopez Bencomo, DNP, MBA, RN
Associate Chief Nursing Officer
Jackson Memorial Hospital

For Ademola "Ayo" Akinkunmi, healthcare is more than a career—it is a calling. He has progressed through various roles at Jackson Health System, and in 2020, he was appointed director of patient care services for the medical-surgical and telemetry division at Jackson Memorial Hospital, where he oversees multiple specialty units and leads a team of more than 400 staff members. Mr. Akinkunmi played a pivotal role in developing strategies and programs as part of Jackson's population health initiative aimed at improving outcomes for underserved patient groups in the community. He helped design targeted interventions to address frequent readmissions and emergency department visits. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he led the central staffing office, collaborating with staffing agencies to onboard agency nurses and support staff, ensuring the hospital maintained its high standards of care. In 2024, he was recognized for successfully implementing hospital-wide initiatives that improved patient flow and care delivery. He introduced structured rounds and a new patient flow application across the hospital's inpatient units, resulting in significant improvements. These efforts, combined with a strong focus on outlier reduction, reduced the average length of stay (LOS) from 10 days to 7.7 days over two years.

While participating in Leadership Miami, Cohort 43, a Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce initiative designed to prepare the next generation of South Florida leaders, Mr. Akinkunmi's cohort identified the Linda Ray Intervention Center, part of the University of Miami, as a critical community partner in need of support. Through strategic fundraising and outreach efforts, they successfully raised \$80,000 in cash and in-kind donations to transform the center's park into a safe and nurturing environment for learning and play. He also joined the center's Community Advisory Board, where he has played a pivotal role in expanding referral opportunities for pediatric patients in need of high-quality early intervention services.

NURSES

GUS CASTILLO, RN, BSN
Nurse Manager, Neurosciences
& Epilepsy Stepdown Unit
UHealth-University of Miami
Health System



"In Gus Castillo, UHealth has a leader who not only excels in his current role but also has the potential to elevate the entire health system to new heights. His commitment to transformational leadership is not just a testament to his individual excellence but also a source of inspiration for the staff from whom he has earned so much well-deserved admiration."

Julio Garcia, BSN, RN, NE-BC®
Executive Director of Nursing
Acute Care & Oncology
Inpatient Services
University of Miami Hospital
and Clinics

A recent nominee for the UHealth—University of Miami Health System's Transformational Leadership Award, Gus Castillo began his career as a bedside nurse. He was quickly promoted to charge nurse, a position of leadership that deemed him responsible for the efficient flow of patients through his clinic as well as providing supervision to nursing and support staff. Mr. Castillo's current role is nurse manager for the Neurosciences and Epilepsy Stepdown Unit in the UHealth Tower, where he has helped transform it into a clinical beacon of excellence within the UHealth clinical construct. His guidance has prompted UHealth leadership to deem 6 North as an "innovation unit" that is depended upon to devise, test and refine new techniques that are expected to benefit patients and staff alike. Mr. Castillo's knowledge of current best practices is comprehensive and his willingness to embrace the latest technologies are crucial elements in maintaining his unit's high-performing standards. Under his leadership, 6 North has exhibited consistent improvement in performance and quality metrics that serve as the objective evaluative measures of a clinic's effectiveness. Mr. Castillo's team has seen a remarkable 50 percent decrease in adverse events since he assumed his current position. The decrease in adverse events tracks precisely with his time at 6 North, declining from 50 events in 2020, the year before he assumed his managerial position, and dropping annually to 44, 23, and 15 events, respectively. He continues to spearhead multiple pilot projects across the health system.

JORGE A. VALDÉS, DNP, CRNA, APRN, FAANA, FAAN

Dean & Fellow, Nicole Wertheim College
of Nursing & Health Sciences
Professor, Department of Nurse
Anesthesiology
Florida International University



"What began as a clinical career 21 years ago became a calling—Dr. Valdés now leads one of Florida's top nursing colleges with purpose and pride."

Michelle Caldera, MPA, MA
Director of Strategic Initiatives
Nicole Wertheim College of
Nursing and Health Sciences
Florida International
University

Dr. Jorge Valdés is an accomplished nurse anesthesiologist, university administrator, and health advocate with over 20 years of experience in both clinical practice and academic leadership. A steadfast champion of student success, Dr. Valdés takes great pride in Florida International University's role in shaping the future of health care across the state. As Dean of the Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing & Health Sciences at FIU, he leads with a visionary perspective—one rooted in both firsthand clinical expertise and a deep understanding of systemic healthcare challenges. Under his leadership, the college has emerged as a state leader in addressing critical healthcare workforce shortages through an innovative, multidisciplinary approach that unites the state legislature, community hospitals, and higher education institutions. A key initiative of his tenure has been the college's implementation of the state-sponsored Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) partnership. Through this program, FIU has collaborated with major healthcare providers—including Baptist Health South Florida, Nicklaus Children's Hospital, Memorial Healthcare System, HCA Florida, Jackson Health System, and Riviera Health Resort—to offer full scholarships and guaranteed job placements for undergraduate nursing students. Thanks to these strategic alliances, since 2022, FIU has secured \$8.8 million in combined partner and state match funds—the largest LINE award across Florida's State University System. These efforts have effectively doubled admissions for the undergraduate nursing program. Thanks to his leadership, FIU continues to be a driving force in preparing the next generation of healthcare leaders.

INDIVIDUALS OF MERIT

CAROLYN W. DOMINA, MSN, ARNP, CNOR, CAN-BC

RN Advisor, Griffin Surgical Tower
Project/RN Wisdom Program
Nicklaus Children's Hospital



"Carolyn Domina is a dynamic and results-driven leader whose contributions have had a lasting impact on Nicklaus Children's Hospital. Her unwavering dedication to excellence in patient care and nursing leadership has made her an indispensable member of the team and a true asset to the institution."

Shannon O'Dell
VP, Chief Nursing Officer
Nicklaus Children's Hospital

Carolyn Domina has had a distinguished and impactful career at Nicklaus Children's Hospital, where she has consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership and a commitment to advancing patient care and the nursing practice. Through her tenure, she has excelled in a range of pivotal roles, including as administrative director of surgical services, program administrator for professional services, interim director of the maternal fetal program, interim chief nursing officer, and, since June 2021, as the RN Advisor for the Kenneth C. Griffin Surgical Tower project within the RN Wisdom Program.

Ms. Domina's strategic leadership was key to the successful establishment of the Maternal Fetal Care Program. She played a central role in its development, overseeing the creation of the program's structure, business plan, proforma, service line strategy, and community outreach initiatives that set the stage for what is today the Fetal Care Nurse Navigator program. As interim chief nursing officer during the beginning stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, her leadership and ability to navigate an unprecedented healthcare crisis were indispensable. She effectively supported both nursing teams and the hospital's patient population, ensuring that the hospital's mission continued despite the numerous hurdles presented by the pandemic.

Ms. Domina's passion and invaluable skills to always provide the best pediatric care to the community has also been demonstrated through volunteer efforts. She has routinely volunteered and accompanied a neurosurgical specialty team to care for and perform surgery for children from Haiti with neurosurgical challenges. Her expertise, gained from her involvement in the Advanced Care Pavilion (APCP) construction project, proved invaluable in the planning and execution of the Kenneth C. Griffin Surgical Tower.

Her leadership in perioperative services, strategic planning, and operational transitions contributed significantly to the successful go-live of the Kenneth C. Griffin Tower on September 26, 2024. Today, she continues to mentor emerging nurse leaders at Nicklaus Children's Hospital, offering guidance and insight to help shape the future of nursing at the institution.

JULIETTE FABIEN, MBA, RN

Chief Programs Officer
The Children's Trust



Born in Haiti, Juliette Fabien began her professional journey in 2004 as a registered nurse health educator at Jackson Health System, where she witnessed firsthand the profound impact of social determinants on health outcomes. Since joining The Children's Trust in 2006, Ms. Fabien has risen through the ranks, excelling in roles that showcase her versatility and strategic insight.

Her roles included leading the HealthConnect initiative—a comprehensive system of care addressing children's physical, emotional, and developmental needs—to serving as Chief Programs Officer, where she oversees a team of 25 human services professionals and guides the implementation of innovative funding initiatives, ensuring that resources are distributed effectively to meet the evolving needs of Miami-Dade County's most vulnerable populations.

Her dedication to holistic community health has transformed The Children's Trust into a catalyst for positive change, ensuring that over 103,000 students across 144 public schools have access to vital services. By deploying mobile health units, Ms. Fabien has ensured that underserved areas are reached effectively, providing essential services to students who might otherwise face barriers to accessing these critical resources.

This multi-tiered strategy also integrates telehealth services, enabling schools with on-site nurses to connect with a broader network of primary care providers. Under Ms. Fabien's leadership, The Children's Trust has reached unprecedented levels of impact. The organization now allocates the largest percentage of its \$255 million budget to direct program services, including \$31 million dedicated to health and wellness initiatives (an increase of nearly 50 percent from the previous year). These investments support critical programs such as school-based health services, vision care, oral health training, food and nutrition programs, public benefits enrollment, and injury prevention education.

One of Ms. Fabien's most notable contributions is her leadership of the annual HealthConnect conference, which equips hundreds of school nurses, social workers, and mental health professionals with the latest knowledge and practices to address students' needs.

"Juliette Fabien's impact is measured in the scale of the programs she oversees and the lives she touches. Her vision, adaptability, and collaborative approach have left an indelible mark on South Florida, advancing health equity and fostering brighter futures for children and families."

Imran Ali
Chief of Staff
The Children's Trust

INDIVIDUALS OF MERIT

JOSE PERDOMO

Senior Vice President, Operations & Infrastructure
Nicklaus Children's Hospital



With a career spanning more than 42 years, Jose Perdomo's leadership at Nicklaus Children's Hospital has been marked by significant achievements that directly impacted the hospital's growth, financial stability, and operational expansion. Currently serving as senior vice president for operations and infrastructure, Mr. Perdomo provided critical oversight of the \$145 million construction of the new Kenneth C. Griffin Surgical Tower, successfully completing the project on time and \$1.8 million under budget. His leadership also resulted in the improvement of the capital asset management system, yielding \$3 million in savings.

In 2019, Mr. Perdomo was appointed interim hospital president and COO, which was pivotal in bringing stability and a vision for growth and expansion to Nicklaus Children's Health System. He implemented a medical-administrative leadership model that enhanced physician engagement and collaboration. As SVP & chief ethics and compliance officer, he led the transformation of the health system's compliance culture, shifting the organization from passive regulatory adherence to active, interdisciplinary accountability. He created a digitized accreditation process, which was recognized as the National Healthcare Innovation of the Year (2018) by DNV-G. This process became a model for remote accreditation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While serving as EVP of Ambulatory Services, Mr. Perdomo was responsible for expanding the hospital's network of outpatient facilities, which resulted in a 15 percent increase in urgent care visits and a 13 percent growth in critical care transport team transfers. He also led the development of new facilities, including a 14-bay dental clinic and additional urgent care centers.

In his role as director of the Research Institute, Mr. Perdomo spearheaded initiatives that led to a \$1.2 million increase in research revenue, driven by the expansion of clinical trials and personalized medicine programs. Additionally, his integration of LEAN methodology into the research accreditation process helped the institution achieve AAHRPP reaccreditation, demonstrating his ability to improve operational efficiency in complex environments.

"Jose Perdomo's contributions to patient-centered care, healthcare innovation, and community engagement have left an indelible mark on the hospital and the broader healthcare landscape. He is more than a senior leader, he has become the face and embodiment of the Nicklaus Children's culture of belonging and family centered care."

Matthew Love
President & Chief Executive Officer
Nicklaus Children's Health System

ORGANIZATIONS/PROGRAMS

HEALTHY WEST KENDALL
BAPTIST HEALTH WEST KENDALL
BAPTIST HOSPITAL

Healthy West Kendall

Powered by West Kendall Baptist Hospital



The Healthy West Kendall coalition is a community-wide effort led by Baptist Health West Kendall Baptist Hospital, uniting more than 200 partners across schools, businesses, government agencies and nonprofits. Together, they focus on one goal – helping residents live healthier, safer lives. Launched in 2013, the coalition was formed with support from leading organizations, including the Miami-Dade County Commission and the Florida Department of Health. Today, it is a powerful network that shares ideas, identifies local needs and takes action – from hosting health fairs and safety programs to addressing priority needs such as access to care, and healthy lifestyles and wellness.

In 2014, a health and wellness kiosk, the Healthy Hub, opened in the lobby of West Kendall Baptist Hospital, offering free health screenings, health risk assessments, personalized patient education, referrals for follow-up primary care and information about community resources for healthy living. More than 36,000 screenings have been performed including assessments of blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose levels and mental wellness.

With outreach that touches residents of all ages, in 2023 Healthy West Kendall provided water safety instruction for more than 2,400 children, high school programs on healthcare careers, hand hygiene education for more than 1,000 students, six new community gardens at local schools, essential items to students experiencing housing instability and much more. By bringing together the strengths of healthcare, education, business and local leadership, it is creating a stronger and healthier community.

“Hand in hand with its partners in industry, education, government and other sectors, Healthy West Kendall takes on issues impacting health and wellness. From promoting preventive healthcare and resources to ensuring safer neighborhoods, Healthy West Kendall is shaping a healthier tomorrow.”

Simone Cheong
Magnet Program Director
Baptist Health West Kendall
Baptist Hospital

JEWISH COMMUNITY SERVICES
OF SOUTH FLORIDA

JCS is a steadfast advocate for Miami-Dade County's most vulnerable individuals and families, addressing their unique needs and providing life-sustaining support.

The organization champions for its clients, ensuring access to critical services such as home care, emergency financial assistance, and mental health support, nutritional security, and other services to ensure that clients are empowered to live with dignity.

Recognizing the unique challenges individuals face when they seek support from JCS—trauma, aging-related health issues, housing and financial insecurity, mental health concerns, crisis situations and more, JCS has developed tailored initiatives, including home care services; trauma-informed mental health support; emergency financial assistance; case management services; and food security (JCS operates the only kosher food bank in Miami-Dade and provides meals to hundreds of homebound seniors daily).

JCS also manages the 24/7/365 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, and the JCS 211 Miami Helpline for Miami-Dade & Monroe Counties to assist those experience a mental health crisis, and those seeking community resources. Through its support for Holocaust survivors, JCS plays a vital role in ensuring this treasured population ages with dignity, their stories are preserved, and their lessons of resilience live on. By fostering intergenerational connection and combating antisemitism through education and advocacy, JCS cares for all of their clients based on Jewish values.

“JCS's work is about more than providing services; it's about restoring dignity, preserving history, and building a compassionate community. By addressing the physical, emotional, and social needs of the South Florida community, JCS exemplifies a holistic approach to health care that goes far beyond the ordinary.”

Kerry-Ann Royes
President and CEO
YWCA South Florida



Where Your Child Matters Most™

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM
NICKLAUS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

There is a behavioral health crisis among the youth in South Florida and the U.S., leading to poor life outcomes. National surveys show an alarming rise in anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation and research shows an 8-to-10-year gap between symptom onset and care. Between 2021 and 2023, nearly 11,000 Miami-Dade County children were hospitalized for a behavioral health-related condition, with Nicklaus Children's Hospital caring for 38 percent of the total discharges.

A key component of the hospital's strategic plan and organizational priorities are to improve access to pediatric behavioral health services along the care continuum. Home to the largest pediatric residency program in the Southeast, Nicklaus Children's trains four psychology fellows, four doctoral interns, and four psychiatry fellows each year. It additionally receives approximately 15 doctoral practicum students each from sponsoring local universities and offers psychiatry rotations to over 50 residents and medical students from community facilities.

The organization completed a 20-bed Inpatient Behavioral Health unit expansion in June 2023 to better serve the growing number of children who are being admitted to the hospital for mental health treatment. They expanded capacity to a total of 40 beds, ensuring that no child or adolescent needs to be transferred out of the hospital for care.

Some of the programs launched to better serve the needs of children and adolescents include the Social-Emotional Wellness Program, integrating psychology providers into primary care; the Pediatric Behavioral Health Network, which improves access to mental health services by leveraging community organizations and connecting families to the appropriate and geographically convenient facility; the Safe + Sound Digital Safety Alliance that provides education to the community about safer internet practice and the impact on our youth and their mental health; and the Zero Suicide Initiative, which has expanded universal suicide screening across the hospital and emergency department allowing for early screening, improved access, and training for the system's workforce.

“Nicklaus Children's is increasing its network of pediatricians, behavioral health professionals and community partners. Additionally, the organization is addressing the national shortage of pediatric mental health professionals through robust training programs to solve recruiting challenges and to meet the growing demand.”

Matthew Love
President & Chief Executive Officer
Nicklaus Children's Health System



FIRST RESPONDERS

JAMES “MIKE” ADAMS
Lieutenant/Fire Investigator
Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department

Lt. James Adams has been with Miami Dade Fire Rescue (MDFR) for more than 24 years. During his career, he has educated fellow firefighters, children and the public, volunteering to teach at Southridge High School, Coral Reef High School, and the MDFR Explorer program. Lt. Adams has spent countless hours of his own time building the MDFR Fire Investigations burn cell and other burn training props that educate firefighters, the public, and the insurance industry on product safety and potential product liability. Lt. Adams has also helped improve standard operating procedures, and co-wrote the first MDFR Investigator Training Task Book. He teaches and is on the board of multiple fire investigator-related associations that help improve fire investigators' working conditions and help them keep current with the requirements of NFPA 1033. This year alone, Lt. Adams has taught multiple classes outside MDFR to include Coral Springs Fire Safety Stand Down, the International Association of Arson Investigators Evidence Collection Technicians, the South Florida Auto Show, and the AASIU conference, in which he demonstrated the potential safety hazards of EV vehicle fires for the insurance industry. Lt. Adams has attended multiple conferences, training seminars, and classes throughout his career, most of which were on his own time. He was also invited to attend an EV seminar with General Motors.



“Due to James Adams’ commitment to the Fire Investigation Bureau and MDFR, our Fire Investigations Bureau is considered an expert on lithium battery failures in our industry and one of the top fire investigation bureaus in the country.”
Nicolas Morgado
Division Chief
Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department

CARLOS “IGGY” EGUILUZ
Instructor
Miami Dade College Medical Campus

Carlos “Iggy” Eguiluz’ tireless dedication to improving rescue techniques and fostering future EMS professionals has made an indelible mark on the field. By combining technical expertise with a passion for teaching, he has transformed lives both locally and globally. One of his most significant contributions to EMS is his work in teaching extrication techniques across various EMS municipalities. Vehicle accidents often pose complex challenges for first responders, as individuals trapped in cars require precise and efficient rescue techniques to ensure their survival. Mr. Eguiluz’ hands-on training equips EMS teams with the skills necessary to navigate these high-pressure situations. His approach emphasizes both safety and efficacy, enabling first responders to save lives while minimizing risks to themselves and the victims. By ensuring that rescuers are well-prepared, he has directly improved survival rates in countless emergencies. Through his international training efforts, Mr. Eguiluz has influenced emergency medical practices across diverse cultural and geographic contexts. His influence is perhaps most profoundly felt in his role as an instructor at Miami Dade College. Over the years, he has educated thousands of students, preparing them to embark on careers in emergency medical services. His teaching goes beyond textbooks, instilling a deep sense of responsibility and passion in his students. His mentorship has shaped a new generation of EMS professionals, many of whom carry forward his teachings to save countless lives. As a legendary educator, Mr. Eguiluz’ legacy is defined not only by his personal achievements but also by the accomplishments of his students. His classroom serves as a launching pad for future EMS heroes, ensuring that his impact continues to grow exponentially. By fostering a culture of excellence and dedication, “Iggy” has solidified his status as a transformative figure in EMS education.



“Through his expertise in extrication techniques, his global training initiatives, and his role as a legendary educator at Miami Dade College, Carlos “Iggy” Eguiluz has saved lives, elevated EMS standards, and inspired countless individuals to pursue careers in this vital field. His legacy is one of empowerment, innovation, and hope, making him a true icon in the world of emergency medical services.”
Fabio Nascimento
Chairperson
Miami Dade College Medical Campus

FIRST RESPONDERS

MARIA ORTIZ
Lieutenant
Miami-Dade Fire Rescue

Lt. Maria Ortiz is a 29-year veteran with Miami-Dade Fire Rescue (MDFR). She holds a certification as a Technical Rescue Technician and has been a member of Florida Task Force 1 since 2010, and her accolades include three Unit Citations, one Life Saving Award and one Major Campaign for her actions during the Surfside Response. For her entire career she has served and worked at busy units (15 years at Station 20 alone) and she has never stopped growing and training, even becoming TRT around her 20th year, and now serving within USAR for the last 10 years of her career. She has been involved with MDFR United Way Campaign for 15 years, first as an assistant and eventually becoming the department coordinator. Lt. Ortiz became a conduit and ambassador for Miami-Dade to be able to assist firefighters in several countries by providing over 600 sets of bunker gear that otherwise would have been burned. She founded a 501c3 nonprofit organization in honor of her mother, called Project for the Love of Jesus. Through the foundation, she has provided ongoing training to firefighters in the Dominican Republic and equipment including sets of bunker gear, fire helmets, fire gloves, fire hoses and medical supplies; assistance to the Haitian migrant farming community through the provision of basic food supplies; improvement of their living quarters and construction of a school and church, and the provision of clean potable water. She continues to supply a standing store located in the Dominican Republic where she donates goods and resources for families, particularly for women in need throughout the country.



“She’s beloved by all and probably one of the hardest working woman in the fire service. Her character, work, service, and love is second to none and known by all.”
Nicolas Morgado
Division Chief
Miami-Dade Fire Rescue

YOUTH VOLUNTEER RECIPIENT

JASMINE J. WILLIAMS
Student
The Children’s Trust Youth Advisory Committee

Jasmine’s leadership credentials are extensive and inspiring. As president of the Southern Pearls (Top Ladies of Distinction) Chapter of Top Teens of America (TTA), vice-president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Youth Council South-Dade Branch, and former vice-president of Alliance of Youth Leaders in the United States (AYLUS) Miami, she has demonstrated her ability to mobilize and inspire others. In each of these roles, she has prioritized raising awareness about critical health issues affecting her community. Jasmine has taken the initiative to educate teens about diseases impacting minority populations, encouraging them to disseminate this vital knowledge among their peers. Jasmine’s passion for healthcare is both personal and profound. Her recent essay on HIV in minority communities showcases her ability to combine research and advocacy, highlighting her deep understanding of health disparities. Jasmine’s aspiration to become a pediatric oncologist stems from a heartfelt desire to improve the lives of children battling cancer. She is particularly driven by the possibilities of advancing cancer research and dreams of contributing to breakthroughs that could lead to cures. Academically, Jasmine is nothing short of extraordinary. She has been dually enrolled at Miami Dade College for the past three years while excelling in a rigorous curriculum of Advanced Placement and honors courses at her high school, School for Advanced Studies. Her dedication to her studies will allow her to graduate next year with both her high school diploma and an Associate of Arts degree, with many prerequisites for a pre-med major already completed. Her hard work and achievements have been recognized through numerous accolades, including the Achievement in Academics award from the West Perrine Community Builders Association, the Top AP Statistics Student award at MAST Homestead Campus in 2023, and consistent placement on the Principal’s Honor Roll for three consecutive years.



“Jasmine embodies the qualities of intelligence, leadership, and unwavering determination that make her an exceptional candidate for this honor. Her commitment to healthcare and community service exemplifies what it means to be a true changemaker.”
Yolanda L. Vines
Retired Educator
Miami Dade County Schools



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BROWARD HEALTH CORAL SPRINGS

Sandra Porter Daley, BSN, RN, MSN

Sandra Porter Daley, BSN, RN, MSN, has over 20 years of nursing experience and more than 12 years of experience in perioperative leadership at Broward Health Coral Springs. In her role as Surgical Services Nurse Manager, she has led initiatives that improve surgical processes, enhance patient outcomes and boost team performance, with a focus on staff development and quality improvement.

"Leadership in nursing is about empowering our team," Daley said. "My team strives to prioritize compassionate, patient-centered care while fostering a culture of safety and collaboration."

Her commitment to patient-centered care ensures that the voices of patients and families are always heard and prioritized throughout the surgical experience. Daley is not only a leader but also a mentor, empowering her surgical team to strive for excellence while embracing innovation and best practices in perioperative care.

Daley received her RN in Montreal, her BSN from the University of Phoenix and Master of Science in Nursing from Nova Southeastern University.



Jenna Rodriguez, BSN, RN, MSN

Jenna Rodriguez, BSN, RN, MSN, is the Director of Med/Surg and Nursing Support at Broward Health Coral Springs, where she leads the hospital's medical/surgical units and nursing support staff. With an extensive healthcare background, her experience spans patient access, quality, informatics and nursing.

Before joining Broward Health Coral Springs, Rodriguez served as the Nurse Manager of Telemetry and Interim Director of Inpatient Services at Coral Gables Hospital.

"I am dedicated to improving patient experience, satisfaction and care quality," Rodriguez said. "My goal is to create a supportive environment where both patients and staff can thrive."

Rodriguez began her career in Miami, earning her LPN before completing an Associate of Arts in Health Services Administration and an RN/BSN from Miami Dade College. She is currently pursuing a master's in nursing leadership to further enhance her expertise.



BROWARD HEALTH MEDICAL CENTER

Dianne Phang, RN

Dianne Phang, RN, has been a nurse for 15 years. She began her career on a med-surg stroke unit before transitioning to one of the hospital's most high-pressure environments, the trauma floor at Broward Health Medical Center, where she has passionately served for the past seven years.

"I knew from an early age that I wanted to follow my family's footsteps into nursing, a journey of compassion and dedication," Phang said.

In her role, Phang is committed to ensuring that her patients receive the best care, both medically and emotionally. She provides compassionate and effective support, making a positive impact on the lives of those she cares for.

"Some of my patients are severely injured and may stay in the unit for months," said Phang. "It's incredibly rewarding to see them progress and ultimately return to good health."

Phang was honored with the prestigious DAISY Award, a recognition of excellence in nursing. She completed her associate's degree at Miami Dade College.



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BROWARD HEALTH MEDICAL CENTER

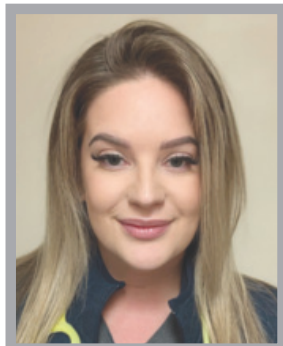
Katelyn Thomson, RN

Katelyn Thomson, RN, has always had passion for caring for others and making a positive impact in their lives. Thomson serves as a charge nurse at Broward Health Medical Center, caring for cardiac patients, many of whom have undergone open-heart surgery or experienced neurological events like strokes.

"Taking care of my patients is what fuels my passion," said Thomson. "When you see the difference you make in their lives, every effort feels purposeful and every moment worthwhile."

Thomson also enjoys mentoring newly graduated nurses. She finds it deeply rewarding to help her peers grow in their careers, and in doing so, she finds it helps her become a better leader.

Thomson earned her associate's degree at Keiser University. Her goal is to further her education and become a nurse practitioner in psychiatry.



BROWARD HEALTH NORTH

Brittany Karimi, CCRN/SCRN

Five years ago, Brittany Karimi, CCRN/SCRN, started her nursing career at Broward Health North, where she currently serves as an assistant nurse manager in the neuro and surgical intensive care unit.

Her responsibilities include overseeing nursing staff in her unit, as well as responding to hospital emergencies like code blues, rapid response and stroke alerts.

When asked what she would tell people considering a career in nursing, Karimi shared that it offers the chance to make a real difference in people's lives, coupled with job security and opportunities for professional growth and specialization.

"I chose to specialize in intensive care because I find it stimulating," said Karimi. "I love everything about it, from caring for others to working through intellectually challenging situations."

Karimi is a 2025 Daisy Award recipient and received the 2025 Life Alliance IUC Nurse of the Year Award. She earned her bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of West Florida.



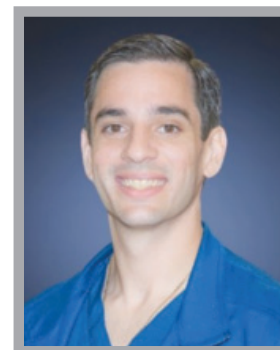
Alexander Travers, RN, DNP

Alexander Travers, RN, DNP, has been a nurse with Broward Health for 10 years, currently serving as a nurse manager for inpatient rehabilitation and wound care support, managing the day-to-day nursing services of the inpatient rehabilitation unit at Broward Health North.

A people-oriented person, Travers enjoys serving people when they need help the most. Wanting to make a greater impact, he pursued a doctorate to enhance his leadership abilities and broaden his expertise to move into nursing leadership.

"I appreciate the growth mindset at Broward Health that helps build leadership from within," said Travers. "Pairing my education with the clinical experience I gained with the system paved the way for me to step into the role of nurse manager alongside the rehabilitation team – an opportunity I'm truly honored to have."

Travers received his associate's degree in nursing from Broward College and his Doctor of Nursing practice degree from the University of Central Florida.



Thank you, nurses, for everything you do

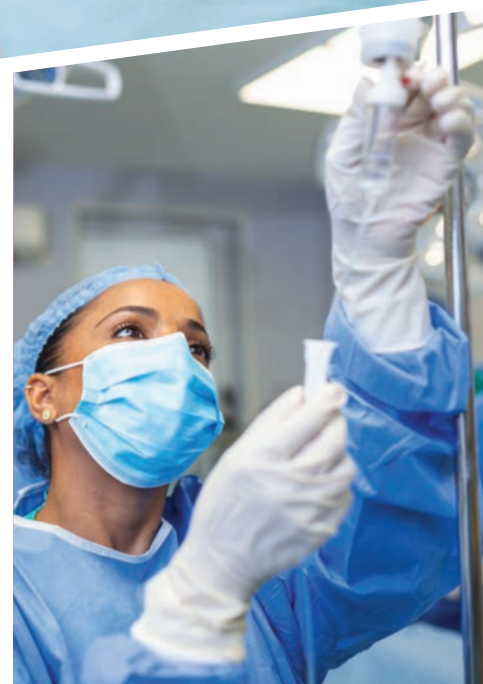


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BROWARD HEALTH IMPERIAL POINT

Maria "Giesa" Espanol, RN

Inspired by her aunt, a nurse who introduced her to the concept of Nursing Informatics as an upcoming nursing specialty, Giesa Espanol blends her love for caring, communication and technology to improve workflows and promote patient safety, quality care and strong teamwork collaboration in the 5th floor Telemetry Unit at Broward Health Imperial Point.

Espanol also serves as an Epic Site Lead and Epic Superuser, leveraging her expertise with the electronic health records system to train staff, optimize workflows and enhance patient care. Originally from the Philippines, Espanol moved to the U.S. in 2008 and has been a nurse for 10 years, including the past eight as an RN.

Espanol holds a master's degree in nursing informatics from the University of Phoenix and a bachelor's degree in mass communication. Her advice to aspiring nurses is to "have a vision for your impact and let that guide a journey of growth, purpose and excellence."



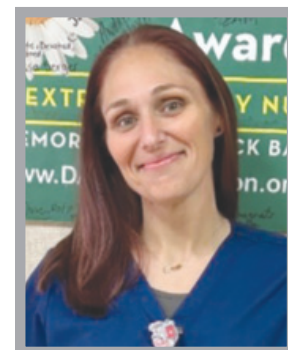
Lisa Berger, RN, BSN

South Florida native Lisa Berger, RN, is a dedicated member of the Broward Health Imperial Point medical/surgical department. Berger was inspired to further her career while working in an OB/GYN office, where she quickly recognized the diverse roles nurses play, from educating patients to providing leadership to community outreach.

After 13 years and raising six children, Berger earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from Antigua College International. Today, she provides direct nursing care, including assessments, treatments and medication administration, while collaborating with interdisciplinary teams to create individualized care plans.

Berger also educates patients and families on wound care, disease prevention and staying healthy. She is certified in basic life support and advanced cardiac life support and has earned two Daisy Awards for excellence in nursing.

"Being a nurse is not just a career, it's who I am," Berger said. "I love bedside care and making a difference in my patients' lives."



The heart of pediatric care

Providing pediatric care requires exceptional expertise and unwavering compassion. During National Nurses Week, we honor the incredible pediatric nurses at Nicklaus Children's Hospital for their vital role in supporting both patients and their families. Their dedication to clinical excellence and heartfelt care ensures that, here, children are always our top priority.



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CHRISTINE E. LYNN COLLEGE OF NURSING

Hope Shaw, PhD, RN, CNOR

Assistant Professor, Finalist,
2025 Florida Atlantic University
Distinguished Teacher of the Year Award

Dr. Hope Shaw, a Registered Nurse for over 30 years, joined the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing in 2021 and has taught a range of courses including Chronic Care Nursing Situations for Adults and Aging Populations, Nursing Research and Periop 101: Operating Room curriculum. She started her medical-surgical nursing journey in Jamaica and had a brief hiatus from nursing after pursuing a business degree and working in the banking industry. She continued her nursing journey working in the operating room as a staff nurse and later as a clinical educator in the perioperative (Pre, intra and postop) department. Her published articles focus on Mental Health: The Caribbean Immigrant Experience and Periop 202 Total Hip Arthroplasty.



Wanda Morancy, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC

Visiting Instructor, 2025 DAISY Award for
Extraordinary Nurse Educators recipient

Dr. Wanda Morancy, a board-certified family nurse practitioner, joined Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing as a full-time faculty in 2020. Her clinical practice, teaching, and service embraces the philosophy of caring and health promotion. Her passion is to empower others to maintain well-being. Dr. Morancy's DNP Capstone focused on diabetes self-management education in Afro-descent older adults. Her area of interest includes person-centered and culturally competent concepts to promote health and decrease health disparities. She serves as the faculty advisor for the college's Student Nurses' Association. Dr. Morancy is also co-author of a qualitative study underscoring the need for improved support systems, resources and evidence-based interventions for family caregivers to mitigate the emotional and physical toll of caring for a relative with alcohol use disorder.



Beth Pratt, PhD, RN

Assistant Professor, 2025 DAISY Award for
Extraordinary Nurse Educators recipient

Dr. Beth Pratt is the associate director for Canines Providing Assistance to Wounded Warriors (C.-P.A.W.W.), a health research initiative for veterans, part of the Florida Atlantic Institute for Human Health and Disease Intervention (I-HEALTH). Her research focuses on complementary and integrative approaches to improve health outcomes for veterans with trauma-related conditions, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI), and their families. Her current research projects include a multi-state Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute Dissemination and Implementation Initiative project to disseminate evidence-based psychological and pharmacological treatments for PTSD to veterans and community stakeholders. Dr. Pratt is also co-author of a qualitative study exploring the lived experiences of family caregivers and the emotional and physical toll of caring for a relative with alcohol use disorder.



Rita de Cassia Gengo e Silva Butcher, PhD, RN, MSN, MSc, FNI

Assistant Professor, 2025 Excellence in
Research Award,
Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing

Dr. Rita de Cassia Gengo's main research focus area is Healthy Aging Across the Lifespan with concentrations in cardiovascular nursing, symptom management, and developing and testing complex interventions to manage unpleasant symptoms in individuals with cardiovascular diseases. Her current project aims to validate the Modified Fatigue Impact Scale for use in heart failure. She is also exploring racial/ethnic differences in predictors and outcomes of heart failure symptom clusters using the All of Us dataset to understand symptom management and health disparities in cardiovascular care. In collaboration with international scholars, Dr. Gengo is developing a decision-making framework rooted in nursing disciplinary knowledge to identify patient problems. Within the past three years, her research has been widely shared through high-impact peer-reviewed journals, manuscripts, articles, and national and international conferences.



Mary Ann Leavitt, PhD, RN, CCRN, CHFN

Assistant Professor, 2025 Outstanding
Scholarship Award, Christine E. Lynn
College of Nursing

Dr. Mary Ann Leavitt's research focuses on leveraging patient-centered technology and nursing interventions to reduce hospital admissions and readmissions for individuals living with heart failure. Her work focuses on patients with heart failure with preserved ejection fraction (HFpEF). She has developed and validated a non-invasive external sensor designed to monitor HFpEF patients and enable early intervention before decompensation leads to emergency department visits or hospitalizations. In collaboration with Florida Atlantic University's College of Engineering and Computer Science, Dr. Leavitt is co-developing skin-based wearable sensors that can detect early signs of heart failure decompensation. The team has miniaturized the sensor's electronics into a 3D-printed housing—approximately the size of a deck of cards—which attaches to the upper chest using two snaps on a single large electrode. Dr. Leavitt also serves as a faculty advisor for the college's Nurses Christian Fellowship student organization.



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HEALTH CARE DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY'S SKILLED NURSING CENTER

Quetelie Perrin, RN, BSN

Quetelie Perrin, RN, BSN, is a dedicated nursing supervisor at the Health Care District of Palm Beach County's award-winning Skilled Nursing Center, where she ensures outstanding resident care throughout the night shift. Known for her strong clinical skills, she is a trusted resource for her colleagues, providing guidance and support whenever it's needed. Perrin is not only a dependable team player but also a passionate advocate for residents, always putting their well-being first. Her commitment to delivering quality care and maintaining high standards makes her an indispensable member of the Skilled Nursing Center team. Perrin has more than 30 years of nursing experience, including more than a decade with the Health Care District. Before joining the District, she served in diverse roles such as triage nurse, anesthesiologist nurse, charge nurse, nurse educator, and teacher. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Barclay University.



Kira Justice, RN

Kira Justice, RN, is a registered nurse at the Health Care District of Palm Beach County's award-winning Skilled Nursing Center. Her passion for nursing is evident in everything she does, from delivering high-quality care to going the extra mile to support residents and their families. Justice consistently fulfills her responsibilities with excellence while embodying the values of professionalism, empathy, and teamwork. She is a true team player who is respected and appreciated by her peers for her positive attitude and collaborative spirit. Her commitment to patient-centered care and her drive to make a difference in the lives of others make her an invaluable member of the Skilled Nursing Center team. Justice earned her nursing degree from Brightwood College.



HEALTH CARE DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY'S LAKESIDE MEDICAL CENTER

Reyna Perez, RN

Reyna Perez, RN, is a registered nurse in the pediatrics and medical-surgical unit at Lakeside Medical Center, the Health Care District of Palm Beach County's teaching hospital in the Glades. She has been caring for patients in the rural Glades communities for 20 years, beginning her journey at Glades General Hospital. A true team player, Perez consistently goes above and beyond to support both her patients and colleagues. Whether she's staying late to ensure continuity of care or stepping in to cover extra shifts, she always puts the needs of others first. Her positive attitude, reliability, and commitment to excellence make her an essential part of the Lakeside team. Perez's dedication, compassion, and collaborative spirit are deeply appreciated by all who work with her. She leads with heart and makes a lasting impact with every patient interaction. Perez earned her nursing degree from Palm Beach State College.



Brandy Seider, RN, BSN

Brandy Seider, RN, BSN, is the Surgical Services and Pediatrics Nurse Manager at Lakeside Medical Center, the Health Care District of Palm Beach County's teaching hospital in the Glades. For 24 years, Brandy has proudly served the Glades communities, first at Glades General Hospital and now at Lakeside, leading with compassion, integrity, and an unwavering dedication to patient care. She regularly jumps in without hesitation, staying late to support staff, helping on the floor, and advocating for the resources her team needs to succeed. More than a manager, Seider is a mentor, motivator, and a constant source of support for the entire hospital. Her ability to navigate complex challenges with patience and heart sets the tone for the entire unit. Brandy earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Florida Atlantic University.



HEALTH CARE DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

Kendra Williams, RN, BSN

Kendra Williams, RN, BSN is a registered nurse with the Health Care District of Palm Beach County's Belle Glade Community Health Center. Williams is dedicated to delivering high-quality patient care and consistently demonstrates heartfelt compassion for the patients she serves. As a strong patient advocate, she goes above and beyond to ensure every individual receives exceptional care, always putting patients' needs first. In her role, Williams provides care for patients of all ages and backgrounds, drawing on her experience in pediatrics, adult primary care, and women's health. Her clinical insight and collaborative spirit were instrumental in the pilot and successful rollout of the health centers' Chronic Care Management program. Williams holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Palm Beach State College. Prior to joining the health center team, she worked as an RN in the medical-surgical unit at the Health Care District's hospital, Lakeside Medical Center.



Genevieve La Ferrera, RN, BSN

Genevieve La Ferrera, RN, BSN, is a nurse manager with the Health Care District of Palm Beach County's Behavioral Health pilot program at the Mangonia Park Community Health Center. She joined the team at the very start of the pilot, helping build a new model of integrated care for patients struggling with mental health or substance use disorder. La Ferrera is known for combining clinical excellence with heartfelt compassion. She approaches every patient interaction with empathy and support, making a meaningful impact on individuals and their families during vulnerable times. Her dedication to treating the whole person, body and mind, reflects the mission of the pilot program. Over the past year, La Ferrera has helped shape a growing program while continuing to grow personally and professionally as a nurse and a leader. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Florida.



HEALTH CARE DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM

Holly Hoover, RN

Holly Hoover, RN, is a registered nurse at Jupiter Elementary School for the Health Care District of Palm Beach County's School Health program. Since joining the District in 1997, she has been a dedicated and compassionate caregiver, going above and beyond to ensure her students and their families receive the support needed. Hoover is known for her determination, resourcefulness, and heart for service. She tirelessly advocates for students, connecting them with vital medical, financial, and community resources, never stopping until their needs are met. Her creative problem-solving, lifesaving care and extensive network have made a lasting impact on students and their families. In addition to caring for students, Hoover is a trusted mentor to her fellow nurses and a reliable support to her school staff. She brings positivity and professionalism to everything she does, making her an exceptional member of the team. Hoover earned her nursing degree from Palm Beach Junior College.



Safina Bansee, RN, BSN

Safina Bansee, RN, BSN, is a registered nurse at Wellington High School for the Health Care District of Palm Beach County's School Health program. She brings a strong clinical background, professionalism, and a calm, compassionate presence to one of the larger high school campuses in the county. Known for her ability to manage high-pressure situation, Bansee consistently demonstrates excellent nursing judgment and leadership. She's a steady, reassuring presence for students and staff, and her dedication to the well-being of the Wellington High School community has not gone unnoticed. Her commitment has been recognized by the School District's administrative team, who have expressed their appreciation for her outstanding service. Bansee's contributions have played a major role in the continued growth and success of the School Health program. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from South University.



Cover Story: Uniting for the Future: How the Nursing Consortium of Florida Is Shaping the Profession Statewide

Continued from page 1

came together to address community needs and that spirit of unity gave rise to what we are today.”

Initially serving South Florida, the Consortium has expanded statewide in recent years. “It was our work during the pandemic that first attracted organizations across Florida to join,” Egües says. “We held a conference in Orlando last summer and our next conference will take place this June at St. Pete Beach. Our board has directed that we take programming to where our new members are.”

Building the Pipeline: Clinical Placements and Professional Support

One of the organization’s most celebrated achievements is its innovative approach to student nurse clinical scheduling. “We were asked in 2006 to bring in a tech solution to facilitate the matching of placement needs to unit availability,” Egües recalls.

Today, the latest version of that centralized clinical placement system, the CCPS, allows schools and hospitals to efficiently coordinate clinical placements, improve compliance tracking, and facilitate recruitment efforts. “It’s been a game-changer,” says Dr. Carol Clarke, Director of the School of Nursing at Palm Beach State University and a board member of the Consortium. “With more than 400 RN students, the system helps us manage placements seamlessly.”

Clarke also points to the system’s role in recent reaccreditation success. “Our accreditors were impressed with our ability to show in real-time how we manage clinical placements electronically,” she says. “We received no recommendations for improvement.”

Tackling Retention and Onboarding Challenges

Beyond logistics, the Consortium is invested in professional development and retention. One key area of focus is graduate nurse transition to practice—a critical gap often underfunded in healthcare.

“There’s no expectation that a new med school grad is ready to practice—they go through years of residency and fellowships that are federally and state supported,” notes Egües. “But in the case of nurses, hospitals are expected to absorb that cost. We’re looking to better leverage our 501(c)(3) status to bring in funding, including through a novel approach to apprenticeships that won’t require hospitals to change their residency programs for onboarding graduate nurses.”

Recruitment and retention are recurring challenges, particularly in high-cost areas like Miami. Vicki D. Caraway, Chief Nursing Officer at the Miami Cancer Institute, and president-elect of the Consortium knows the struggle firsthand. “When I arrived, turnover exceeded 30 percent,” she recalls. “Now it’s under seven percent. It took multiple strategies—rounding, strong onboarding, visibility—but what really helped me was the



Rebekah Jernstedt



Dr. Carol Biggs



Dr. W. Jason Dunne



Dr. Patricia Gagliano



Caren J. Roach

network of support available through the Consortium.”

That support is rooted in openness and shared goals. “We’re all competitors,” Caraway admits, “but the Consortium brings us together as colleagues. We learn from one another and celebrate each other’s wins.”

For Dr. Maria A. Suarez, AVP at Miami Cancer Institute and Consortium past-president, the group’s inclusive approach is what sets it apart. “This is the only organization that brings together nurse leaders, educators, staff nurses, and students,” she says. “Everyone has a voice—and that diversity of thought leads to real solutions.”

The Consortium’s impact reaches future nurses, too. Programs like Day in the Life of a Nurse™ introduce high school and middle school students to the profession. During the pandemic, the program went virtual, expanding its reach from one thousand students to more than six thousand middle and high school students in Monroe, Miami Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties.

“There’s been a renewed focus on caregiver mental health. So many topics of conversation including team building, workforce retention, disaster recovery, and workplace incivility have led back to mental health,” Egües says; “that’s what inspired the theme of the next Consortium conference on St. Pete Beach in June which features national thought leaders like Brian Sexton from Duke Health and Rocky Hauch from BayCare Healthcare System.”

For Caraway, the choice of venue resonates personally, “I spent 30 years in the Tampa Bay area and lost my home on Treasure Island in a recent hurricane,” she shares. “This conference is our way of extending a hand to a community that’s still rebuilding and reaching out to nurses that were most affected with a great program that will also be a celebration of nursing. It’s about our saying, ‘We see you, and we’re here to support you.’”

New Members, Lasting Impact

As the Consortium grows across Florida, it welcomes new members with a strong sense of inclusion and purpose. One of those is Cape Coral Hospital, part of the Lee Health system on Florida’s Gulf Coast.

“Cape Coral Hospital’s experience as a relatively new member of the Nursing Consortium has been incredibly positive and welcoming,” says Rebekah Jernstedt, Vice President of Operations and Chief Nurse Executive. “From the beginning, the hospital never felt like a newcomer. Several staff members quickly became involved in committee work, and within six months, our leaders were already spotlighted on conference panels.”

That early involvement laid the foundation for deeper engagement. “My predecessor was elected to the board, and I’ve since been elected as well,” Jernstedt adds. “These leadership roles reflect our commitment to supporting nursing as a whole and contributing to the Consortium’s growth.”

Jernstedt emphasizes the value of connection and collaboration. “Through the Consortium, nurses at all levels and from across specialties can share ideas, learn from others outside their immediate systems, and grow professionally. It’s a vital resource for advancing the nursing profession.”

Expanded Perspectives from Statewide Leaders

As the Nursing Consortium of Florida continues to grow and evolve, leaders across the state are echoing the value it brings to their organizations, communities, and the nursing profession as a whole.

Dr. Carol Biggs, Chief Nursing Executive at Jackson Health System, highlights the Consortium’s role in driving advocacy, education, and collaboration.

“The Consortium’s efforts in advocating for policies that strengthen nursing practice and education have been instrumental,” she says. “It also fosters academic-practice partnerships, encourages nurses to serve on community boards, and offers invaluable educational conferences that promote growth and leadership.”

Board President Dr. W. Jason Dunne emphasizes the importance of long-term infrastructure.

“The Consortium brings academic and healthcare leaders together to assess workforce needs and design scalable solutions,” says Dunne. “Sustainability means predictable investment, data-informed policy, and inclusive pathways into the profession—ensuring that the nursing workforce is well-resourced, adaptable, and

centered on improving health outcomes.”

On Florida’s Treasure Coast, Dr. Patricia Gagliano, Dean of Nursing at Indian River State College, and newly elected Consortium director saw great alignment between the Consortium’s mission and her college’s commitment to community transformation. “I hope to serve as a catalyst for transformative partnerships that advance wellness and grow our local workforce,” she says. “I’m eager to expand educational programming and help propel nursing into the next generation.”

Board member Caren J. Roach, Chief Nursing Officer at HCA Florida Woodmont Hospital, agrees. “The NCOF cultivates a culture of collaborative leadership. From ‘A Day in the Life of a Nurse™’ to reactivating the Advocacy Committee, the Consortium empowers members at all levels to be part of healthcare transformation through dialogue, education, and action.”

Strategic Vision for Nursing in Florida

Looking ahead, the Nursing Consortium of Florida has launched a strategic planning process with ambitious goals. These include a presence in Tallahassee, growing their financial capacity to support member initiatives, and increasing nursing presence on community and foundation boards throughout Florida.

“Too many boards are making healthcare decisions without a nurse at the table,” Suarez notes. “We’re changing that through active membership in national organizations like the Nurses on Boards Coalition and regional ones like the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce.”

In an era when nursing challenges can seem overwhelming, the Nursing Consortium of Florida offers a rare mix of pragmatism and hope.

“During the pandemic, a New York Times Magazine writer told me that I was the only person she had interviewed who was hopeful about the future of nursing,” Egües recalls. “And I continue to be. Because, as I told her, through the Consortium, we long ago realized that we get to better together.”

For more information about the Consortium or about their upcoming conference, visit www.nursingconsortium.us.

Cover Story: Broward Health's Nurse Residency Program 2.0

Continued from page 1

staffing pools and strengthened partnerships with local colleges such as Broward College, Nova Southeastern University, Keiser University, Florida Atlantic University and Florida International University.

"New nurses are walking into high-pressure roles, often without the preparation needed to succeed," said Sylvia Sloane Jones, APRN, who manages the Broward Health Nurse Residency Program. "Our program bridges that gap, technically and emotionally, so they feel equipped, confident and connected."

A New Era of Nurse Education

Broward Health has made significant updates to its simulation training labs used to train nurses and other staff. These labs incorporate the use of high-tech simulation manikins that help nurses practice critical skills, such as airway management and cardiac response, before ever caring for a real patient. These manikins respond to medication types and doses, simulate complications like seizures and offer real-time feedback. Simulation-based training is also used by emergency medical teams and clinical staff across departments, including ICU, OR and medical-surgical units.

To improve nurse resident engagement and problem-solving skills, Broward Health has integrated gamified elements into its nurse residency program to align with changing learning styles, transforming lectures into clinical escape rooms filled with clues, invisible ink and collaborative challenges. These three-day intensives focus on soft skills like communication and teamwork while reinforcing clinical protocols and policies.

"Gamified learning sparks energy and engagement," said Jones. "It improves retention, sharpens decision-making and makes learning memorable."

The core mission of the program is to set realistic expectations for what bedside nursing looks like. That includes managing patient loads, collaborating with physicians and adapting to unpredictable demands. Many graduates find these responsibilities overwhelming, particularly if they lacked strong clinical exposure in school.

"By normalizing the challenges and offering structured support, we help new nurses push through the steep learning curve instead of walking away," Jones said.

The residency spans one year, starting with General/Nursing Orientation and a three-day residency onboarding, followed by a 12-16-week orientation. Residents

then receive ongoing mentorship, clinical debriefing and leadership development opportunities.

How Broward Health Raises the Bar for Nurse Training

- **Monthly Cohort Start Dates:** Unlike many hospitals that onboard quarterly, Broward Health welcomes new nurse residents each month.

- **Ongoing Commitment to New Grads:** While some institutions have reduced hiring of new graduates, Broward Health continues to invest in their development.

- **Graduate Nurse Community:** Residents join a strong peer network with access to resources, mentorship and community.

- **Innovative Learning Tools:** From simulation to gamification, training is scenario-based and meets national education standards.

- **Dedicated Mentorship:** Each resident works with a support specialist for one-on-one clinical guidance.

"Our model blends traditional structure with the innovation needed to meet today's workforce where they are," said Jones. "We're showing nurses what's



possible and giving them the support to stay, grow and thrive."

Celebrating a Milestone Year

The redesigned Nurse Residency Program officially launched in early 2024. As it nears its one-year anniversary, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Graduates report increased confidence, readiness and job satisfaction.

Jones sees the program as both a recruitment and retention strategy, reinforcing Broward Health's long-term commitment to building a resilient nursing workforce.

For more information or to apply, visit BrowardHealth.org/Nurse-Residency-Program or contact Sylvia Sloane Jones, at sljones@browardhealth.org.

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University of Miami Nursing Dean to Join International Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame

Hudson P. Santos Jr., PhD, RN, FABMR, FAAN, the Dean of the University of Miami School of Nursing and Health Studies, has been selected as an inductee into the 2025 International Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame for Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing (Sigma). He will be honored during Sigma's 36th International Nursing Research Congress, slated to take place this July in Seattle.

"I am truly honored to be inducted into Sigma's International Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame," said Dean Santos. "This recognition is not just a reflection of my work, but of the countless mentors, colleagues, and students who have inspired and challenged me along the way."

Thanking Dean Santos for continued support of Sigma and contributions to nursing science, Dr. Sandra C. Garmon Bibb, president of Sigma, and Lucas M. Davis, CEO, wrote, "Sigma is pleased to recognize you for your lifetime achievements in and contributions to research, as well as your mentoring of future nurse researchers. Your exceptional work in research is an inspiration to nurses everywhere."

Dean Santos—also the Dolores J. Chambreau, RN Endowed Chair in



"Nursing research has the power to transform lives, shape health policy, and drive meaningful change in our communities."

Dean Hudson P. Santos Jr.

Nursing and a professor at the school—is currently among the nation's top 3 most-funded nurse scientists and is lead principal investigator for a \$23.57 million interdisciplinary grant from the National Institutes of Health to establish "Miami-ECHO: A Cohort of Mothers, Children and Fathers in Miami-Dade County." Through pioneering biosocial studies, longitudinal cohorts, and clinical interventions, Dean Santos bridges biological and social domains in nursing science, addressing developmental origins of health and disease. He is devoted to mentoring future nurse scientists and other health professionals.

He is the International Society of Nurses in Genetics' immediate past president and a Fellow of both the American Academy of

Nursing and Academy of Behavioral Medicine Research. As principal investigator of multiple funded studies focused on developmental health trajectories for at-risk populations, he has helped advance knowledge about how adverse life events affect maternal-child health and developmental outcomes among at-risk children.

"Research has the power to transform lives, shape health policy, and drive meaningful change in our communities," said Dean Santos. "I hope this recognition serves as an inspiration for the next generation of nurse scientists to push boundaries, ask bold questions, and lead with impact. I look forward to celebrating this moment with my fellow honorees and continuing this important work together."

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KIDZ Nurse Practitioner with Premature Twins Lives Her Mission

BY VANESSA ORR

For nearly 30 years, Paula Plympton, ARNP, has seen what it means for parents to have the medical care and support they and their children need from KIDZ Medical Services. As the mother of two premature twins herself, she's also lived through the experience, making her even more committed to continuing to provide the highest level of neonatal care.

"There's nothing more reassuring than knowing that you and your children are in the best of care, but it's a real eye-opener seeing it through the other side, going through NICU with your own children," she said.

A 1991 graduate of the University of Miami, Plympton began her career in the neonatal ICU at South Miami Hospital with Critical Care Newborn Services. In 1996, she decided she needed a break from bedside nursing and decided to go into the pharmaceutical field.

"Dr. Albert Tano, one of the cofounders of KIDZ, invited me to join their group and offered to send me to Georgetown University to become a nurse practitioner," she said. "He told me I was going to miss being a clinician providing bedside care and 29 years later, I'm still here. He was right."

Plympton joined KIDZ Medical—a private, physician-owned multispecialty health-care organization dedicated to neonatal, pediatric, and women's healthcare—in 1996 and has watched it grow exponentially, from seven nurse practitioners and five neonatologists to more than 200 clinicians today.

"When I first started out, it was a really tight-knit group, and the physicians were so supportive of us. They provided excellent mentoring, and treated us as colleagues," she said. "Even now, I'm able to pick up the phone at any time of day or night and say I need help, and they take care of it. It's priceless to have that support from the staff as well as the senior partners of the group."



Paula Plympton

Since 2003, Plympton has worked at Homestead Hospital, a Level 1 hospital that is often the first responder to C-sections, premature babies, surgical cases and more. The staff also stabilizes and transfers high-acuity patients, working with the KIDZ Medical's transport team. Plympton has seen the Homestead community grow significantly—along with the demand for high-quality labor and delivery and neonatal care—and KIDZ Medical has been working ever since to meet that need.

One of the most rewarding parts of her almost three-decade career, according to Plympton, is that she is now starting to see the second generation of families coming through the hospital doors. "A patient will come in and I'll realize that I delivered her 22 years ago, and now she's having a baby," she said. "What's even more incredible is when the family remembers you and wants to tell you how well your team did."

"Being a referring hospital, we don't always get to follow babies as closely as if we were a Level 3 hospital," she added. "But in the last five years, I've gotten to see the circle completed."

Plympton appreciates that KIDZ Medical has given her the opportunity to have such an incredible career, as well as the flexibility to be a mother to her own three children. "No matter what position you're in, you're always encouraged to do more schooling, get more licensing, or start mentoring new practitioners and PAs," she explained. "They set high goals and then give you the autonomy to reach those goals."

"They also gave me the ability to spend time as a mom; to be really involved in my children's lives when they were little," she added of the twins, now 24, and a son, 22. "It's difficult when a strong career needs so much time, but I feel like we reached the perfect balance."

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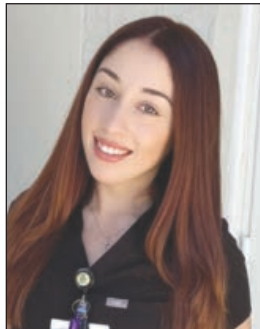
Creation of the Patient Turning Team: A Clinical Nurse-Led Initiative for Pressure Injury Prevention

After reviewing evidence-based research and peer-based literature, Gisselle Castaneda, BSN, RN, an intensive care unit (ICU) nurse at the UHealth – University of Miami Health System, sought out to improve hospital-acquired pressure injury (HAPI) outcomes for the most critically ill patients. Motivated by her learnings, Castaneda recognized the impact of implementing a turning team as an effective method of reducing HAPIs, especially for ICU patients and those on vasopressors, who are more vulnerable to pressure injuries and require frequent repositioning. Drawing from the literature and aligning it with her patients' needs, she translated research into action, demonstrating how evidence-based strategies can lead to improved, measurable health outcomes.

While nurses are required to turn patients at least every two hours, ICU nurses are focused on emergent needs such as resuscitation and medication management, relying on informal support to reposition their patients.

In light of current practice and the published research, Castaneda proposed the creation of the "UTurn Team." Her idea was simple: each ICU nurse would sign up for one time slot per shift to turn all the patients with a Braden scale score of 18 or less. The frequency of turning and repositioning is generally uniform across clinical settings, with most clinical guidelines recommending a substantial change in a patient's position according to their health status. By standardizing the turning process, UHealth patients benefit from minimized pressure on the targeted skin and enhanced blood perfusion in the affected areas. With support from their colleagues, nurses can successfully meet the two-hour patient turning requirement.

The UTurn Team was initiated in March 2023, and Castaneda trained the nurses in all four ICUs, reinforcing the importance of standardized patient-turning procedures.



Gisselle Castaneda

The nurse manager for each unit purchased a marking board for the unit secretary to identify the nurses responsible for turning. In addition, a new full-time position was created for a certified nursing assistant to support this project. A sign-up sheet was developed so nurses could choose a time slot best suited to their needs. The unit secretary reminded the nurses when it was their time to participate. If a nurse became busy, they could switch with another colleague or request assistance from the charge nurse.

Castaneda reports that forming this taskforce has improved collaboration between nursing staff and the workflow in her unit, and this concept has since expanded to include all inpatient units. "The UTurn Team embodies the collaborative spirit of our clinical nurses to promote quality, safe patient care," Castaneda said. "The goal of this system is to prevent gaps in turning patients by systematically approaching turns across the unit and build teamwork."

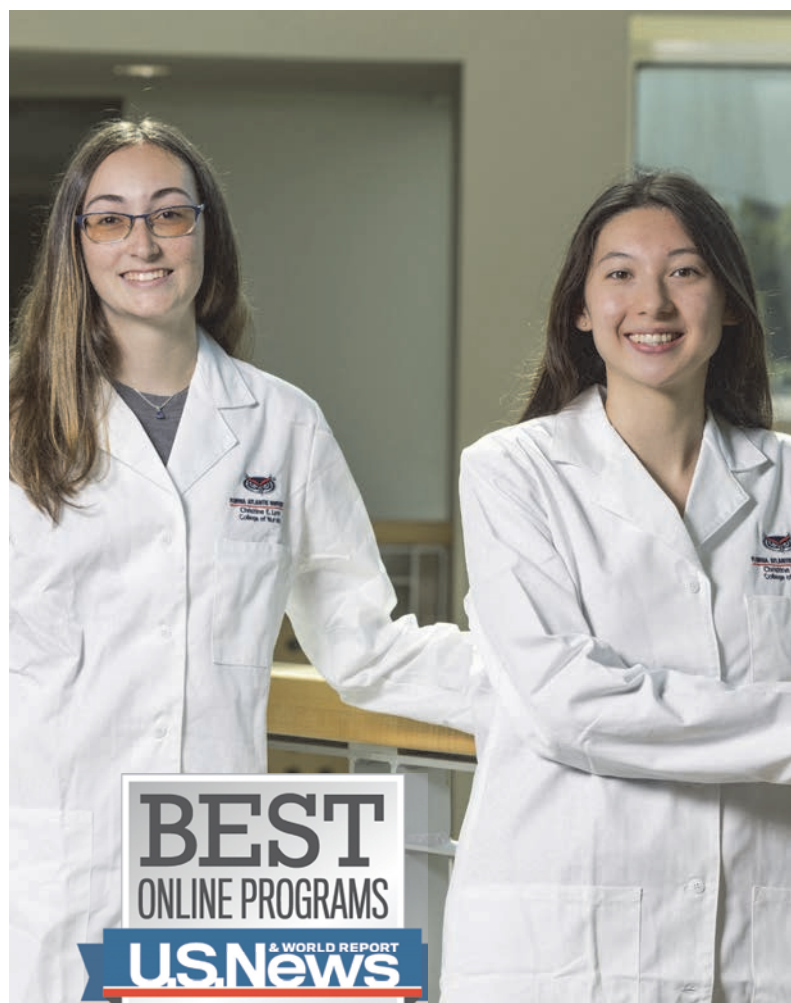
The UTurn Team concept was embraced, not only by Castaneda's unit management, but also by her fellow nurses who appreciated the idea of having their eligible patients turned every two hours while reducing the burden on nursing staff. The metrics showed success with this project, and the ICUs experienced a decrease in their HAPI rate after this task force was implemented.

Castaneda is proud of what she has achieved. "This is just one example of how clinical nurses are empowered to learn, collaborate and support our patients and our practice," Castaneda continued. "The initiative is beneficial for patients, and our nurses have expressed positive feedback on the system."

On behalf of the institution University of Miami Health System.

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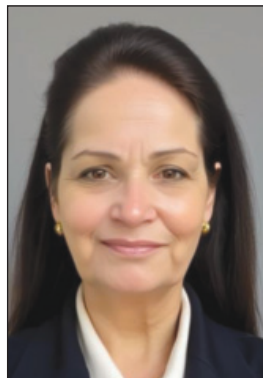
The baccalaureate, master's and DNP programs at Florida Atlantic University's Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

The Heart of Senior Care: A Passion for Nursing at Conviva

For Beth Parets, nursing is more than a profession—it's a calling. As a manager of the Broward Care Integration Team at Conviva Senior Primary Care, she and a colleague oversee the well-being of patients across 23 centers in the Broward market. Her extensive healthcare experience has fostered her deep dedication and compassion for the elderly community she serves.

Parets' nursing career began in a hospital, where she spent 12 years specializing in oncology, rehabilitation, and wound care. However, it wasn't until she began working with older adults that she discovered her true passion.

"This is where my heart is," she says. "There's such a need to care for the elderly, especially in South Florida."



Beth Parets

Supporting Seniors Holistically

Conviva stands out by offering more than just medical care. Its team of social workers, pharmacists, CMAs (certified medical assistants), and access coordinators helps seniors with everything from food assistance to long-term care. In addition, Conviva's activity centers provide opportunities for seniors to socialize, learn, and stay active, supporting both their physical and emotional well-being.

The holistic approach to care is a major reason why Parets loves her role. The Care Integration Team addresses not only medical needs but also the social and emotional aspects of well-being. From discharge planning to food and housing support, Conviva creates a network that helps seniors live healthier, more fulfilling lives.

"Doctors and nurses truly listen to patients' needs. I have the best job because I get to lead this incredible team in Broward County," she says.

Staying Motivated and Focused on Patients

For Parets, staying motivated in such a demanding field comes down to focusing on the patients.

"Amid system changes and workflow adjustments, keeping our patients at the center of our work helps us push forward."

Through her unwavering passion for nursing and senior care, Parets exemplifies healthcare leadership. She and her team continue to make a profound impact at Conviva, ensuring that seniors receive the care, dignity, and respect they deserve.

Parets offers this advice to anyone considering a career in the medical field: Nursing is a profession that offers tremendous flexibility. Find the path that truly resonates with you—whether in home care, hospitals, pediatrics, or senior care—because when you connect with your passion, it makes all the difference.

A Privilege to Serve Seniors

Working with seniors gives Parets the chance to care for an often-underserved population. Many of her patients have led rich, full lives but now face challenges such as declining functionality and increased dependence on caregivers. She finds fulfillment in building meaningful relationships, helping them accept care while preserving their autonomy.

"Nobody wants to lose their independence, so allowing someone to assist them is a privilege," she explains.

She treasures the personal stories her patients share, each one offering a glimpse into a life filled with experience. Over the years, Parets has learned invaluable lessons from the seniors she serves.

"Being a better listener and refraining from quick judgments is key," she says. "You never know what someone is going through."

She believes a simple smile or friendly greeting can make a big difference, especially for those with little social interaction.

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Cover Story: From the Emergency Room to the Executive Suite: Stephanie Paultre's Path to Leadership

Continued from page 1

her the strategic knowledge and confidence to lead at the executive level.

"My MHA studies deepened my understanding of healthcare systems and management," she says. "It improved my ability to coordinate patient care, collaborate with my team, and solve problems effectively."

Beyond academics, the program offered valuable networking.

"Connecting with peers, faculty, and healthcare professionals through workshops and events broadened my perspective and opened doors to mentorship and collaboration," she says. "These relationships have supported my growth and created new opportunities in healthcare leadership."

Paultre also credits her MHA experience with refining her leadership style.

"It taught me to lead with confidence, stay resilient in the face of change, and handle organizational shifts with grace," she says. "It's helped me become a more effective, compassionate, and adaptable leader."

She emphasizes that effective nursing leadership is rooted in core personal qualities.

"Compassion, communication, teamwork, adaptability, and a positive attitude are all essential," she says. "These traits help guide the team and deliver excellent care."

Surprisingly, nursing wasn't always in her plan. "Healthcare was never part of my original career path," she says.

That changed when her father, a former Bronx firefighter and 9/11 responder, was diagnosed with cancer.

"I remember the exact moment," she

says. "We were walking near the pool one evening when he said, 'Steph, you'd make a great nurse.' From that point on, I never looked back."

Her father passed away on June 24, 2008—the same day she began her first college course in anatomy and physiology.

"That day marked a turning point," she says. "I was determined to grow in healthcare, knowing that's what he would have wanted."

Reflecting on her years as a registered nurse, one moment stands out.

"During the pandemic, I witnessed an incredible sense of unity and teamwork among healthcare professionals," she says. "It was challenging, but it brought out the best in us. That experience reinforced my passion for nursing and my sense of purpose."

Today, Paultre is committed to mentoring others.

"My advice to those entering nursing or considering leadership is to stay passionate, keep learning, and always prioritize your patients and community," she says. "You may never feel completely ready for the next step—and that's okay. Embrace the journey."

Looking ahead, her vision is clear.

"I want to mentor future nurses, improve healthcare processes, and help foster a culture where both patients and care teams feel valued and empowered."

With clinical experience, academic knowledge, and personal resilience, Stephanie Paultre is helping shape the future of healthcare leadership—one inspired step at a time.

For more information, visit emha.fau.edu.

AI-Driven Artisight Technology Enhances Patient Care at Mount Sinai Medical Center

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the healthcare landscape, and Mount Sinai Medical Center is embracing this change with the introduction of cutting-edge AI technology to improve patient care. With a focus on automating tasks, simplifying processes, and improving communication between departments, the medical center is set to elevate its operational efficiency and patient experience overall.

Earlier this spring, Mount Sinai began integrating a new virtual nursing program into 160 inpatient rooms across their Miami Beach campus through a smart hospital platform known as Artisight. This new technology introduces an additional layer of oversight and care, ensuring patients receive the attention they need, when they need it.

"New healthcare technology is revolutionizing the way we approach treatment," says Dr. Alon Weizer, Chief Medical Officer at Mount Sinai Medical Center. "These breakthroughs, like Artisight, enable nurses to predict, prevent, and intervene more effectively than ever before."

Artisight's Smart Hospital Platform is an advanced computer-vision technology, paired with a nursing command center, that allows the Mount Sinai's care teams to monitor patients remotely around the clock. The platform empowers staff to engage proactively and leverage AI to be aware of and stop incidents, such as falls, before they occur.

Additionally, the command center provides real-time audio and video capabilities, allowing physicians and nurses to quickly address patient questions and needs. Artisight also helps nurses execute critical tasks like discharge planning, admission assessments, and documentation, freeing up floor nurses to focus on delivering direct patient care.

"The fusing of Artisight into our nurses' day-to-day schedule not only helps make the hospital run more efficiently, but it allows for patients to have a smoother experience and for our nurses to experience less burnout," says Dr. Weizer. "It's a great piece of innovation that betters the workflow, reduces the administrative burden, and ultimately improves our patient care."

By utilizing Artisight's virtual nursing technology, Mount Sinai anticipates improved staff productivity, better nurse recruitment and retention, and a heightened patient. Thanks to this complementary approach to traditional care, Mount Sinai is designed to offer a more personalized and efficient healthcare experience for every patient in South Florida and beyond.

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Reasons for Hope This Mental Health Awareness Month

As we observe Mental Health Awareness Month, we celebrate the strides Florida is making to address challenges to timely access to high quality mental health care. We also know that we can and must do better. There are still too many gaps in access to the full spectrum of behavioral health care – from prevention and early intervention to crisis intervention and daily supports such as the Clubhouse model so that every Floridian has access to the right treatment and support when they need it.

Tragically, too many Floridians experience barriers to accessing essential community-based behavioral health services promptly, with 1 in 5 adults and 1 in 6 youths experiencing mental illness every year. Florida has more than 400,000 children and youth with emotional, behavioral, and developmental issues, but only about half are able to access services. Nearly 3 million adults in Florida have a mental health condition, but an estimated nearly 800,000 have not received care.

The impacts of delayed or foregone mental health care are felt in our families, our schools, our workplaces, our justice system, and our health care settings. Unmet mental health care needs affect family stability, undermine a child's ability to thrive and succeed in school, jeopardize wellness and happiness for far too many, and too often shorten lives.

Strengthening the Behavioral Health Workforce

Addressing the shortage of mental health professionals is paramount. Without enough mental health professionals, whether psychiatrists, psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners, social workers, or counselors, delays in care will persist. Currently, Florida has a behavioral health provider-to-population ratio of 510:1, ranking 43rd nationally. Our state has more than 200 federally designated mental health professional shortage areas, which leaves just 21 percent of the need for mental health professionals being met.

The Legislature's establishment of state-designated behavioral health teaching hospitals, as part of the 2024 Live Healthy legislation, is a significant step forward in the work to increase the number of mental health professionals. These institutions will train the next generation of behavioral health providers, ensuring a robust workforce equipped to meet the growing need. However, it is imperative that Florida is able to retain these graduates in good-paying jobs here in Florida. If not, we will educate and export to other states. Florida Medicaid is the dominant payor for mental health services, and reimbursement rates paid by Medicaid through managed care plans (private insurance companies) must keep pace with the labor costs and other critical investments to ensure access to high quality mental health services in Florida.

Expanding Access to Timely Care and Intervention Through Community Initiatives

Another notable advancement is increased support for the highly effective model of care, behavioral health mobile response teams. These teams, available 24/7, provide



BY MARY C. MAYHEW

immediate crisis intervention and de-escalation services and effectively reduce unnecessary hospital admissions and law enforcement engagement. There are 55 mobile response teams serving the 67 counties of the state. Remarkably, 82 percent of individuals served by these teams are stabilized without requiring hospitalization.

But, more can be done. These teams are funded with state general revenue. Leveraging federal Medicaid dollars would provide stable, long-term funding.

Another community-based care model – certified community behavioral health centers (CCBHCs) – provide 24/7 wraparound services to assist in stabilizing those experiencing a mental health crisis. The programs have demonstrated significant reductions in hospitalizations, incarceration, and homelessness. Expanding these programs is also critical. The Florida Legislature has included authorization for the state to pursue Medicaid funding for these incredibly effective models of care. Again, Medicaid funding is critical for the sustainability of these models.

And, maintaining mental health requires not just access to mental health services but also education, housing, employment, and other supports such as the Clubhouse model. Clubhouse programs offer wellness, employment assistance, and community engagement and have a crucial role in promoting recovery and reintegration for individuals with serious and persistent mental illness. The Clubhouse model focuses on empowerment, employment, and recovery, shifting from crisis care to long-term stability. Despite their proven effectiveness, however, Medicaid reimbursement remains stagnant at \$5.00 per quarter hour. Increasing rates and leveraging the federal match for this extremely cost-effective service is not only the right thing to do, it also will save money on preventable emergency department visits and psychiatric readmissions.

Collaborative Efforts for a Brighter Future

By focusing on early intervention, expanding community-based services, and investing in workforce development, we are laying the foundation for a more responsive, compassionate and, ultimately, more cost effective, mental health care system. The goal is a system of proactive, holistic care that does not wait for a crisis to engage but places the individual and their needs at the center so that when they are ready for and in need of community mental health treatment, the door is open and services available as soon as possible.

When Mental Health Awareness Month comes to an end, the work continues. And, Florida's hospitals will be leading the way, not only providing care but engaging state leadership and community-based organizations to promote an integrated, collaborative local approach to providing timely behavioral health care for every Floridian who needs it.

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



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A message from our President

Meditations: Big Data

Recently, I have had the opportunity to read several articles where authors have put on their "future" glasses and talked about healthcare from that perspective. I thought that I would synthesize all their hard works and create my own future!

By 2050, healthcare will be transformed by advances in technology, data integration, and personalized medicine. Care delivery will shift from hospital-centric models to decentralized, patient-focused systems. Smart homes equipped with health monitoring devices will enable early detection of diseases, allowing many conditions to be remotely managed. Artificial intelligence (AI) will play a critical role in diagnostics, treatment planning, and even robotic surgery, enhancing precision and reducing human error.

Genomics and biotechnology will usher in an era of hyper-personalized medicine, with treatments tailored to an individual's genetic makeup, lifestyle, and environment. Chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease will be more effectively managed—or even prevented—through predictive analytics and real-time data from wearable devices. Mental health care will become more integrated into primary care, with digital platforms offering therapy, monitoring, and support.

The healthcare workforce will evolve alongside these changes. Clinicians will



Jaime Caldwell

work more collaboratively with data scientists, engineers, and AI systems. Virtual reality and simulation will be standard tools in medical education and surgical training, while telemedicine will be a default mode of care for routine consultations.

Equity will remain a central challenge. While affluent populations may benefit most from high-tech advances, health systems will be pressed to ensure that rural, elderly, and underserved communities are not left behind. Regulatory frameworks will have to adapt quickly to protect patient privacy while enabling data-sharing across systems.

By 2050, healthcare will likely be more proactive than reactive, more data-driven than intuition-based, and more personalized than ever before. The result could be longer, healthier lives—but only if technology is harnessed equitably and sustainably.

In these pictures of the future, I am uncomfortable about who will be benefiting from these advances. I feel reasonably confident that one of the ways to reduce overall healthcare cost is to provide and encourage people to get primary/preventive care. Preventive care that leads to avoidance of more serious illnesses requiring hospital admissions will be lessened (per capita). The only way we can do that is to ensure that quality, affordable healthcare insurance/program is available and that those eligible are encouraged to take advantage of that care.

Over the next few years, I look forward to seeing this view of the future unfold.

Amre Nouh, MD, Elected Chair of Stroke Community with American Academy of Neurology

Amre Nouh, MD, who serves as Chair of Neurology for Cleveland Clinic in Florida, has been elected to serve as Chair of the American Academy of Neurology (AAN) Stroke and Vascular Neurology Section. Dr. Nouh begins his two-year term in April 2025.

In his role with AAN, the world's largest association of neurologists and neuroscience professionals, Dr. Nouh will lead the online SynapseSM community on stroke and vascular neurology, fostering new and collaborative opportunities for its members.

Prior to Cleveland Clinic, Dr. Nouh held various leadership roles. He most recently served as Chair of the Northeast Cerebrovascular Consortium, System Director of Stroke and Cerebrovascular Disease at Hartford Healthcare, a seven acute care hospital system in Connecticut, as well as Stroke Director of Hartford Hospital and Vascular Neurology Fellowship Director. Dr. Nouh is a fellow of the American Heart Association, member of the National AHA Stroke Council, and lead author and Vice-Chair of the AHA Scientific Statement on Best Practice Recommendations for In-Hospital Stroke. He has authored and co-authored more than 100 publications and has presented globally on stroke and cerebrovascular disease.



Dr. Amre Nouh

Structural Interventional Cardiologist Brijeshwar Maini, MD, Joins Palm Beach Health Network Physician Group

Structural interventional cardiologist Brijeshwar Maini, MD, FACC, joins the Palm Beach Health Network Physician Group. He is on staff at Delray Medical Center and Good Samaritan Medical Center, where he leads the Center for Preventive Cardiac Medicine.

Dr. Maini is 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.



Dr. Brijeshwar Maini

Dr. Thomas Utset-Ward, Pediatric Orthopedic Oncology Specialist, Joins Nicklaus Children's

Thomas J. Utset-Ward, MD, has joined the Nicklaus Children's Orthopedic, Sports Medicine & Spine Institute as a pediatric orthopedic surgeon specializing in pediatric orthopedic oncology.

Dr. Utset-Ward was born and raised in South Florida, was a Nicklaus Children's patient and is natively bilingual in both English and Spanish. He earned his medical degree at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine and a master's degree in business administration from the Vanderbilt University Owen Graduate School of Business in Nashville, TN. He completed a residency in orthopedic surgery at the University of Chicago and then pursued a fellowship in musculoskeletal oncology at Ohio State University and Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, OH. Dr. Utset-Ward then furthered his training with an additional fellowship at Nationwide Children's Hospital as the nation's first-ever fellow in pediatric-specific orthopedic oncology.

In addition to his surgical role, Dr. Utset-Ward will also serve as director of Surgical Innovation, leading the Nicklaus Children's 3D Printing and Modeling Program and championing the development and adoption of the latest advances in patient-specific surgical technology.



Dr. Thomas Utset-Ward and patient

Constance Katsafanas, DO, Joins Marcus Neuroscience Institute

Board-certified neurologist Constance Katsafanas, D.O., program director of Florida Atlantic University Schmidt College of Medicine's Neurology Residency Program, has joined Marcus Neuroscience Institute, part of Baptist Health. She will lead the residency program at Boca Raton Regional Hospital. Dr. Katsafanas specializes in brain aneurysms, multiple sclerosis, stroke and telestroke medicine.

Prior to joining Baptist Health, Dr. Katsafanas served as an associate professor of neurology at the University of Florida (UF) and a neurologist at the UF Health Neuroscience Institute in Jacksonville. There, she also served as director of telemedicine, departmental quality officer, program director of the Neurology Residency, associate program director of the Vascular Neurology Fellowship and associate clerkship director.

Dr. Katsafanas earned her medical degree at Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Davie, Fla. She completed a neurology residency and a vascular neurology fellowship at the University of Florida College of Medicine in Jacksonville, FL.



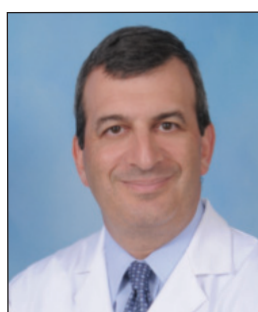
Dr. Constance Katsafanas

Palm Beach Health Network Names Dr. Eric Lieberman as Chief Medical Officer

The Palm Beach Health Network (PBHN) names Dr. Eric Lieberman to the position of Chief Medical Officer (CMO). In his new role, Dr. Lieberman will oversee quality improvement initiatives, lead strategic planning for cardiovascular services, and support the expansion of PBHN's cardiovascular service line across its six hospitals.

Dr. Lieberman will work closely with cardiologists throughout the network to ensure cohesiveness in care delivery. Additionally, he will play a key role in launching the cardiovascular program at the soon-to-open Florida Coast Medical Center in Port St. Lucie.

With a distinguished background in healthcare leadership and a strong commitment to improving patient outcomes, Dr. Lieberman brings a wealth of knowledge to his new role.



Dr. Eric Lieberman

Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon Joins Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital

Plastic and reconstructive surgeon Daniel Sutphin, M.D., recently joined Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital. Dr. Sutphin earned his doctorate of medicine from the University of Tennessee College of Medicine in Memphis. He completed his residency in plastic and reconstructive surgery at the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, and his general surgery residency at the University of Tennessee Medical Center, Knoxville.

A fellow of the American College of Surgeons holding several professional certifications, Dr. Sutphin is board certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery and has extensive postgraduate training, including a fellowship at the University of California, San Francisco, where he served as a microsurgical fellow and clinical instructor in the Division of Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery.

Dr. Sutphin's specialty interests include oncoplastic and implant-based breast reconstruction; management of breast implant complications such as capsular contracture and rupture; body contouring after massive weight loss; periocular surgery including blepharoplasty and ectropion management; and the management of soft tissue and cutaneous malignancies including melanoma, Merkel cell and squamous cell carcinomas.



Dr. Daniel Sutphin

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

Cleveland Clinic Adds Experienced Cardiologist in Port St. Lucie

Gregory Heins, M.D., is a distinguished cardiologist with a remarkable career marked by leadership and dedication to patient care. Dr. Heins earned his medical degree from Kansas City University before completing an internal medicine internship and residency at Delaware Valley Medical Center. He then completed a cardiology fellowship at Deborah Heart and Lung Center. Dr. Heins sees patients at Cleveland Clinic Tradition HealthPark Two in Port St. Lucie.

Dr. Heins is an active member of the American Osteopathic Association, the American College of Cardiology and the American College of Osteopathic Internists. He is certified in cardiology and internal medicine by the American College of Osteopathic Internists.

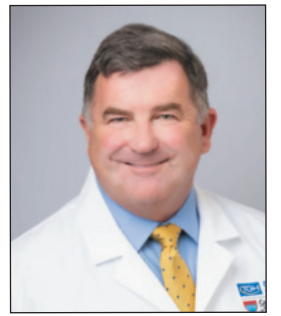
Dr. Heins' contributions to the field of cardiology have been recognized with various awards, and he has been involved in multiple research projects and community presentations. His commitment to advancing cardiology and improving patient outcomes is evident in his extensive experience, leadership roles and ongoing efforts to enhance clinical practice.



Dr. Gregory Heins

TGH Cancer Institute | Cancer Center of South Florida Welcomes Cancer Specialist Dr. Stephen G. Patterson

TGH Cancer Institute | Cancer Center of South Florida (CCSF) welcomes board-certified medical oncologist Dr. Stephen G. Patterson to its practice. He specializes in treating patients with prostate, bladder, kidney and lung cancers. Patterson is a member of the American Society of Clinical Oncology and has more than 30 years of experience in both academic and community medicine. He received his medical degree, completed his residency in internal medicine and his fellowship in medical oncology and hematology – all at the USF Health Morsani College of Medicine.



Dr. Stephen G. Patterson

Jorge N. Gil, MD, Joins Baptist Health Orthopedic Care

Fellowship-trained orthopedic foot and ankle surgeon Jorge N. Gil, M.D., has joined Baptist Health Orthopedic Care. Dr. Gil's clinical interests include foot and ankle trauma surgery, revision surgery and arthroplasty.

Prior to joining Baptist Health, Dr. Gil was an orthopedic foot and ankle surgeon at the Orthopedic Center of Florida in Naples.

Dr. Gil earned his medical degree and completed an orthopedic surgery residency at the University of Florida College of Medicine in Gainesville. His post-doctoral training also includes an orthopedic foot and ankle fellowship at Baptist Health South Florida in Miami.



Dr. Jorge N. Gil

Cleveland Clinic Tradition Hospital Welcomes Gastroenterologist

Board-certified gastroenterologist Roberto Gonzalez, M.D., has joined Cleveland Clinic Tradition HealthPark One in Port St. Lucie. Dr. Gonzalez earned his Doctor of Medicine degree from Florida State University in Tallahassee and completed his residency in internal medicine at Weill Medical College of Cornell University in New York, NY. He then went on to complete two fellowships: one in digestive diseases at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York, NY; and another in advanced endoscopy at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx, NY. These specialized fellowships allowed him to gain expertise in managing complex gastrointestinal conditions and performing advanced endoscopic procedures. With dual board certifications from the American Board of Internal Medicine and the American Board of Gastroenterology, Dr. Gonzalez is highly trained in diagnosing and treating a wide range of gastrointestinal disorders to complex conditions requiring advanced interventions.



Dr. Roberto Gonzalez

Cleveland Clinic Adds Radiation Oncologist in Port St. Lucie

Board-certified radiation oncologist Patrice Cohen, M.D., has joined the medical staff at Cleveland Clinic Family Health Center, St. Lucie West. Dr. Cohen earned her medical degree from Weill Cornell Medical College in New York, NY. She completed her residency in radiation oncology at NYU Langone Medical Center, also in New York, NY, where she received comprehensive training in advanced radiation techniques and multidisciplinary cancer care. Dr. Cohen's clinical interests span multiple disease sites including breast cancer, lung/thoracic cancer, prostate cancer, CNS malignancies, gastrointestinal cancers and skin cancer. She has a particular focus on stereotactic body radiation therapy (SBRT) and combined modality treatment approaches such as chemo-radiation.



Dr. Patrice Cohen

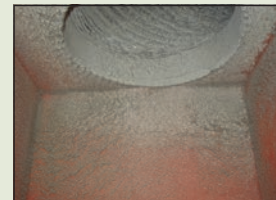
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Cover Story: Camaraderie, Support Critical When Dealing with Limb Loss or Difference

Continued from page 1

nity and consists of a nationwide network of trained peer mentors who have successfully recovered and rehabilitated following amputation. AMPOWER also collaborates with community partners who specialize in amputations, prosthetics and orthotics to provide additional resources, especially related to new technology and advocacy.

For example, AMPOWER worked with Hanger Clinic to demonstrate to different insurance companies how people at home (K1 ambulators) could benefit from certain forms of technology that were previously only given to those with more active lifestyles (K3 ambulators).

"Insurance companies were not recognizing that people ambulating at home could benefit from this technology, which could reduce falling and save expenses down the line," explained Uzcategui. "When Medicare recognized this, it was a huge win. But it was only made possible through our collaboration with scientists, doctors, patients and more."

AMPOWER holds monthly activities, educational events and support groups in South Florida to help those with limb loss or limb difference learn how to reincorporate back into society, celebrate their triumphs and support each other,

according to Uzcategui, who is an amputee herself and wears bilateral prostheses.

"We hold gatherings once a month to discuss things patients need help with, like finding the right therapist or finding different activities in the community or what to do if a prosthesis doesn't fit well," she explained. "We want to give them a clear plan to get to the next level."

AMPOWER also holds social events such as Sunsets at the Beach, where those with limb loss can take advantage of accessible paths to the beach and beach wheelchairs to gather together. A much larger event, Get Unstuck, is held at the end of April and helps people identify why they get stuck and how to break through those limitations. There, they can try new activities like riding adaptive bikes or playing pickleball or basketball designed for players with prosthetic limbs.

While some limb loss is genetic or birth-related, the Society of Interventional Radiology reports that approximately 70 percent of amputations are caused by vascular disease. Roughly 29 percent are caused by trauma and the rest by cancer.

"Every day, 507 people in the United States lose a limb," said Uzcategui. "That

SO EVERY BODY CAN MOVE

So Every BODY Can Move is an initiative to provide greater access to specialized orthotic and prosthetic care used for physical activity. The initiative outlines the need for insurance coverage of medically necessary prosthetic limbs and custom orthotic braces designed to enable individuals with limb loss and limb difference to participate in exercise, recreation and physical activities.

"It's not fair that because of insurance issues, people only have access to basic prosthetic or orthotic devices," said Uzcategui. "Imagine a little one born with a leg limitation who isn't given a running prosthesis. Why should they have to sit down when all of their friends are running?"

"We all need to have access to insurance coverage to use prosthetic devices recreationally. It shouldn't be a luxury; it should be a right."

The organization's five-year goal, 28x28, is to enact So Every BODY Can Move legislation in 28 states by the 2028 Los Angeles Paralympics in order to then pursue federal, nationwide reform.

To find out how you can help, visit www.soeverybodycanmove.org.

number is really scary."

Because limb loss affects more than just the amputee, AMPOWER invites families to educational events to learn more about how they can help their loved ones and what to expect in the coming months and years.

"The loss of a limb is a loss for everyone around the patient; their lives are changed," explained Uzcategui.

Through AMPOWER's help, patients are able to return to independent lives. "Being able to confidently shake someone's hand or cut your own meat at a restaurant may seem trivial to someone with both hands, but it's not for someone like me," said Uzcategui. "When I meet these people right after surgery, they're lost, but seeing the smiles as they accomplish more and more is so exciting."

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

Loyola Medicine's Pierre Monice, FACHE, Named President and CEO of Holy Cross Health in Fort Lauderdale

Holy Cross Health, a member of Trinity Health, is pleased to announce the appointment of Pierre Monice, FACHE, as its next President and Chief Executive Officer, effective May 11. Monice, currently president of Loyola Medicine's MacNeal Hospital in Berwyn, IL, brings extensive leadership experience and a deep commitment to advancing health care excellence and equity.

Born and raised in South Florida from a Haitian immigrant family, Monice knows firsthand the needs of Broward County. His career journey began in ministry as a senior pastor, where he developed a deep passion for service, leadership and community engagement—values that have shaped his approach to health care leadership.

Monice has held key leadership roles in health care, including serving as Senior Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer for Trinity Health's Midwest Service Area and Chief Operating Officer at AdventHealth's Altamonte Campus in Orlando. Throughout his career, he has successfully led operational improvements, expanded service lines, strengthened physician partnerships and enhanced workforce stability. Under his leadership at MacNeal Hospital, colleague turnover decreased by 25%, contributing to a more engaged workforce and improved patient care.

Monice holds a Master of Business Administration from Webster University and a Bachelor of Arts in Theology from Southern Adventist University. He is board-certified in healthcare management as a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives (FACHE), a certified Professional in Human Resources (PHR) and holds a Six Sigma Black Belt certification. Earlier this year, Monice was the recipient of the 2025 Robert S. Hudgens Memorial Award for Young Healthcare Executive of the Year by the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE).



Pierre Monice

HCA Florida JFK North Hospital Welcomes New Chief Operating Officer, Andrew Wright

HCA Florida JFK North Hospital is proud to announce that Andrew (Drew) Wright, MBA, RN, has joined the hospital as Chief Operating Officer.

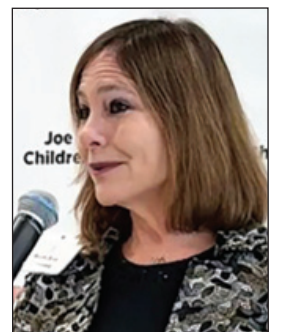
Drew joins HCA Florida JFK North Hospital from HCA Florida Westside Hospital, where he served as Vice President of Operations & Ethics and Compliance Officer. Prior to his time in Florida, Drew held key leadership positions at St. Luke's Des Peres Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri, where he directed Emergency Services, Senior Care Outpatient Clinic, and Bariatric Clinic operations. His work has consistently demonstrated a deep commitment to operational excellence, service line growth, and patient safety. Drew holds an MBA from Webster University, a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Chamberlain College of Nursing, and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. His clinical background and administrative expertise position him well to lead operational initiatives and support HCA Florida JFK North Hospital's ongoing mission of delivering high-quality, compassionate care to the Palm Beach community.



Andrew Wright

Beth-Ann Krinsky Appointed Chair of Memorial and Joe Dimaggio Children's Hospital Foundations

The Memorial and Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital Foundations announce Beth-Ann Krinsky, the national litigation chair and partner at Greenspoon Marder LLP, has been named chair of the group's Board of Directors. Krinsky will serve a two-year term leading the foundations, which provide philanthropic support to enhance the patient and family experience throughout Memorial Healthcare System. Krinsky, a Plantation resident, first joined the board in 2019 and was most recently its vice chair. She succeeds Fort Lauderdale entrepreneur Brett Rose in the leadership role. Krinsky, a skilled commercial litigator, trial attorney, and Harvard Law School graduate, is also dedicated to raising the profile of the foundations and the vital work they do. She emphasized the importance of transparent stewardship of contributed funds and the opportunity it provides to expand access to care, particularly for underserved populations.



Beth-Ann Krinsky



E-mail Your Editorial
Submissions to
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