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Publisher's Note

My goal for 2022 is to accomplish the goals of 2021 which I should have done in 2020 because I promised them in 2019 and planned them in 2018.

Perhaps if I were a "more" goal-oriented individual, the prospect of resolutions for 2022 wouldn't seem so daunting. However as Carol delights in reminding me, my brain is like a butterfly on Red Bull and never quite reaches solid ground. So for this totally non-denominational holiday season, I leave you all with our simple thanks. Thanks for being our friends, our clients, our community of readers, and most of all our caregivers.

May all your troubles last as long as my New Year's resolutions!



Charles Felix



You can reach Charles Felix at
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What's Next?

www.bdo.com/healthcare

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Why Healthcare Businesses Should Embrace Blogging



BY DON SILVER

At BoardroomPR, our digital PR specialists understand the importance of building your healthcare brand awareness and media presence. What is an effective, targeted creative way to foster engagement for your healthcare practice or facility? With the right strategy, a blog can play an integral role in your business' overall success. Here are just a few of the many benefits of blogging for your business.

1. Increase Traffic. Interesting blog topics lead to more readers (e.g., clinicians, patients, healthcare administrators, etc.). The more you focus on tending to your healthcare blog, the more likely you are to increase and strengthen your overall audience. Keeping your blog updated on a regular basis and creating a separate blog section for your practice's site encourages people to continue coming back. Attract more readers by writing new, relevant and engaging content.

2. Attract Inbound Links. Utilizing internal links throughout your blogs is a great way to give people almost instantaneous access to various pages on your site, allowing them to learn more about your healthcare practice and your brand.

3. Expand Brand Awareness. Blogging is extremely helpful when building and maintaining your brand awareness and what sets your practice apart from the rest. It offers constant exposure for your brand online and allows your current and prospective patients to get to know your business on a much more personal level. Seeing a doctor, nurse or clinician requires trust, and a blog is a great way to begin to foster and earn this.

4. Boost Online Engagement. Blogs are a great medium for online engagement. Ask yourself who your targeted audience is – are your patients a certain age, gender, or demographic? – and then create captivating content that you can use to connect to that audience. This will prompt more people to read and share the blog – even leading to conversation between yourself and potential/current patients and other professionals.

5. Social Media Content. Not only are blogs great on your facility's site, but they also provide intriguing social media content. Incorporate recent blogs within your content calendar, which will invite more conversation. Giving social media followers updates on blog posts will lead to stronger connections while driving traffic back to your site.

6. Demonstrate Dependability and Expertise. Blogging allows you to showcase your abilities and knowledge to the world. Take this opportunity to emphasize your healthcare business' strengths and where your expertise lies. Giving patients and other healthcare professionals a better understanding of your business' capabilities offers higher brand loyalty.

7. Grow SEO. Search Engine Optimization is critical when growing your business. While enhancing your healthcare practice's online presence, you can drive more traffic to various sections of your site.

8. Generate Leads. Improving your search engine optimization ranking through blogging will lead to more brand awareness through your website – offering more opportunity for new patients to find you online, which directly translates into new business.

9. Discuss Important Topics. Blogs help build better relationships with your audience because you can connect on a personal level. This is your chance to discuss important and relevant topics in healthcare, while increasing conversation and giving patients and other clinicians insight into what your values and principles are as a business.

10. Improve Business. Effective blogging helps attract and maintain current and future business. Having a strong blog on your site offers the opportunity for stronger relationships, resulting in profitable outcomes.

If you're ready to take your healthcare business blogging to the next level, our team of social media and PR experts are here to help! Named one of the top Florida digital marketing and public relations agencies, BoardroomPR offers expertise and insight into how to best elevate your business. Contact us today to see how we can help you! Visit boardroompr.com or call (954) 370-8999. Don Silver is COO, BoardroomPR.

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KIDZ Medical Expands Women's Services in Homestead Area

BY HILDA S. MITRANI

KIDZ Medical is pleased to announce the recent opening of MOMZ, an obstetrics and gynecology practice in Homestead. While the office is new, Board-certified obstetrician and gynecologist Darren S. Salinger, M.D., has worked in the community for many years providing emergency room and pregnancy services at Homestead Hospital.

From this fully-equipped office, Dr. Salinger will be able to diagnose and treat a variety of common health conditions including fibroids, polyps, vaginal infections, STDs, ectopic pregnancy and endometrial biopsy in addition to standard prenatal and well-woman care. Additionally, Dr. Salinger will continue to treat pregnancy-related emergencies, evaluate labor progression, monitor fetal heart rate, miscarriage and deliver babies.

"Expanding our services in Homestead is a natural progression for our organization," commented Wayne Brackin, CEO and president of KIDZ Medical. "Dr. Salinger's patients will have more and better access to care."

Dr. Salinger specializes in routine and high-risk obstetrics and gynecology. In practice for more than 20 years, he cares for all people equally with compassion and respect. He serves as Assistant Professor at the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine at Florida International University, and is the Medical Director for the Miami Dade College Physician Assistant program.

Additionally, as a certified healthcare ethics consultant (HEC-C), Dr. Salinger believes in the power of positive thinking and in using positivity to provide excellence in healthcare.

The new office is located at 975 Baptist Way, Suite 203, Homestead FL 33030, on-site at Homestead Hospital. The phone number is (305) 205-6236.

Since 1989, KIDZ Medical has been an innovative force in the advancement of neonatology and pediatric specialty care, partnering with leading acute care and pediatric health systems, physician groups and outpatient providers throughout South Florida.



Dr. Darren S. Salinger

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BROWARD COUNTY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION



95th Presidential Inauguration & Dinner

Please join us as we inaugurate the 95th BCMA President, Vania E. Fernandez, M.D. and...

Celebrate Cuban-American Heritage

Fun begins at 6:30 pm with Mojitos and Hors D'oeuvres. Cuban Cuisine Dinner to follow. Cuban Themed Music and Dancing! Suggested Attire: Guayabera Shirts, Havana Nights Style Dress



Vania E. Fernandez, M.D.
95th BCMA President

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EMERALD: \$7,500

Includes one premier table (10 seats), Exhibit Booth, Full Page Ad in Program, Recognition in All Press Releases, Logo on Invitation, Appreciation Plaque and Recognition from Podium, Logo on BCMA's website for one year.

RUBY: \$5,000

Includes one preferred table (10 seats), Exhibit Booth, Full page Ad in Program, Appreciation Plaque and Recognition from Podium, Recognition in press releases, Logo on BCMA's website for one year.

SAPPHIRE/TABLE SPONSOR: \$3,000

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PEARL: \$2,000

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DATE

Saturday,
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TIME

6:30 pm



Tickets: \$200 per Guest (Non-BCMA Members)
\$185 per Guest, \$370 per Couple (BCMA Members)

The Broward County Medical Association Foundation was formed in August 1991 to further the charitable and educational goals of the Broward County Medical Association. As the delivery of health care undergoes a transition, the need for public education and communication with the medical community will increase. Please consider attending the dinner and contributing to the Foundation.

www.BCMA.com



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The Broward County Medical Association Foundation is an officially registered 501(c)3 organization. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling 800-435-7352 within the state. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state. Registration number is CH7281.

Tricia Young Chaplain and Bereavement Specialist Broward Health Medical Center and Salah Foundation Children's Hospital

Patricia "Tricia" Young is the chaplain and bereavement specialist at Broward Health Medical Center and Salah Foundation Children's Hospital. Over the last 2 years, Young has provided spiritual support to patient and their families in addition to bereavement support to families.

"My favorite part about being a chaplain is meeting people where they are and being present with them and listening," said Young. "It is such an honor and privilege to be invited into their sacred space. As patients spiritually heal you can sometimes see the weight being lifted from their distress and this is such a joy to see."

Young's role also extends to providing support to nurses, physicians, social workers, and other healthcare teams throughout the hospital. This past October, Young planned spiritual care week for staff at the hospital which included events such as blessings of the hands, affirmation rock painting, wheels of joy, an inter-faith prayer wall and an orthodox Catholic mass in the chapel. Young recalled, "As staff was either rushing in or rushing out during shifts, they were able to take a minute to center themselves and receive a moment of peace during the blessing of the hands."

Young became a hospital chaplain after a personal family experience. "My mom had a hospice chaplain who she connected with spiritually when she had breast cancer," said Young. "This person helped me as well as I lived 9 hours away. It was during that time that I felt the call to pursue the ministry of chaplaincy."

Young received her Bachelor of Science in communications for business at Florida State University. She is scheduled to graduate in April 2022 with her Master of Divinity from the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary.



The Importance of Spiritual Support

Hospice chaplains offer guidance and support for people (and their family members) during the final months of their life. "Their families are walking this journey with them. Often, they don't know what to expect or how to do it. I listen and ask questions and lead the family to whatever it is they are looking for," said Joe McNett, Trustbridge Spiritual Care Coordinator.

A research study on the most important concerns of terminally ill patients reported, "Family support and spirituality are very important to dying patients. Patients were concerned that their families appreciated them, that they would be able to say good-bye to family and friends and that they would be able to express their feelings to their families. By recognizing the significance of these needs, the hospice team can ensure that these areas are addressed in ways that enable the patient and family to find comfort and closure."

McNett agrees, "We help people leave a legacy and lasting memories for their loved ones. That may involve reuniting estranged family members or helping someone write a letter to communicate feelings they haven't expressed in their relationships. At the end of life, these words become all the more meaningful."

The ordained ministers and rabbis who serve as our Trustbridge Hospice Chaplains help people of all faiths and levels of belief find meaning and purpose as they review their lives. Sometimes they just want someone to talk to without judgment. Others find comfort in religious rituals, prayers and music. Some want help to reconnect with faith or beliefs they set aside long ago.

"Each family has a unique set of needs. The possibilities for personal growth and closure in the final months of life are inspiring. It's an honor to help them find peace at this deeply meaningful time."



Joe McNett



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Innovation and Opportunity in Medical Design

Designing for medical care in the not-so-distant future is one question. And how medical providers will afford to pay for it takes on an even more critical meaning at this point in time.

We have survived an extraordinary year and a half, successfully adapting, coping, and dealing with uncertainty and separation. Medical focus on the COVID-19 pandemic modified how we provide our nation's medical services and changed the medical temperament of the public.

Generational distinctions concerning technology were never more apparent than during the pandemic; however, our technological baptism under fire pushed everyone along the technology path. It has been a successful and transitional change.

One of the most important lessons learned by virtue of the pandemic was the financial uncertainty of the entire healthcare sector. The pandemic demonstrated that our medical system is financially vulnerable.



BY CHARLES MICHELSON

Delayed procedures and a wary public caused extraordinary losses. Therefore, the healthcare system needs to transform itself financially as the trends in lower volumes are anticipated to continue. Virtual visits generate less revenue, but require greater IT costs, in addition to all other facility, equipment and supply chain issues that make up the capital improvement financial pie.

Future capital expenditure will trend toward technology investments, as a means of moving toward organizational goals and alternate care models achievable only with a robust technology format.

Core technology should create efficiency that helps cut costs through a better distribution of information seamlessly through a healthcare system on behalf of any given client.

Planning makes things better, but the acceleration of change has demanded the critical need for strategic planning; organizational decision-making will boost future business growth. Resiliency, adaptability

and planning will allow the better healthcare providers to survive, prosper and grow.

Success in healthcare will be measured; identifying what to track, preparing complete analytics and reporting, analyzing the information, and finally and most importantly, turning that information into actionable insight.

It is for that reason there will continue to be capital growth and expenditures in facilities; why building and spaces will be designed and constructed, and spaces modified for new equipment or approaches to treatment.

Knowledge without action is stagnation; information is for improvement, impact and leadership.

Credibility, trust and confidence in the healthcare system will come through contact and human response to a client's medical needs. Our compassion and humanity must always be at the forefront of these interactions. But technology is the tool which will enable us to better connect with those we treat within our medical facilities.

Charles Michelson is President of Saltz Michelson Architects. For more information, visit www.saltzmichelson.com.

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USA Pipelining Robots Stop Leaks, Clear Clogs, Coat Pipes, Save Dollars

BY BARBARA R. FALLON

Suffering pipe blockage or leakage from years of corrosion and rust and other build-up? Dreading the construction demolition mess, safety issues, downtime and exorbitant costs of pipe replacement?

Fortunately, the plumbing nightmare for homeowners and facilities managers is over if you rely on the cast iron pipe experts and their robotic technology at USA Pipelining.

Dorron Blumberg explains how USA Pipelining, a family-owned business led by his father Leonard Blumberg, has revolutionized pipe restoration.

"During more than three decades of experience Master Plumber Leonard Blumberg has honed skills and ingenuity to create an ingenious, proprietary robotic technology which first cleans, then pinpoints trouble areas and, finally coats the interior of cast iron pipes, making them stronger than they were when first installed and impervious to future corrosion and cracks. And, all this without removing even one pipe from your building," he said.

How It Works

After a diagnostic review of the issue, USA Pipelining utilizes pipe cleaning robots to deliver a cost saving, mess



(l-r) Jordan and Leonard Blumberg

reducing, environmentally friendly, safe and long-term alternative to replacing pipes. This technique restores them to a stronger than original functioning with little to no downtime for an organization.

A three-step process first sends robots with expanding steel brushes to scour away years of harmful corrosion from inside pipes as narrow as 1.5 inches and up to 100 inches in diameter, navigating curves and straightaways while removing even the heaviest of deposits. When all the scales are cleared, an industrial blowback airhead vacuums out and contains debris.

Secondly, a robotic camera examines the interior and pinpoints troublesome spots which can cause leakage and rusting if not fixed before a third and final step of spray-

ing or pouring a non-toxic fast cure epoxy (polyaspartic aliphatic urethane base) along the interior of pipes.

This epoxy has superior chemical resistance, a harness shore D+80, and a compressive strength of 12,000 psa designed to resist abrasion, deter metal scale formation and corrosion and, provide a smooth finish to allow free flow of waste and toilet paper to alleviate drainage blockage.

The end result is a clean pipe airway and a stronger pipeline overall. After a final inspection of the entire project a 15-year warranty is provided on pipelining. All machinery, tools and equipment are made in the USA.

Experience and Expertise

While the company has worked on projects nationwide and is licensed in several states, they are particularly knowledgeable regarding the challenges that hot, humid climates and sandy soil present on chill, sewer, gas and drain lines and cooling tower systems. In Florida's hot temperatures, the fast-drying epoxy must be an exact precision application in order to achieve a smooth inner pipe lining.

"Experience counts in our company. Just like heart surgeons unclogging arteries, we have no time to stop and look up directions when we are in the final lining stages of our work," Blumberg emphasized.

The company counts residential and commercial clients including hospitals, schools, nursing homes, airports, and stadiums, among their satisfied customers.

Customer Satisfaction

Testimonials consistently point out the skills, professionalism and innovation of the company, but customers also appreciate the old-fashioned integrity and prompt personal service that this family-owned company exudes.

In addition to Leonard Blumberg's long term professional team, his youngest son Jordan is now a journeyman plumber learning the business while Dorron, the older son, supports the business with his marketing and administration skills.

If you are having nightmares about pending major plumbing projects with costly replacement of old, leaky pipes in a house or building, take a breath and check out the benefits USA Pipeliners can deliver to stop leaks and improve water flow, clear clogged pipes, revitalize crumbling cast iron piping, with little to no construction demolition at a major cost savings.

For information, visit www.usa-pipelining.com, call Leonard at (954) 914-9966, or email info@usa-pipelining.com.

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Michelle and Michael Hagerty Gift \$8.5 Million to Boca Regional's Keeping the Promise Capital Campaign

Boca Raton residents and philanthropists Michelle and Michael Hagerty have made their third seven-figure gift to Keeping the Promise ... The Campaign for Boca Raton Regional Hospital. Their latest, a \$5 million contribution in support of the residency programs, brings their total giving to Keeping the Promise to \$8.5 million. Their support is one of many other seven- and eight-figure donors to a campaign that has surpassed \$212 million raised.

"Michelle and Michael Hagerty are deeply embedded in our mission at Boca Raton Regional Hospital," said Lincoln Mendez, CEO of Boca Raton Regional Hospital. "When donors make repeated gifts to our capital campaign, it's clear they believe in our vision for the future. We are grateful for their role in the success of the campaign and their demonstration of faith in our campus initiative is irreplaceable."

Boca Regional serves as the primary teaching site for Florida Atlantic University's Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine offering residency programs in Internal Medicine, General Surgery and Neurology. The program plays a pivotal



Michael and Michelle Hagerty

role in the hospital's transformation to a tertiary academic medical center. Expansion plans include more than doubling the size of the space housing the existing programs providing a new learning center, conference room, computer lab, surgical simulation center, and much needed administrative and educational space for all three programs. This new space will help Boca Regional recruit and retain top medical school graduates for world class training in Boca Raton.

The latest gift from the family will be recognized in the naming of the Michelle

and Michael

Hagerty Center for Graduate Medical Education. Previously, the couple made a \$2.5 million gift with recognition at the Michelle and Michael Hagerty Courtyard on the northern tip of the new Gloria Drummond Patient Tower and other gifts totaling \$1 million to name the Michelle and Michael Hagerty Education Center at the Christine E. Lynn Women's Health & Wellness Institute.

Michelle Hagerty is a prominent philanthropist and strong advocate for children in the South Florida community. She has been involved with various organizations locally in addition to the hospital, including Place of Hope, Nicklaus Children's Hospital, and Florida Atlantic University, among others. Prior to moving to South Florida, Michelle worked in New York for her family business, White Rock Distilleries. Michelle and her husband, Michael, have two children and live in Boca Raton.

The \$250 million Keeping the Promise Campaign is the largest fund-raising initiative in Boca Regional's history and is supporting its most ambitious period of

growth and expansion. The campus redevelopment plans include at the centerpiece, the new Gloria Drummond Patient Tower where patients will be welcomed in the inviting new Louis B. and Anne W. Green Lobby with plans for retail, dining, meeting space, a sanctuary, outdoor courtyards, and other conveniences for visitors. The new tower features all new surgical suites and all private patient rooms exceeding the latest safety standards for patient care. In the current hospital building, all existing rooms will be converted to private in a comprehensive renovation of all patient units including maternity, oncology, and orthopedics. An expansion of the Marcus Neuroscience Institute is well underway with emphasis on neurovascular/stroke, central nervous system tumors, spine, and epilepsy/seizure disorders. The recently opened 972-car Schmidt Family Parking Facility will be connected to the Marcus Neuroscience Institute once the new tower construction is complete. Also underway is the new Toby and Leon Cooperman Medical Arts Pavilion with outpatient surgery, physician offices and adjacent parking.

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The Desai Sethi Family Foundation to Fund Creation of Urology Institute

In an effort to further position the University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine as a global leader in the field of urology, the Desai Sethi Family Foundation has made an extraordinary commitment of \$20 million to the Miller School's renowned Department of Urology. The Foundation's generosity will help establish a premier Urology Institute within the Miller School, which will accelerate breakthrough advances in research, expand clinical care, and train future generations of urologists.

The Desai Sethi Urology Institute, as it will be known, will attract the brightest minds and recruit the most talented physician-scientists dedicated to the study and treatment of urologic disorders, and fund innovative research in the field.

University of Miami President Julio Frenk, M.D., M.P.H., Ph.D., said, "The Desai Sethi Family Foundation's generosity propels the University into the upper echelon of institutes dedicated to the discovery and treatment of urologic disease – not just in South Florida, but worldwide. We are grateful for this commitment to the types of advances in health care that are only possible at an academic health system."

The Desai Sethi Family Foundation commitment is part of the University of Miami's recently announced Ever Brighter: The Campaign for our Next Century. The most ambitious in the University's

history, the campaign has already raised more than \$1.6 billion toward its \$2.5 billion goal.

The Miller School's Department of Urology has conducted research that has notably advanced the science of urology, publishing seminal work on the efficacy of robotic surgery, urologic cancers, men's health, endourology and male infertility, and in treating various urologic diseases.

The Institute's founding director will be Dipen J. Parekh, M.D., the chief operating officer at the University of Miami Health System, professor and chair of the Department of Urology at the Miller School, the Victor A. Politano, M.D. Endowed Chair in Urology, and one of the world's most experienced robotic surgeons in urologic oncology. In that role, he works closely with the NCI-designated Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center at the Miller School.

The Institute will be located in South Florida granting access to a multitude of patients from various backgrounds and cultures and will be an international destination for care. Institute researchers will be able to study health disparities in the treatment of both men and women with urological issues.

The new urology institute will be named and known as the Desai Sethi Urology Institute. The University of Miami will further honor the donor's generosity by naming the Professional Arts Center the Desai Sethi Medical Center.

Lee Health Announces Plans for New Hospital Campus in Fort Myers

The Lee Health Board of Directors approved plans to move forward in planning a new hospital campus in the City of Fort Myers. Tentatively known as Lee Health Colonial Campus, the property will sit on 52 acres of land along Challenger Blvd. between Colonial Blvd. and Winkler Ave.

The Board of Directors approved proceeding with issuing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for architectural services, construction management and commissioning authorities as a first step in developing the hospital campus. The RFQ process identifies well-qualified firms that wish to work with Lee Health to undertake this project.

The campus is anticipated to include an acute care hospital with 216 beds, 16 operating rooms, an emergency department with 30 emergency room bays, and a 16-bed observation unit. An observation unit allows a patient to stay in the hospital while their care team determines whether they need to be admitted or discharged. The campus will also house a complement of ancillary and social services and will include a Medical Office Building. Lee Health's data center will move to the new campus.

The permitting process for the new, state-of-the-art campus is expected to take about two years. After that portion of the project is complete, the build timeline is estimated to take an additional three years. The anticipated opening date of the campus is 2027.

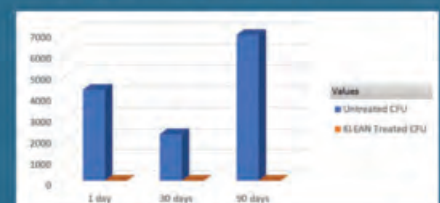
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Back Cover Story: Cannabis Education Begins in the Classroom

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communities today is not a trend, but rather a reality. Maturing students and young adults should be taught the facts about cannabis by educated educators in an effort to debunk the many myths of the past and present surrounding the stigma of its use.

In a secondary school setting, the topic can easily be introduced in health education courses. Many students possess a familiarity with cannabis albeit from their own personal knowledge and perception around their community. Active learning lessons regarding cannabis data, its history, use disorders, risks and benefits, and societal impact can serve as valuable teacher-student interactions. With the significant increase in virtual classrooms primarily as a result of the pandemic, teachers do not need to possess immediate knowledge of cannabis as other facilitators can be invited to speak to classes online.

In a non-health degree college or University setting, cannabis can be introduced in content areas that range from philosophy to business to agriculture to law and so much more. In a University-level healthcare curriculum, courses such as anatomy and physiology can introduce the endocannabinoid system, course like pathology or disease can address cannabis use with medical conditions, a course in pharmacology can discuss dosing and application, and courses in medical and legal ethics can review case studies and vignettes of how cannabis use varies around the country and the world based upon individual laws and public policy.

In particular, degree majors such as

Public Health, Medicine, Law, and others should more closely examine how to make current their curriculums and implement cannabis-based content to better prepare their graduates for future employment.

In fact, while already being done, Florida is ripe and should strongly consider with State Board of Governors Higher Education approval, a systematic approach toward the creation and granting of Bachelor level, graduate level, and certificate programs in Cannabis. Yes, a Bachelor of Science degree in Cannabis. Students can focus their interest in healthcare, business, agricultural, marketing, chemistry, and so many other areas. This would serve as a wonderful interdisciplinary degree that could meet the needs of tomorrow's workforce and fall in line nicely with the cannabis initiatives that the state has committed to.

There are many positive reasons why it is imperative that cannabis education be implemented in curriculums at secondary and post-secondary school levels throughout Florida. There are no good reasons not to.

Dr. Jeff G. Konin is a Clinical Professor in the Department of Athletic Training in the Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing and Health Sciences at Florida International University (FIU) where he directs the Global Initiative for Cannabinoid Research and Education. To learn more about FIU's cannabinoid research and education initiative you can visit their website at <https://go.fiu.edu/GlobalCannabis>. Views represented in this column do not reflect that of Florida International University and are solely attributed to Dr. Jeff G. Konin.



Trulieve Celebrates Opening of Bartow, Florida Location

Trulieve Cannabis Corp. announced the opening of a dispensary in Bartow, Florida. The Bartow location is Trulieve's 104th in the state. This dispensary joins the Company's 103 additional medical marijuana dispensaries across Florida, including those in nearby Winter Haven and Lakeland.

Trulieve Expands Patient Access to Medical Cannabis with Grand Opening of Inverness Dispensary

Trulieve Cannabis Corp. announced the opening of a dispensary in Inverness, Florida. This dispensary joins the Company's 107 additional medical marijuana dispensaries across Florida, including those in nearby Ocala, Crystal River and Gainesville.



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CANNABIS SPOTLIGHT

Chris "Sunshine" Williams President & Founder of Sunshine Cannabis

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

Legal access for MMJ patients in Florida after many decades of total Cannabis prohibition literally saves human lives now. I believe the actual number of lives saved to be in the thousands overall at many different levels. And I do mean lives actually saved, not just improved upon symptom wise.

From natural relief from severe depression and crippling anxiety or PTSD, to managing chronic pain or just giving people a safer natural alternative to harmful excessive drinking or addictive pharma pills, there is no doubt that we all have an extensive upside mentally and physically from this healing plant. To no longer be in constant fear of arrest for using the herb legally in the Sunshine State as medical patients is really a blessing and a huge step in the right direction for Florida. There is still work to be done and we really need legal homegrow here, but we are working on that diligently too!



Chris "Sunshine" Williams

What motivates you to be a part of the Cannabis Industry?

Well I am a healer with a passion for plants and I really enjoy helping people. It's who I am and always will be. It takes funding to be able to do good things and help others, or even just give out some cool swag to empower this movement and make someone smile and know they are part of something even bigger than themselves or any single person. This is a movement; Sunshine Cannabis is a movement, and we transcend being just another brand.

We are literally a family, and we love the Sunshine State. I do feel a powerful deep motivation to help bring full legalization and homegrow here to Florida and I feel it's my obligation to give back to my home state. I've had a lifelong relationship with Cannabis primarily as a breeder and grower who got started in the 90's in South Florida where I grew up. It is a dream come true to be operating legally in this space now after far too long in hiding and living in constant agonizing fear and anxiety. I'm eternally grateful to Kim Rivers, CEO of Trulieve, for helping us build the bridge that has enabled myself, my team, and my homegrown brand to do something truly great here and hopefully beyond Florida in the near future. A million thanks would not be enough, so I'll add an extra special one here. Thank you, Kim!

Chris "Sunshine" Williams has dedicated his life to advocacy and activism for Cannabis reform. As President/Founder of Sunshine Cannabis and a Director on the board of Regulate Florida, he works tirelessly to Free the Plant in the Sunshine State for all Floridians while also operating one of the largest and most popular Cannabis brands in Florida as a partner of Trulieve with dozens of branded MMJ products available in all Trulieve locations statewide.

PART II OF CHRIS' CANNABIS SPOTLIGHT
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The Importance of Employee Benefits Packages

Like many readers of *Cannabis News Florida*, I just returned from MJBizCon 2021. It was wonderful to be with the cannabis community again, spending time with old friends and meeting new people. It's been a long two years for all of us. The conversations I had with cannabis business owners around the country were about the struggle to hire and retain talented employees. The pandemic left many business owners overwhelmed, struggling to attract talent.

An important consideration for employees transitioning out of a pandemic is employee benefits packages. If your competition is offering a medical plan with a \$5,000 deductible and you're offering a \$1,500 deductible, your offer is more attractive. Additionally, we now have carriers that will provide disability



BY SUMMER WESTERBUR

Covid. Sometimes small improvements to an employee benefits package can make a difference.

For example, most dental policies offer a \$1,000 or \$2,000 annual benefit, but there are plans available with a \$5,000 annual benefit. Minor improvements to an employee benefits package can be the determining factor when an employee is

coverage to cannabis companies. This allows us to design a rich package including medical, dental, vision, disability, and more. Early in the pandemic, carriers were waiving hospital costs for Covid-related illness but that is no longer the case. Additionally, people are thinking about disability coverage now that they face the risk of disability caused by long

considering your employment offer. Rich benefits packages also help you retain these employees.

In April of this year, it was reported that 4 million American workers quit their jobs, representing 2.7% of the workforce. In August 2021, 2.9% of workers left their jobs, according to numbers from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Hiring employees will likely remain a challenge.

As the weight of the crisis lifts, experts are anticipating a long-term impact on people's mental health. For some people, feelings of anxiety and depression that emerged during the pandemic will resolve as routines resume — people go back to the office, social connections are reformed, the seeming danger of activities dissipates. Others will face mental health issues that persist or even appear down the road, a number that could be quite large given the magnitude of despair and disruption. This is the time

to consider adding an additional mental health benefit. Some plans offer a significant number of visits, whether Telehealth or office. For employers unable to offer health insurance, these can be offered as a group plan.

This is the time of year to think about the physical and mental health of your employees. Reach out if you have any questions.

Summer Westerbur, founder of Kairos Insurance Group, is experienced in all types of insurance including employee benefit packages, product liability, general liability, professional liability and building insurance. Kairos also has expanded to include a Cannabis Division to address the unique challenges facing the cannabis industry and its employees.

For more information, contact Summer@kairosinsurancegroup.com or call (719) 331-1832.

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