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Are Improving Patient  
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Dr. Canipe Helps  
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Best

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

Volume 19 • Issue 7 • \$5.00

January 2023

THE REGION'S MONTHLY NEWSPAPER FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS & PHYSICIANS

OUR 19TH YEAR SERVING THE HEALTHCARE COMMUNITY!

## 2023: A Look Ahead



Calvin Glidewell

## Healthcare 2023: The Only Constant Is Change

BY CALVIN GLIDEWELL

After a tough 2022 rife with pandemic-related challenges, provider burnout, cyberattacks, supply chain issues, disruptive competition, and regulatory upheaval, healthcare executives are scratching their heads and wondering what is around the corner. Unfortunately, the end of the tunnel is a bit cloudy and hard to see. Constant change is now part of the fabric of healthcare. If history is any indicator, we can expect even more change—more digital transformation, more labor challenges, more reimbursement pressures, and, potentially, a grimmer environment with a negative financial outlook. Let's take a look at some of the major trends, one at a time.

Healthcare financial pressures will remain. "Triple-demic" (COVID, flu, and

*Continued on page 8*

## Broward Health Celebrates 85 Years of Excellence

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

Broward Health is celebrating its 85th year of providing quality healthcare to the people it serves while supporting the needs of all physicians and employees.

The healthcare system, founded in 1938, has grown from a small hospital in downtown Fort Lauderdale to four hospitals and more than 30 locations throughout South Florida. This milestone anniversary is a testament to the commitment and dedication of Broward Health's staff and leadership, who strive to deliver high-quality patient care while advancing medical research and education.

"We've been essential to the community for 85 years," says Shane Strum, Broward Health's president and CEO. "Our first hospital opened about 20 years after Broward County was founded, and since then, we've grown alongside and evolved with the community to meet its health care needs."

### Providing world-class healthcare

Strum says the organization has remained committed to focusing on the needs of the people it serves.

"We're committed to building a healthier region," says Strum. "Our residents have built a bond with Broward Health over the years, whether they were born here, had a child who



Shane Strum

*Continued on page 26*

## FAU College of Nursing Researcher Aims to Improve Outcomes for Young Breast Cancer Survivors in South Florida

BY TARSHA JONES, PHD, MSN,  
PHNA-BC

A south Florida woman was just 36 when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She found a lump in her breast that became tender, so she went in for a visit with her physician, who confirmed that it was suspicious on examination. She had no family history of breast cancer or significant medical issues. The provider ordered a mammogram but nothing abnormal showed up. A biopsy was performed and she was diagnosed with hormone positive breast cancer. She initially underwent a lumpectomy and other treatments; however, she asked her doctor, "can you tell me that there is no cancer left anywhere?" the doctor told her "no" I cannot guarantee that. She also com-



Tarsha Jones

*Continued on page 24*

## Oncology



Dr. Rogerio C. Lilenbaum

## Anderson Family Cancer Institute Offering Next-Day Appointments, Cutting-Edge Treatments

BY VANESSA ORR

Getting a cancer diagnosis can be devastating, and it often leaves people with far more questions than answers. One of the most difficult things for patients to deal with at this time is not knowing where to turn and not being able to quickly get in touch with experts who can help guide them through the process.

"A diagnosis of cancer is a life-changing event; when patients receive the news, there is a tempest of emotions not only about their own future, but that of their families and loved ones," said Rogerio C. Lilenbaum, MD, FACP,

*Continued on page 23*



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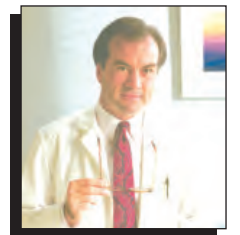


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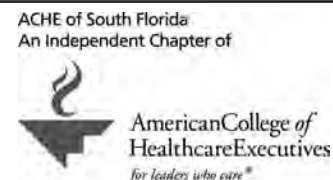
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## Let's Connect: ACHE of South Florida Spotlight



## ACHE of South Florida Member Spotlight: Incoming President Jenna Merlucci, FACHE

BY VANESSA ORR



Jenna Merlucci

As the incoming president of ACHE of South Florida, Jenna Merlucci, FACHE, director of business development and operations for the Cardiac and Vascular Institute at Memorial Healthcare System (MHS), is looking forward to connecting members with the organization, no matter where they may be in their careers.

"Our membership base is made up of 1000-plus people, and my goal is to ensure that they get the most out of ACHE, understanding that what is 'the most' for me may be different for somebody else," she said. "My hope is to continue giving all of our members what they deserve, which is a community for them to connect with."

During her tenure, Merlucci hopes to get more students involved, as well as encourage members down the fellowship path. She also plans to continue providing members with the high-level education and networking opportunities that make ACHE such an important resource for healthcare professionals at every stage of their careers.

For the past nine years, Merlucci has been in charge of business development, physician relations, finance and budgeting and overseeing the Echo, Cardiac Rehab and Data Registry departments at the MHS Cardiac and Vascular Institute, where she appreciates the opportunity to take care of patients and their families at some of the most difficult times in their lives.

She earned her undergraduate degree and her master's degree in Healthcare Administration at the University of Central Florida, where an internship at Arnold Palmer Children's Hospital piqued her interest in the field. Merlucci also interned at Memorial Healthcare System and was later hired, and it was here that she was introduced to ACHE of South Florida, which she joined in 2013.

"I immediately got involved in the organization, and I'm so glad that I did," she said. "I am excited to be part of an organization that aligns leadership and healthcare and to be with like-minded people in the community."

Merlucci joined the board as the treasurer-elect, and has served as treasurer, member-at-large and president elect. She is proud to now be president of ACHE of South Florida, and credits those who volunteer their time for making it such a worthwhile organization.

"We have a very robust chapter in South Florida, and none of that would happen without our board and volunteers," she said. "The really nice thing about ACHE of South Florida is that while so many of us are involved in different organizations and may even be competitors, when the ACHE hat goes on, it all comes down to the greater good of the community."

Merlucci is counting on this teamwork as her presidency kicks off in January, when she is due to have her second baby. "I'm looking for a very collaborative year," she said of her management style. "I like to let people do what they think is best and work together to reach a common goal."

She is encouraging members to participate at all levels, whether that means coming to an event, joining a committee or volunteering their time. "I want people to get whatever they want out of it," she said. "Whether that means going to one more event than they attended the prior year, or serving on a panel, or getting actively involved, I am happy with however they choose to participate."

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## Let's Get Digital: Being Authentic in the Internet Age

We all know that word of mouth is the ultimate form of advertising. What you might not know is that this is a powerful public relations technique, one of many ways to get your medical practice, hospital or surgery center's name out to your target demographic. This is known as earned media, and its authenticity is what makes it so incredibly effective.



BY DONALD SILVER

These days, word of mouth has transitioned into the digital sphere. In 2022, word of mouth presents itself in all sorts of ways. Comments on a LinkedIn thread regarding your latest innovative procedure, a TikTok video by a patient in the hospital that goes viral, or an Instagram post about a successful surgery have the potential to raise your profile.

To get coveted earned media, you absolutely must embrace the internet. Your social media pages present an opportunity to become your powerful, and free! advertising machine. Let me be clear. Social media messaging is not just for Gen Z. If used properly, it can be a big revenue producer for you. So, what are you waiting for?

To answer my own hypothetical question, I know that getting started can often be the hardest part when it comes to adopting new ways of doing things. I'm going to give you some tough love and tell you my favorite mantra that I tell myself and my employees all the time: JUST DO IT! Start a profile and start posting. Even if you don't have lots of engagement, keep posting! Maybe set a regular cadence of how often you post.

Follow friends and contacts in the medical industry locally and nationally. Research the hashtags that garner engagement and start using them yourself. A lot of this is a numbers game. Make the odds be in your favor. Highlight your practice's great work, your impact in the community, and soon enough, your word-of-mouth chain will catch on with your contacts

and your sphere of influence will grow. Do your best to keep it casual! If you are being your authentic self and doing well - it will show in your posts.

It's not enough to simply post on your own profiles; you need to get out into the online community and engage with others' posts. Liking and commenting in the social media sphere will increase your reach and may even bring you more of your own followers. People will be more eager to reciprocate on your pages if you have been interacting with theirs.

If you're feeling overwhelmed by this, there's no shame in asking for some help! Public relations firms have strong social media pros who literally do this for a living. Seasoned professionals like my publicists will kickstart and work with you to successfully interact with others online.

Let's embrace our new world of digital PR. If we harness these opportunities, new business will come.

*Don Silver is COO of BoardroomPR, a top-10 statewide digital public relations agency. He can be reached at [donsil@boardroompr.com](mailto:donsil@boardroompr.com).*

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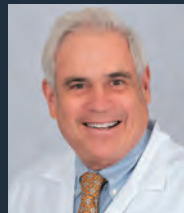
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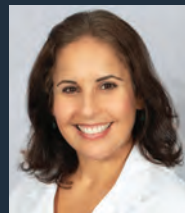
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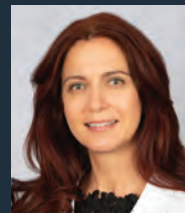
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# Cover Story: Healthcare 2023: The Only Constant Is Change

Continued from previous page

RSV) issues are driving healthcare costs and threatening hospital capacity. In addition, many patients who delayed care during the pandemic have exacerbated their chronic conditions and may further drive up costs and stretch resources.

To add insult to injury, the federal government is increasingly saying that it will end the public health emergency early next year. This will have a double-whammy effect: (1) drying up the Provider Relief Fund it had provided for safety net hospitals and federally qualified clinics during the pandemic and (2) no longer requiring Medicaid plans keep patients enrolled. HHS estimates that as many as 15 million Medicaid and CHIP beneficiaries will lose coverage when the public health emergency does end, likely adding to providers' uninsured burden.<sup>1</sup> Hospitals and other providers are already facing an unprecedented healthcare worker shortage and are having to dramatically increase wages to retain talent. And with high inflation fueling steep increases in supply and equipment costs, the financial picture for healthcare in general is not very rosy. The American Hospital Association has stated that more than half of all hospitals are operating at a loss, and bankruptcy filings by hospitals are expected to increase by more than 30%.<sup>2,3</sup>

Interestingly, though, not all providers seem to be experiencing the same pandemic-related effects. Not-for-profit hospitals may need to learn some lessons from their investor-owned counterparts. Hospital operators HCA, Tenet and CHS, with their enhanced purchasing power, labor pools, solid supply chains, and generally lower uninsured rates, have all reported operating margins which exceed pre-pandemic (pre-2019) levels.<sup>4</sup>

Healthcare is becoming more retail-oriented. The American healthcare consumer is becoming more impatient and more demanding, and some of the largest retailers in America are responding. Retail clinics provide near-immediate access to care for many Americans, and major chains such as CVS, Walgreens, and Walmart now routinely offer retail healthcare clinics for their customers. These blue-chip companies are savvy competitors which often offer superior and more timely care at a lower cost than what could be accessed at a hospital emergency department or urgent care center. Consumer interest in preventive healthcare (for example, immu-

nizations), wellness, and early intervention to treat basic illness have stimulated demand for retail services; in fact, some retail providers are now even including behavioral health treatments in their portfolio of services. The compound annual growth rate of retail clinics is anticipated to be over 10% over the next several years. Pharmacy chains and grocery stores will increase their retail presence, and the number of independent operators and hospital-owned clinics will undoubtedly grow as well.<sup>5</sup>

The digital transformation of healthcare will continue. Healthcare has finally come of age—the digital age, that is. The pandemic jumpstarted digitally-enabled care, particularly in telemedicine and virtual health delivery; in fact, digital health investment nearly doubled in 2021 from the prior year. Although we saw a slight decline to about \$15 billion in 2022, the level of investment is expected to continue at about \$15 to \$25 billion annually over the next several years.

Computer-aided artificial intelligence, asynchronous telemedicine, remote patient monitoring, digital therapeutics, and use of augmented reality in chronic pain treatment are just a few of the digital opportunities in healthcare. And that's just on the treatment side of things.

On the administrative side, simplifying digital access and patient self-scheduling, optimizing patient portals, and using AI to assist in nurse staffing and scheduling as well as to triage patients to the right venue of care, are just a few of the applications which will inevitably grow in the healthcare field.<sup>6,7</sup>

Non-traditional Merger and Acquisition (M&A) activity will be the norm, and industry competition will increase. 2022 was an especially tumultuous year in Healthcare M&A. The pace of change was dizzying. Consider Amazon's \$3.9 billion acquisition of primary care group One Medical; CVS's acquisition of home health company Signify Health; Cano Health's decision to go public in a \$4.4 billion merger with special purpose acquisition company (SPAC) Jaws Acquisition Corp; Walgreen's diversification by acquiring Summit Health (\$9 billion), CareCentrix (\$330 million), and Village MD (\$5.2 billion); Humana's \$5.7 billion acquisition of Kindred at Home and its \$1.2 billion joint venture with private equity firm Welsh, Carson, Anderson & Stowe to grow its Conviva and CenterWell primary care

lines of business; and United Health Care/Optum's \$5.4 billion acquisition of LHC Group, a home care company. Although 2023 may not see the same level and scope of M&A activity as last year, the days when "horizontal integration," or hospital-to-hospital mergers as the predominant type of integration activity are long gone. Instead, primary care has become the hot new commodity, and hospitals are now competing with health plans, drug store chains, national big tech firms, and private equity groups for this critical access point to the healthcare delivery system. But it's not just primary care groups which serve as acquisition targets; other digital care companies and pre- and post-acute members of the delivery system will either be acquired or enter into provider and payer partnerships. Primary care may hold the golden key to the healthcare delivery system, but control of healthcare costs and the ability to divert patients to a lower cost setting are also important and will drive more integration and disruption in 2023.

Federal healthcare policy change will be incremental at best. Perhaps the fuzziest and most obscure piece of the healthcare outlook for 2023 is the regulatory/legislative agenda. One of the federal government's major priorities—control of inflation—is not per se a healthcare issue at all, but will nonetheless have a tremendous impact on healthcare.

As the Fed increases interest rates, the fallout effect will be that the labor market will continue to tighten, consumer spending for healthcare will be cautious, and medical debt will increase. In addition, the 2023 Congress and the Executive Branch are responding to greater consumer criticism and mistrust of the healthcare industry, which will lead to greater scrutiny of healthcare pricing transparency compliance, more hearings on Medicare Advantage billing practices and payment denials, and heightened interest in healthcare M&A activity.<sup>8</sup>

There was substantial movement on several healthcare issues last year; at the federal level, Congress passed major legislation related to price transparency, surprise billing, and prior authorizations. Next year, however, a divided Congress almost guarantees more gridlock on issues like abortion, healthcare costs and access, despite the fact that politicians have taken note that the Supreme Court's Dobbs v. Jackson Health Organization abortion decision was a fundamental factor in the midterm elections.

There does seem to be some bipartisan agreement on a few issues: the importance of telehealth in improving access to healthcare (particularly for underserved or vulnerable populations), the imperative to protect health data privacy, the interest in providing greater interoperability of health data, and the criticality of keeping healthcare affordable.

Even if bipartisan minds can't prevail in Congress, it is likely that court decisions and White House executive orders rather than substantive legislation will drive incremental changes in healthcare.<sup>9</sup>

Local and statewide jockeying among providers and payers will continue. In Florida, both providers and payers will see more changes in 2023. The local market is already seeing the effect of the legislature's decision a few years ago to eliminate the Certificate of Need (CON) requirement for new healthcare facilities. CON repeal has

spawned more competition (and, in at least a few cases, more collaboration) in the South Florida market. In Palm Beach County, new acute care hospitals are planned by Universal Health Services (150 beds in the Alton district of Palm Beach Gardens) and by Jupiter Medical Center in partnership with the University of Florida (a "neighborhood" hospital with emergency and ancillary services in Health Park at Avenir). A 24-bed orthopedic specialty hospital is planned by Legent Health in partnership with Texas-based Physicians Surgical Network in Delray Beach. A new LTAC/rehabilitation hospital is planned by Vibra Healthcare in Boynton Beach and another rehabilitation hospital by Encompass Health in Palm Beach Gardens. In Broward County, both Baptist Health South Florida and a Broward Health/Memorial Healthcare partnership are pursuing separate acute care hospitals in Sunrise. Within the last year, Miami-Dade County has already seen the opening of the 100-bed Jackson West Medical Center and a 15-bed Baptist Health Hospital, both in Doral.

Another significant development for 2023, this time on the payer side of the industry, is that the State of Florida, through its Agency for Healthcare Administration, will be issuing a Request for Proposals to managed care plans who want to provide care to the state's 4.24 million Medicaid beneficiaries. The 6-year, \$100 billion dollar initiative will likely result in geographic-specific awards to several health plans.<sup>10</sup> It will undoubtedly stimulate interest among dozens of payers and, likely, will also result in several challenges by those who are not selected for participation.

Even though the healthcare crystal ball is a bit murky, the South Florida regional healthcare providers and payers have always shown remarkable resiliency as well as dogged determination to succeed and provide excellent care to their community. And although the national, state, and local healthcare environments are sure to change, I don't anticipate that the dedication, perseverance, and pursuit of excellence by South Florida's healthcare players will. Any way you look at it, it should be a very interesting year.

*Calvin Glidewell is President of inspirEx Healthcare Strategies.*

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## Consistency and Communication Key for Employer Liability Post-pandemic

BY VANESSA ORR

A lot has changed post-pandemic, and this includes employer liability issues as the work dynamic has shifted from employees being in the office to working remotely. In every industry, including healthcare, turnover is up and people are choosing not to return to the physical workplace.

"In medical practices especially, whether at large hospitals or in solo doctor's practices, many employees aren't comfortable coming back," said Tom Murphy, senior vice president/ National Health Care Practice Danna-Gracey | Risk Strategies Company. "Unfortunately, not everyone can work remotely. While the clerical staff may be able to work from home, the medical staff provides hands-on care."

This preference for remote working has created a shift in the power dynamic, which is making it difficult for employers to hire and retain employees.

"For years, employers would tell potential employees what was expected, but now the younger generation goes into interviews pretty much demanding what they want of the workplace," said



Tom Murphy

Murphy. "Employees now have the choices."

As a result of the Great Resignation, many people left jobs and are now looking to do something new. And while they are going back into the workforce, which is keeping unemployment low, employers are finding that they

need to be a lot more flexible to entice these prospective employees. Larger employers especially, like hospitals and large medical practices, are working to accommodate workers by offering a hybrid model where employees have more flexibility to do things during the day (like taking time off for doctors' appointment or childcare).

"While some national employers are requiring people to come back to the office, they still need to make exceptions for people with physical and mental disabilities, including some issues that have occurred with people who have long COVID," said Murphy, adding that issues with this population are on the increase.

While those in a number of industries can telecommute, medical providers who

need hands-on help are finding that even while they can require people to return to the office, they still need to be more accommodating, whether that means paying more to employees with a higher risk of exposure, or providing more flexible scheduling.

"When you're talking about employer liability, having a more remote workforce also makes employee training and time-keeping more challenging," said Murphy. "While companies may have provided in-person training or new employee onboarding multiple times a year in the past, a lot of this is now done on Zoom or conference calls, so it's extremely important to provide a consistent message across the workforce, using the same information and documentation."

He adds that over the past five years, practices have also seen an increase in federal regulations, which means that Human Resource departments have to be far more diligent with remote employees to ensure that not only are employees working when they are supposed to be, but also that they are being compensated if they are using personal equipment for their jobs like cell phones and home Wi-Fi.

While sexual harassment complaints have decreased with remote working, it can still be an issue with Zoom calls and

direct messaging when employees say or do things that are inappropriate. Employers are also seeing an increase in employees speaking up about social issues and free speech, wearing clothes or symbols in support of organizations that they support.

"This can be an issue for offices that have dress codes or that try to stay apolitical," said Murphy. "You can tell employees that they can't wear these things in the office, but it's harder to tell them not to wear them at home. It's a fine line, and companies need to work with their HR departments to deliver a consistent message."

While there are trade-offs—for example, remote employees have fewer workers' compensation claims—businesses need to place a priority on consistency and communication to make sure that all employees, whether in the office or not, are clear on company policy.

"This new workforce dynamic, including telecommuting and telemedicine, is here to stay," said Murphy. "Consistency and communication are key to making it work."

For more information, call  
Tom Murphy at (800) 966-2120 or  
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## When It Comes to Patient Care, Link Everything

Recently, I was asked to participate in a webinar hosted by the Beryl Institute, an organization committed to transforming the human experience in healthcare. The topic they gave me was an interesting one. How can hospitals and other providers link important safety items like infection prevention to key business drivers like staff engagement and patient care? The fact is, this is not only possible, forward-thinking leaders know it should be encouraged at every level. Health systems on the leading edge of enhancing the human experience, realize that the path to success is by aligning what's most important and then communicating it so that the team understands the connection.



BY JAY JUFFRE

For example, take something as mundane as ensuring cubical curtains are replaced and sanitized as needed (and immediately after an isolation case). Something like this would normally involve IP fighting with EVS who is fighting with admissions to get the room prepared quickly. It's exhausting. But when you look to educate everyone on what the infection preventionists know, 42% of all cubical curtains tested in the U.S. tested positive for VRE and 22% with MSRA, the why really starts to come into focus. Changing those curtains suddenly becomes about the patient who is going to be around them all day, their family and loved ones who are going to visit, and the staff who will touch those panels constantly throughout the day. Linking the mundane (but important) to human experience is the key to success in 2023. Get creative. Look for ways to link everything to important metrics like revenue, patient care, staff retention. It is amazing when doing one thing can simultaneously drive other items. Too often initiatives get siloed into one department or isolated because we do not take the time to either understand or communicate how they are inter-related. Get the team focused on linking everything and make 2023 your best year yet!

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

## Physician Frustration Grows with Federal Reimbursement Policy

It's a festive season in America and physicians are once again waiting with baited breath to see if our nation's leaders will serve up another plate of disrespect as we head into 2023. Physicians are facing cuts in Medicare reimbursement of 8% in 2023. That is not an inflation adjusted reduction in reimbursement. That is 8% on top of our raging inflation. Only Congress can step in at this point and "save" physicians with the elimination of these devastating cuts. As I write this article it is uncertain if Congress will act to prevent a portion or all of the cuts.



BY RAFAEL FERNANDEZ, JR., MD

While most of my colleagues may disagree, as an individual physician I hope that Congress does not act and lets the full weight of these cuts be realized. That may seem somewhat hyperbolic, but I would rather have the intent of our elected officials illustrated clearly in a single action, or lack thereof, rather than dragging out a decade's long dance of small annual cuts that leads to the same effect.

This is not a new phenomenon for my colleagues and me. In fact, this is a 20+ year old recurring nightmare. The core component of Medicare reimbursement is the conversion factor. That is the most significant weight applied to all procedures to calculate how much that procedure is ultimately worth. The conversion factor for physicians in 1998 was \$36.6873. The conversion factor going into effect in 2023 is \$33.0607. That is almost a 10% reduction in non-inflation adjusted value of physician services over the past 25 years.

When you consider inflation, the true magnitude of this reimbursement policy is revealed. According to the CPI Inflation Calculator, "the dollar had an average inflation rate of 2.54% per year between 1998 and today, producing a cumulative price increase of 82.64%.

This means that today's prices are 1.83 times as high as average prices since 1998, according to the Bureau of Labor

Statistics consumer price index. A dollar today only buys 54.754% of what it could buy back then."

Physicians are the only component of the Medicare program that does not have inflationary adjustments each year. As physicians we wonder how this discriminatory practice is allowed to continue.

We often look to other countries to compare and contrast health care deliv-

ery systems. The National Health System in the United Kingdom is currently being brought to its knees due to strikes over nursing and ambulance service funding. According to The Health Foundation, the average annual basic pay for nurses in the UK has gone down 5% in inflationary adjusted value since 2011. Can you imagine the outrage if those reductions were over 80% like those being felt by physicians in the U.S.?

Regardless of whether Congress acts or not, it is unlikely physicians will walk out on Medicare, but they are already running away from private practice, seeking shelter from these cuts in the form of employment by health systems and Corporate America. This penny wise and pound foolish approach has already done irreparable harm to health care delivery in this nation.

At the end of the day, while the devaluation of physician services alters physician practice patterns and behavior, it is the Medicare Beneficiaries who feel the real impact of this policy at the point of care. More of their doctors are now employees. They see mid-level providers most of the time. Physician visits are 5 minutes or less. And wait times to see specialists grow longer. Real reform is needed for physician reimbursement in Medicare. Not a last second stop gap measure that just delays the inevitable.

Dr. Rafael Fernandez, Jr. is President, Dade County Medical Association.

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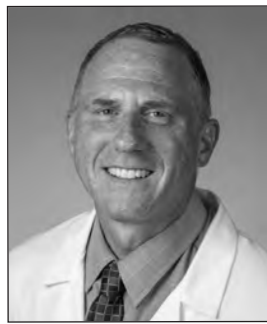


## Orthopaedic Surgeon and Orthopaedic Oncologist, Jason S. Weisstein, MD, MPH, FACS, Joins Cleveland Clinic Martin Health

The Orthopaedic & Rheumatologic Center at Cleveland Clinic Martin Health is pleased to welcome board-certified orthopaedic surgeon, Jason Scott Weisstein, MD, MPH, FACS.

Upon earning his medical degree at Mount Sinai School of Medicine and a Masters of Public Health at Columbia University in New York, Dr. Weisstein completed the General Surgery Internship and Orthopaedic Surgery Residency Programs at the University of California at San Francisco. He then completed fellowship training in Adult and Pediatric Orthopedic Oncology and Complex Joint Reconstruction at the University of Washington College of Medicine in Seattle.

Prior to joining Cleveland Clinic Martin Health, Dr. Weisstein held the position of staff surgeon with St. Francis Medical Center and UC Health in Colorado.



**Dr. Jason Scott Weisstein**

## Ranjith Ramasamy, MD, of Desai Sethi Urology Institute Receives American Urological Association's Gold Cystoscope Award

The 2022 American Urological Association Gold Cystoscope Award has been awarded to Ranjith Ramasamy, M.D., associate professor and director of the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine Reproductive Urology Program and urologist within the Desai Sethi Urology Institute. Dr. Ramasamy has earned the honor for his commitment to education and mentorship.

Gold Cystoscope Awards are presented annually to a urologist who has made distinguished contributions to the profession while being within ten years of completing their residency. Dr. Ramasamy is the second urologist from the Miller School to receive the honor after Dipen J. Parekh, M.D., founding director of the Desai Sethi Urology Institute and chair of urology at the Miller School, received the award in 2013.

Dr. Ramasamy is constantly involved in new research and learning opportunities as he has led various studies regarding the COVID-19 vaccine and how it does not impact male fertility, along with 391 PubMed-indexed lifetime publications thus far.

As it impacts clinical care, Dr. Ramasamy received an RO1 grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to treat erectile dysfunction. In addition, he has multiple ongoing and completed clinical trials investigating new treatments for testosterone deficiency, erectile dysfunction, and Peyronie's disease.



**Dr. Ranjith Ramasamy**

## Holy Cross Health Adds Internist

Jason Ceavers, M.D., has joined Holy Cross Health.

Specializing in internal medicine, Dr. Ceavers provided care for the LGBTQ community at the Holy Cross Health Wilton Manors office during his residency at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine at Holy Cross Health. Dr. Ceavers' goal is to continue to give back to underserved communities by engaging in community outreach and creating a safe place for his patients to receive the appropriate care, regardless of social situation, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Dr. Ceavers earned his medical degree from the Florida International University Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine and a ACMS post-baccalaureate certificate from Temple University. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Florida International University, where he also completed research at the Benjamin Leon Family Center for Geriatric Research & Education.



**Dr. Jason Ceavers**

## Lee Health Welcomes Four Neurosurgeons to Lee Physician Group

Lee Health's Lee Physician Group welcomes the addition of four new neurosurgeons into its medical practice.

Through the purchase of Southwest Florida Neurosurgical and Rehab Associates, Gary Correnti, M.D., Wesley Faunce III, M.D., Donald Moyer, M.D., and Douglas Savage, M.D. are now part of Lee Physician Group's innovative and expert neurosurgery team.

Lee Health's neurosurgeons work to prevent, diagnose and treat disorders that affect any portion of the nervous system, including the brain, spinal column, spinal cord, peripheral nerves and the cerebrovascular system.



**Dr. Gary Correnti**



**Dr. Wesley Faunce III**



**Dr. Donald Moyer**



**Dr. Douglas Savage**

## Ob/Gyn Dr. Dawn George Joins MOMZ Medical Practice

BY HILDA S. MITRANI

MOMZ Ob/Gyn is pleased to welcome obstetrician/ gynecologist Dawn George, M.D., to its new Homestead office beginning January 2023.

In addition to providing prenatal and well-woman care, Dr. George diagnoses and treats a wide variety of common health conditions including fibroids, polyps, vaginal infections, STDs, ectopic pregnancy, endometrial biopsy, pregnancy-related emergencies, fetal heart rate and miscarriage, and delivers babies. Dr. George performs both open and robotic surgery.

"We're delighted to launch our MOMZ team with Dr. George," said Wayne Brackin, CEO and president of KIDZ Medical, the parent company of MOMZ. "Dr. George's patients will have more and better access to care."

In addition to a Board certification in obstetrics and gynecology, Dr. George is Board-certified in obesity medicine. She joins Darren Salinger, M.D., in providing much-needed care to women in the south Miami-Dade community.

Dr. George received a Bachelor's degree in Biology from Wayne State University, a Master's degree in Biomedical Sciences from Barry University, and then returned to Wayne State University's School of Medicine for her medical degree. Her post-graduate work was completed at the University of South Carolina/Richland Palmetto Hospital and University of Toledo Health Science.

The MOMZ office is relocating to 925 NE 30 Terrace, Suite 100, Homestead, FL 33033. The phone number is (786) 404-6612 and the fax number is (786) 404-6613.

MOMZ is the obstetrical/gynecological branch of KIDZ Medical Services (KIDZ), a physician-owned healthcare network founded in 1988 that offers neonatal, pediatric and obstetrical/gynecological care throughout South Florida. KIDZ specialists provide care in dozens of hospitals and private offices in seven counties in South Florida.



**Dr. Dawn George**



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

## HCA East Florida Division Welcomes Richard Read as the New Division Chief Financial Officer

HCA East Florida Division is pleased to announce that Richard Read has accepted the Division Chief Financial Officer position. Read joins the Division office from HCA Florida Kendall Hospital in Miami, where he served as the Chief Financial Officer for the 447-bed facility and two free-standing emergency rooms for the past two and a half years.

Read, a 20-year healthcare veteran, successfully led his team at Kendall through five COVID waves while simultaneously navigating the opening of a new patient tower and service line expansions. In his new role, he will lead the financial operations and reporting for the Division's 14 hospitals, seven free-standing emergency rooms, ten surgery centers, and 59 urgent care centers across South Florida.

Read began his career as a staff accountant with Greenview Regional Hospital in Bowling Green, Kentucky. He earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from Western Kentucky University and is a former certified public accountant.



**Richard Read**

## Dana Begley Appointed as Lee Health's Vice President of Wellness and Recovery

With extensive experience providing strategic guidance and operational management for health care organizations, Dana Begley has been selected to serve as Lee Health's new vice president of wellness and recovery. She is a health care leader in acute and post-acute care.

Begley comes to Lee Health from LifePoint Health in Brentwood, TN, where she previously served as the vice president of post-acute operations, vice president of service line operations and development and most recently, as a quality clinical operations consultant.

Begley earned her Bachelor of Arts from Dickinson College and her Master of Health Care Administration from the University of Pittsburgh.



**Dana Begley**

## Holy Cross Health Welcomes New Mission Leader

Holy Cross Health in Fort Lauderdale has named Mary Carter Warren, D.Min., as the new Mission Leader responsible for the non-profit hospital's Mission Integration Essential Services (Ethics, Formation, Mission Leadership, Spiritual Care, and Well-Being of the Ministry Community) and for Mission Integration Fort Lauderdale Community of Service.

In her new role, Carter Warren will also serve as a member of the Holy Cross executive leadership team, collaborate with Sr. Xiomara Mendez-Hernandez, interim manager of spiritual care, and lead the Fort Lauderdale Community of Service Coordinating Council.

Carter Warren earned a bachelor's degree in music and vocal performance from University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, a master's degree in pastoral ministries at St. Thomas University and a doctorate in ministry at Barry University. She was founding director of the Center for Peace and Justice at St. Thomas University, serving on the faculty and working there for more than 25 years. Carter Warren also was an adjunct faculty member at University of Dallas, Loyola University New Orleans and Loyola University Chicago.

Carter Warren was most recently assistant director for the Office of Peace, Justice and Integrity of Creation with the Atlantic Midwest Province of the School Sisters of Notre Dame.



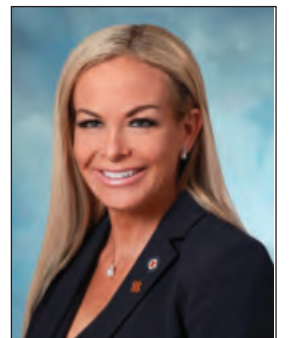
**Mary Carter Warren**

## HCA Florida Woodmont Hospital Names Caren Bock as Chief Nursing Officer

HCA Florida Woodmont Hospital announces the appointment of Caren Bock, MBA, MSN, RN, LSSBB as Chief Nursing Officer.

With 18 years of healthcare experience, Bock served most recently as the interim Chief Nursing Officer at HCA Florida Northwest Hospital where she was a key driver in employee engagement and patient experience. She has also served as the Director of Children's Services at HCA Florida Palms West Hospital.

Bock is a graduate of the HCA Executive Development Program and the Assistant Chief Nursing Officer Capstone Program. She is also a certified Lean Six Sigma Black Belt and belongs to the American College of Healthcare Executives and the Florida Organization of Nurse Executives.



**Caren Bock**

## Cheri Cartwright Appointed as Lee Health's Vice President of Surgical Services

With extensive experience serving in past surgical services roles, Cheri Cartwright, R.N., has been selected to serve as Lee Health's new vice president of surgical services. Cartwright comes to Lee Health from Mercy Health System in Fort Smith, AR, where she served as chief nursing officer. Prior to her role with Mercy Health, she was the vice president of surgical services for Duke LifePoint Haywood Regional Medical Center in Haywood, NC. She was also previously the director of ambulatory surgical services for Mission Health in Asheville, NC.



**Cheri Cartwright**

## Carlos Correcha-Price to Head UHealth and Miller School of Medicine Marketing and Communications

Carlos Correcha-Price, a senior professional with more than 18 years' experience in strategic communications and marketing, has joined UHealth – University of Miami Health System and the Miller School of Medicine as chief marketing and communications officer.

Correcha-Price comes to the University of Miami from the health tech industry, having served as chief marketing and communications officer for eMed Digital Healthcare.

Prior to eMed, Correcha-Price held senior leadership positions at two of the world's top marketing communications firms, where he was responsible for strategic communications, public affairs, crisis management, image, and reputation for a wide portfolio of health care, consumer, technology, logistics, and entertainment brands.

Correcha-Price earned an undergraduate degree in liberal arts at the University of Central Florida. He began his career at Edelman, where he worked for 16 years, serving in various leadership roles in Miami, Washington, D.C., São Paulo, Brazil, and Bogotá, Colombia.



**Carlos Correcha-Price**

## Jennifer Shoemaker, RN, Delray Medical Center's "Success Story," Named Chief Nursing Officer

Jennifer Shoemaker, R.N., has been named Chief Nursing Officer of Delray Medical Center, culminating a remarkable 15-year journey from nursing student to the highest nursing leadership position at the hospital.

Shoemaker began her career at Delray Medical Center in 2007 as a nurse extern in the medical telemetry unit, where she worked to gain practical experience of the nursing profession while still a college student. After graduating from Palm Beach State College, she was promoted to Charge Nurse, and then to Clinical Manager, and ultimately to Director.

In 2017, she was named Administrative Director of the hospital's medical-surgical service line. She was promoted to Associate Chief Nursing Officer in 2020.



**Jennifer Shoemaker**

**E-mail Your Editorial Submissions to [editorial@southfloridahospitalnews.com](mailto:editorial@southfloridahospitalnews.com)**



## Around the Region... Around the

### Clinical Psychologist Maria Gertz Named to Children's Diagnostic & Treatment Center Board of Directors

Clinical psychologist Maria E. Gertz, Psy.D., has been named to the Children's Diagnostic & Treatment Center (CDTC) board of directors.

A clinical psychologist in private practice, Gertz has extensive experience in private, academic, medical and governmental settings handling psychological assessments, risk assessment and crisis intervention. She formerly served as a U.S. Department of Justice staff psychologist for the federal Bureau of Prisons, where she specialized in suicide prevention. Prior to that, she was a psychological specialist for the Florida Department of Corrections and worked with Miami-Dade County-based youth programs on behavior management and treatment planning.

Gertz is a member of the CDTC "Transformers," a group of dedicated, like-minded business professionals who give back and transform the lives of children with special needs and has actively supported CDTC for more than a decade. She has also been an active member of the Charity Guild of Fort Lauderdale since 2014.

A Florida Supreme Court-certified family law mediator, Gertz earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from University of Florida and a Master of Science and Doctor of Clinical Psychology with distinction from Albizu University in Miami, which is known for its pioneering programs to ensure diversity in psychology, particularly in the Hispanic community. She also graduated from the William Alanson White Institute's Intensive Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy program.



Maria E. Gertz

### Tampa General Hospital Senior Director of Data Analytics is Nationally Recognized as a Rising Star

Tampa General Hospital (TGH) Senior Director of Data Analytics, Etter Hoang, is being nationally recognized for his groundbreaking work to advance the application of health care data analytics. Becker's Hospital Review, a digital and print publication, has named Hoang to its 2022 list of Rising Stars: 104 Healthcare Leaders to Know.

Hoang oversees the Tampa General Enterprise Analytics team as well as leads the development of enterprise vision and strategy for analytics as part of Tampa General's Data Council and Executive Analytics Steering Committee. Under Hoang's leadership, his team supports data architecture and governance, analytics education, a center of excellence, and an emerging bioinformatics and clinical research team. Hoang and his team ensure data is available and usable by Tampa General and its clinical teams, and that it drives prescriptive strategies and wisdom to inform data-driven decisions.

"Etter's leadership style and big-picture visionary approach to data analysis has allowed our Enterprise Analytics team to make data-driven decisions that enhance patient care, optimize operational efficiency, and provide strategic recommendations to our senior leadership team," said Tampa General Executive Vice President and Chief Information Officer, Scott Arnold. "Etter and his team have implemented data processes that bring quantitative findings to the right people at the right time and inform better care coordination decisions for our clinical teams across Tampa General."

Hoang's leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic is especially notable. At the start of the pandemic, he and his team quickly pivoted to exploring novel approaches for leveraging data and artificial intelligence to work together as a community and ensure Tampa General had the right health care resources to best manage its patient population. Among the transformative COVID data analytics projects Hoang championed:

- Developed real-time data feeds from Tampa General's electronic medical record (EMR) for hospital leadership to track COVID-19 cases and keep clinical teams informed while allowing for appropriate strategies to be developed in advance for managing patient volumes.
- Advanced a data-sharing platform in partnership with 52 Tampa Bay area hospitals and providers to help monitor COVID-19 outbreaks, and hospital and medical supply capacities. The novel data platform led to interoperability – the ability of computer systems or software to exchange and make use of information – and the distribution and sharing of resources as needed.
- Collaborated with IBM Watson to create a forecasting model to predict regional COVID-19 surges and regional strategies for managing surges.
- Sequenced patients to determine prevalent COVID-19 variants. This supported situational awareness for assessing patient volumes and hospital capacity.



Etter Hoang



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# Oncology... Oncology... Oncology... Oncology...

## JUPITER MEDICAL CENTER

### **John A.P. Rimmer, MD, FACS, FRCS, FRCSEd, FICS**

Medical Director of Comprehensive Breast Care Program

Board-certified, extensively trained and internationally practiced in oncoplastic surgery, Dr. John Rimmer serves as Medical Director of the Comprehensive Breast Care program at Jupiter Medical Center.

Dr. Rimmer is Board Certified in General Surgery and completed his residency at Stanford University Medical Center. Dr. Rimmer completed his education at King's College Hospital Medical School in London, England, with eight years of surgical training and has been practicing medicine since 1996. Dr. Rimmer is a Fellow of the International College of Surgeons, American College of Surgeons, Royal College of Surgeons- England, Royal College of Surgeons- Edinburgh, Scotland; as well as a member of the American Society of Breast Surgeons, and a past member of the Royal Society of Medicine and the American Society of General Surgeons.



### **Rogerio C. Lilenbaum, MD, FACP, FASCO**

Senior Vice President and Chief Physician Executive; Director of The Anderson Family Cancer Institute

Dr. Lilenbaum was Professor of Medicine at Yale School of Medicine and served as Chief Medical Officer at the Yale Cancer Center, where he developed and provided oversight of clinical programs, operations, network development and integration. Prior to joining Jupiter Medical Center, he served as the Director of the MD Anderson Cancer Center at Banner Health, leading over 140 physicians at 10 sites. Previously, he also served as Chief Medical Integration Officer at Yale New Haven Health where he developed integrated care models, which led to standardization and optimization of clinical care and patient experience across the delivery network. Dr. Lilenbaum, an experienced research scientist, will spearhead the relationship with UF Health relating to clinical programs, research and graduate medical education. He earned a Masters Degree in Clinical Investigation from Harvard and completed a research fellowship at University of California San Diego Medical Center.



## MEMORIAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

### **Mark Block, MD**

Ongoing collaborations between lung cancer specialists in thoracic surgery, radiology, oncology, radiation therapy, and pathology are a big part of what Dr. Mark Block believes lead to the best possible outcomes for patients.

"Our teams leverage the latest technology to provide patients efficient and accurate evaluations so that we can get patients started on the best available treatment as soon as possible," said Block, chief of Memorial Healthcare System's Division of Thoracic Surgery. "We use the Monarch™ Platform, to cite just one example, enabling us to perform robotic-assisted bronchoscopies simultaneously with endobronchial ultrasound to perform diagnosis and staging in one step, saving patients precious time."

Dr. Block cites the Incidental Lung Nodule program as another instance of effective collaboration. This program alerts the lung cancer team to any abnormal spot in the lung that is found on a scan that was ordered by a physician looking for something else. These spots can be an early-stage lung cancer and acting on them right away can save lives.

Moffitt Malignant Hematology and Cellular Therapy at Memorial Hospital West



### **Hugo Fernandez, MD**

More than a year after introducing CART-T cell therapy, and with 20 procedures done to date, Dr. Hugo Fernandez is proud to say that immunotherapy is working as his team had hoped.

"Several of our CAR-T recipients are in complete remission at over a year out," said Fernandez, chair and medical director of Moffitt Malignant Hematology and Cellular Therapy at Memorial Hospital West. "Our outcomes in cell therapy are above the national median and we're making progressive improvement, including learning to mitigate side effects."

CAR-T genetically alters T-cells harvested from a cancer patient's blood to produce proteins called chimeric antigen receptors (CARs). The cells are reintroduced through a blood transfusion, with the protein then attaching to cancer cells and killing them. It's a more targeted approach than chemotherapy, which kills healthy cells as well as cancerous ones and affects the entire body.

Another targeted therapy showing great promise in the treatment of lymphoma focuses on bispecific T-cell engagers (BiTEs). Fernandez says Moffitt/Memorial is participating in research trials for this approach, which activates cytotoxic activity in the T-cells that kills cancer cells.



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# Taking Cancer Care to the Next Level»

Now under construction, the new **Memorial Cancer Institute** on the Memorial Hospital West campus will offer outpatient cancer treatment with the latest technology and expanded services. In one location patients can access radiation oncology, infusion, breast oncology, Moffitt Malignant Hematology and Cellular Therapy, and a full range of other services that help patients feel better at every step. This is what **Growing Stronger Together** means to Memorial.

Our relentless commitment to advancing cancer care and treatment also means:

- » Earning Cancer Center of Excellence designation, one of only five in Florida, for our research partnership with Florida Atlantic University.
- » Combining FAU research and Memorial clinical expertise to provide our patients with more access to clinical trials and advanced therapies.



**Memorial is moving health forward by taking cancer care to the next level.**



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## Florida's Destination for Complete Cancer Care

*Cleveland Clinic is home to Florida's cancer care team, delivering world class care*

After a century of caring for patients, including more than three decades in Florida, Cleveland Clinic knows what matters most to patients facing a cancer diagnosis. Patients want to have access to high quality, comprehensive cancer services close to home.

Cleveland Clinic's five-hospital regional health system spanning southeast Florida is part of a global, physician-led organization that provides outstanding patient care guided by a "Patients First" philosophy. The nonprofit, multispecialty, academic medical center integrates clinical and hospital care with research and education.

### Commitment to industry standards

Cleveland Clinic's three cancer centers in Florida include the Maroon Cancer Center at Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital, the Robert and Carol Weissman Cancer Center at Cleveland Clinic Martin Health, and the Scully-



BY ZEINA NAHLEH,  
MD, FACP

Welsh Cancer Center at Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital. They work together to ensure patients receive the care they need, including access to leading treatment options and clinical trials.

The Florida-based cancer care team also harnesses the full resources of the Cleveland Clinic enterprise, including collaboration with the Taussig Cancer Institute in Cleveland, Ohio, which is

one of the top cancer centers in the country and part of the NCI-designated Case Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Each Florida cancer center has independently earned recognition for providing quality cancer care, including accreditation by the American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer® and designation as Radiation Oncology Accredited Facilities by the American College of Radiology.

### Advanced cancer treatments

Cleveland Clinic's multidisciplinary

team of cancer specialists in Florida work together to address malignancies in virtually every part of the body using evidenced-based modalities and the latest research. They treat most forms of solid tumor and blood cancers, including:

- Breast cancer
- Lung cancer
- Prostate cancer
- Colorectal cancer
- GI cancer
- Gynecologic cancer
- Head and neck cancer
- Leukemia and lymphoma

### Collaboration across specialties

Teams of specialists conduct weekly cancer conferences to review and discuss cases and develop personalized treatment plans that may include:

- Expert surgical care with access to minimally invasive and robot-assisted approaches
- Chemotherapy or immunotherapy treatments delivered in infusion suites focused on patient safety and comfort
- Advanced radiation therapies using state-of-the-art technology, including intensity modulated radiation therapy and intraoperative radiation therapy

• Participation in clinical trials and cancer research under the direction of leading physician scientists

### Research-driven, personalized breast cancer care

The introduction of targeted precision therapy and immunotherapy has led to a new era of tailored breast cancer therapies that considers a patient's genetic makeup; tumor composition at the detailed biological level; medical history; and response to therapy. Many drugs have been developed in the last decade that target specific types of breast cancer, including Hormone Receptor positive, HER2-positive or triple negative breast cancer with several subtypes within each group.

Cleveland Clinic is contributing to this new era of personalized medicine by focusing on several clinical trials for breast cancer, including expanding the use of immunotherapy. Florida-based researchers are participating in ongoing studies of novel drugs designed to interrupt cancer cell growth, and identify less intensive and toxic treatment options in early stages of specific types of cancer and certain metastatic breast cancers.

*Continued on following page*



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## Sylvester Receives Approval to Build World-Class Myeloma Research Institute

Continued from previous page

### Patient navigation services

Cleveland Clinic Florida has a team of 18 specially trained patient navigators who streamline care team communication and provide patients with step-by-step guidance. They enhance the patient experience and the delivery of cancer care by increasing cancer treatment adherence, reducing care delays, promoting education and lifestyle changes, and providing emotional and psychosocial support throughout a patient's cancer journey.

As a leading cancer care team serving South Florida and the Treasure Coast, Cleveland Clinic Florida provides patients the compassionate, comprehensive care they deserve close to home. And that makes all the difference.

To learn more about cancer services, visit [ClevelandClinicFlorida.org/Cancer](http://ClevelandClinicFlorida.org/Cancer) or call (877) 463-2010 to schedule an appointment.

Dr. Zeina Nahleh is Regional Institute Chair for Cancer at Cleveland Clinic Florida and Center Director of the Maroone Cancer Center

Two years ago, when C. Ola Landgren, M.D., Ph.D., joined Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine to lead the myeloma program, he told Sylvester's Director Stephen D. Nimer, M.D., that his goal was to establish a "top three" U.S. myeloma program within five years.

With three years to go, Dr. Landgren is on track toward his goal with the announcement of the new, dedicated Myeloma Research Institute within Sylvester, for which he serves as the director.

"We recruited Dr. Landgren, a world leader in myeloma research, for his vision and expertise. He and his colleagues are working collaboratively on developing prevention methods, much-needed therapies, and cures for multiple myeloma," said Dr. Nimer, who is also the executive dean for research at the Miller School.

Dr. Landgren previously served as chief of myeloma service at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York, and prior to that as chief of the myeloma program at the National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland. Francesco Maura, M.D., co-leader of the Myeloma Genomic Lab at Sylvester, is associate director of computational oncology research, and Dickran Kazandjian, M.D., professor of medicine at the Miller School, is associate director of clinical trials research at the new institute.

"The Myeloma Research Institute within Sylvester is a necessary next step to dedicate and provide the resources and



Dr. C. Ola Landgren

infrastructure necessary to support a strategically unified team of experts in Miami," Dr. Nimer said. "This institute leverages Drs. Landgren, Maura, and Kazandjian's strengths and fulfills a promise of providing the best cancer care to myeloma patients at Sylvester."

The Myeloma Research Institute's launch follows many important accomplishments by Dr. Landgren and his team, including the publication of several high-impact papers. Sylvester myeloma researchers have authored eight abstracts accepted for oral presentations at this year's annual American Society of Hematology meeting. They have also been invited to open Phase 1 and Phase 2 clinical trials for promising

new drugs, with Sylvester being one of only four or five centers in the U.S. selected to participate, according to Dr. Landgren.

"We are leading development of blood-based tracking for residual disease," Dr. Landgren said. "Earlier this year we launched the TRANSFORMM study, with the idea to try to transform the field for earlier detection of people who are going to develop the disease."

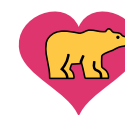
The research team has validated its findings with peer-reviewed publications, and has secured both philanthropic funding through a grant from the Tow Foundation and federal funding via the NIH.

"We currently have more than 10 early-phase drug trials open, and will open another 10 trials in the next 12 to 18 months. There has been an explosion of innovative science and early drug development in multiple myeloma at Sylvester," Dr. Landgren said.

## Providing hope through world-class care



At Nicklaus Children's Cancer and Blood Disorders Institute, we understand the unique physical, emotional and psychological needs of critically ill children. Our team works tirelessly throughout your child's journey to offer compassionate and comprehensive care. We place research at the core of our program for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer and blood disorders, including brain tumors, leukemia and sarcoma. When it comes to your child's care, Nicklaus Children's is where your child matters most.



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[nicklauschildrens.org/Cancer](http://nicklauschildrens.org/Cancer)





On January 2, 1938, Broward General Hospital opened in a humble, converted apartment building in downtown Fort Lauderdale that accommodated 45 patients. Over the next eight decades that tiny hospital evolved into a nationally recognized, integrated healthcare system comprised of more than 30 locations across Broward County. As we celebrate our 85th anniversary, take a step back in time to remember some of the key moments that have shaped Broward Health's history.

1960s



**1961:** North Broward Hospital admitted its first patient in March. The hospital had only three floors when it opened its doors. Three years later, four additional floors were added.

1970s



**1972:** Imperial Point Medical Center opened as a 204-bed community hospital on 22 acres of land in Fort Lauderdale. It is now called Broward Health Imperial Point.

1980s



**1987:** Coral Springs Medical Center, now known as Broward Health Coral Springs, opened to meet the healthcare needs of western Broward County's expanding population. The hospital's first baby was born a few days later.

1990s



**1996:** Chris Evert Children's Hospital opened, which offered a full-service pediatric hospital within Broward General.





More advanced facilities. More impactful innovations.  
A lot has changed since 1938, but one thing never will – our dedication to providing the highest quality care for the people who call South Florida home.

#### OUR TIMELINE BY THE DECADES

1930s



**1938:** On January 2, Broward General Hospital opened in Fort Lauderdale after being converted from the 16-unit Granada Apartments to serve the county's population of 25,000. It is now called Broward Health Medical Center.

1940s



**1941:** A group of local women volunteers founded the Broward General Hospital Auxiliary. The organization went on to fund major capital improvement projects, including heart surgery equipment.

1950s



**1958:** Responding to the county's exponential population growth, the hospital district broke ground on North Broward Hospital on November 25. The Deerfield Beach hospital is known today as Broward Health North.

2000s



**2005:** A \$150 million atrium expansion added 485,000 square feet to Broward General, providing space for ORs, a new ER and critical care areas.

2010s



**2018:** The South Tower expansion at Broward Health Coral Springs opened with all private suites for labor & delivery, mother/baby, a NICU and surgical patients. The expansion increased bed capacity from 196 to 250.

2020s



**2021:** The system erected a vaccination site at Inter Miami CF Stadium and gave more than 110,000 COVID-19 vaccinations to employees, medical staff and the community.

Learn more at [BrowardHealth.org/85](https://www.browardhealth.org/85)



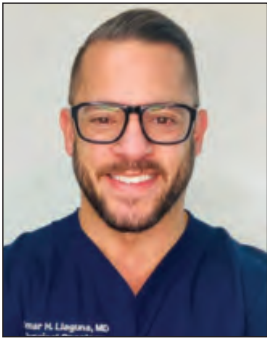


## Robotic Whipple Procedure: A Game-Changing Innovation for Pancreatic Cancer Patients

Patients with pancreatic cancer have few options. While surgery to remove the disease can provide some of the best outcomes, only a few patients are surgical candidates. The national five-year survival rate is 11% and, without surgical intervention, the cure rate is zero.

Within this small subset of patients is an even smaller group who qualify for a “pancreaticoduodenectomy” or Whipple procedure. One of the most complex surgeries, it involves removing the head of the pancreas, the duodenum, a portion of the bile duct, the gallbladder, and associated lymph nodes. The liver, small intestine, and stomach all need to be reconnected with hair-like sutures in soft tissue, all while being bathed in digestive enzymes that can eat away at the area being connected.

Despite the challenging setup and complexity, it’s critically important that we continue to perform the Whipple procedure, since it’s often the patient’s best chance for long-term survival. And, like any surgery, if it can be done in a minimal-



BY OMAR LLAGUNA,  
MD

ly invasive way, patients lose less blood, endure less pain, and recover quicker than with a traditional, open procedure.

### By the Numbers

There were less than 18,000 Whipple procedures completed from 2004-2017 in the U.S., according to the National Cancer Database. Of those, only 12% were minimally invasive (done laparoscopically or with robotic technology), with less than 400 robot-assisted procedures in the total. A high-volume surgical center might see 10-20 Whipple-appropriate cases in a year.

Memorial Healthcare System is one of the few hospital systems in Florida performing the Whipple surgery robotically.

In addition to the minimally invasive approach being better for the patient, robotic surgery offers considerable advantages to surgeons trained in the technology. While seated at a computer console near the operating table, we control a robotic arm with a camera attached that provides a high-definition, magnified, 3D view of the area being worked on. With three other arms holding robotically-controlled surgical instruments and the

improved visuals, we’re able to perform the maneuvers required to complete the Whipple procedure more precisely. Interestingly, even in cases where the patient’s cancer and anatomy require a conversion to open surgery, some of the benefits of the robotic approach remain, including an increased number of lymph nodes that can be obtained.

### Choosing to Adapt

Despite its advantages, there hasn’t been a widespread adoption of robotic surgery as the standard of minimally invasive surgical care for pancreatic cancer. It takes a changed mindset to pivot from the more commonly-performed open approach, especially given the few candidates that qualify for the Whipple procedure, the special training required to operate robotically, and the steep learning curve associated with a surgery as delicate as this one. My own comfort performing the procedure was aided by connecting with others that have successfully completed it, observing their surgeries, and working in simulated situations on non-human subjects.

None of this is meant to minimize the value of open surgery, which is still very much required, given that not all patients are candidates for a robotic approach.

However, when clinically indicated, Memorial believes the benefits to the patient of the robot-assisted Whipple procedure makes it a better option moving forward. We’ve had success combining the newer technology with preoperative chemotherapy regimens and an overall approach that focuses on whole person care. This includes not only the clinical approaches to fighting the disease, but also tactics that address the physical, mental, and emotional aspects of an individual and family’s battle against cancer. All of this enhances recovery time and leads to better outcomes.

As importantly, the robotic Whipple procedure provides pancreatic cancer patients hope while battling a disease most often viewed as a death sentence. If for no other reason, that makes it a worthwhile undertaking.

Dr. Omar Llaguna is a surgical oncologist with Memorial Healthcare System who treats patients with gastrointestinal cancers (including of the pancreas, gallbladder, liver, appendix, etc.), melanoma, soft tissue sarcomas, and peritoneal malignancies. He also assists with the system’s surgical oncology curriculum, is an active researcher, and assistant professor of surgery at Florida International University’s Wertheim College of Medicine.

## Honoring the Patient Experience With Empathy

VITAS chaplains offer comforting support to patients with advanced illness

A part of the hospice interdisciplinary team, VITAS chaplains listen to patients to understand what they need and want. With specialized training in handling spiritual uncertainty caused by advanced illness, chaplains can provide pastoral care and serve as an open ear regardless of faith background.

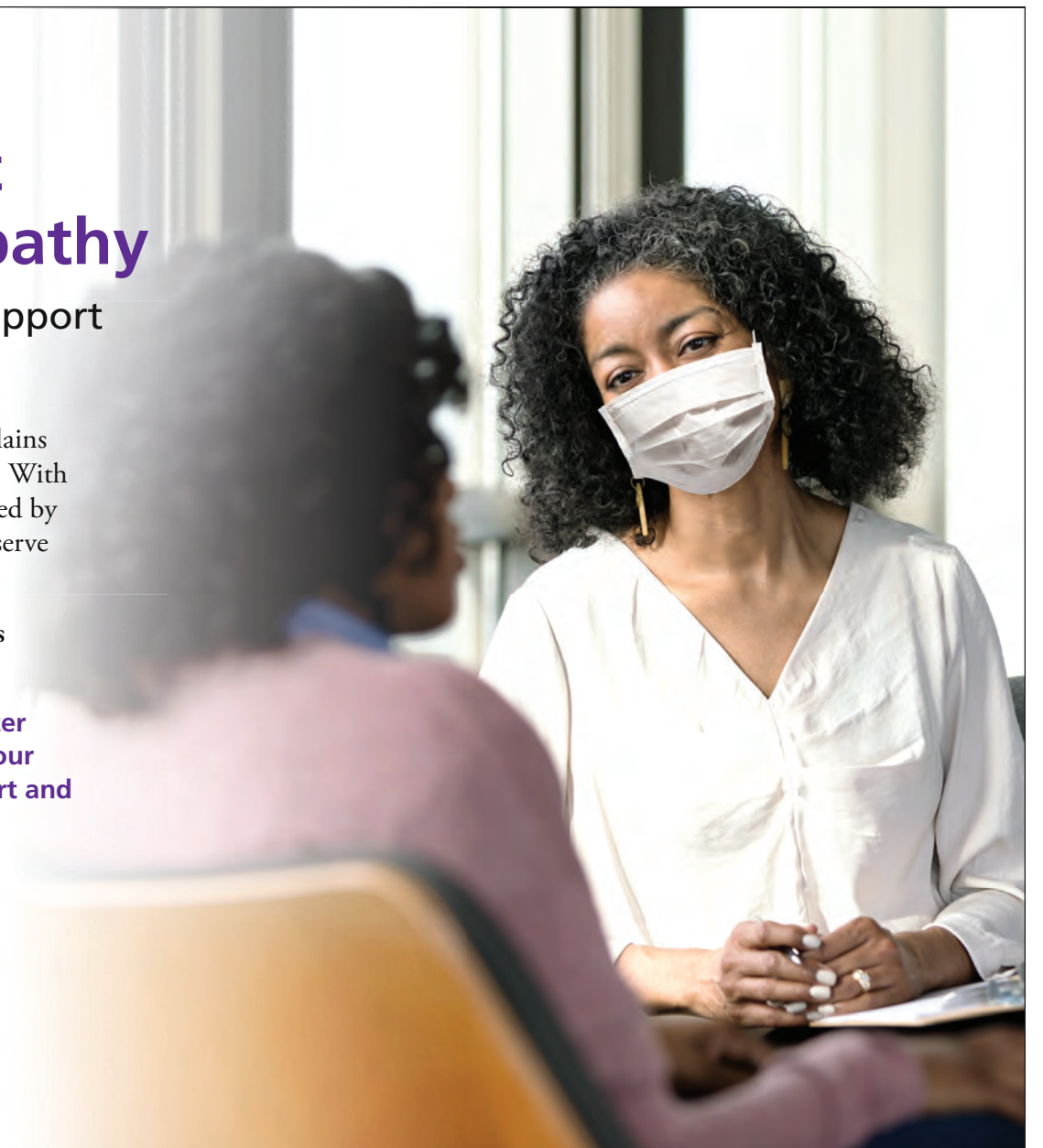
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# Continued Advances in Cancer Care Offer More Reasons for Hope

Cancer care has made great strides in recent years, as exciting breakthroughs have transformed outcomes for many patients. Looking ahead to 2023 and beyond, continued advances in our ability to diagnosis and treat many different types of cancer can give us even more reasons to be hopeful.

Immunotherapies have begun to have an enormous impact on the treatment of lung cancer, colorectal cancer, triple negative breast cancer and melanoma, and are now being studied for virtually every type of cancer. We can anticipate expanding and individualizing treatment with these approaches and seeing the development of other breakthrough treatments for prostate, pancreatic, gynecologic and other cancers.

At Lynn Cancer Institute in Boca Raton, FL, patients requiring radiation oncology treatment will soon have access to Palm Beach County's first MRI linear accelerator, an amazing technology that uses magnetic resonance imaging to precisely focus the radiation beam on the tumor while sparing healthy surrounding tissue. It also gives radiation oncologists unparalleled flexibility to make real-time adjustments during treatment, as a patient's organs – and thus the tumor's position – can shift with normal respiration.

One of the areas of medical science that continues to have impressive advances is genetic testing. We're now starting to see the introduction of breakthrough medications and treatments that are greatly expanding the utility of cancer genetic testing.

In conjunction with the Morgan Pressel Center for Cancer Genetics, Lynn Cancer Institute is launching a cancer genetic screening program at Lynn Women's Health and Wellness Institute. All women who undergo mammograms at the Institute will be offered genetic screening and testing, when indicated, so that they will know if they or their family members may be more susceptible to certain other types of cancers.

### Expanding access to clinical trials and new therapies

Cancer experts know that early detection and diagnosis leads to better outcomes. As a comprehensive cancer center, part of Lynn Cancer Institute's mission is to ensure that everyone in South Florida – especially those in at-risk and underserved populations – has timely and convenient access to cancer screenings, testing, diagnosis and treatment.

With our colleagues to the south at Miami Cancer Institute, we're working to expand access to these and other resources for underserved populations across the region. We're identifying barriers to cancer care within these populations and partnering with local organiza-



BY LOUISE MORRELL, MD

tions to connect people with providers and resources.

Clinical research – testing the efficacy of novel therapies – ensures that the latest advances in cancer research are being made available to patients as early as possible. Now that Lynn Cancer Institute is part of Baptist Health Cancer Care, cancer patients in Palm Beach County have expanded access to

groundbreaking clinical trials and potentially life-saving therapies.

### The power and promise of Baptist Health Cancer Care

With both Lynn Cancer Institute and Miami Cancer Institute under the umbrella of Baptist Health Cancer Care, we have an extraordinary opportunity to advance cancer care in South Florida even further.

Baptist Health Cancer Care brings together the experience, skills, passion and commitment of more than 150 oncology specialists across the region, the most advanced cancer-fighting technology available anywhere and the high-quality, compassionate care that Baptist Health is known for.

From Miami to Plantation to Boca Raton, the region's top cancer experts are leading research initiatives that are being made available to patients throughout the region. They're reviewing and updating treatment standards, and they're learning from each other and bringing their unique perspectives to all aspects of cancer care.

### Multidisciplinary care

Advances are occurring in all cancer specialties – radiation oncology; surgery; medical therapies such as immunological therapies; chemotherapy; genetics; interventional radiology; screening and diagnosis, and pathology.

Close collaboration of these specialists in planning a patient's treatment is absolutely key. At Lynn Cancer Institute, we employ a multidisciplinary approach that ensures the patient has access to fully coordinated care and all of the latest medical advances. We also consider the individual patient and the impact of treatment on their life, family and emotional wellbeing.

There are so many therapies and technologies available now that are revolutionizing the diagnosis and treatment of cancer, and it's certainly an exciting time to be working in the field. We're proud to be at the forefront, and to be able to offer comprehensive cancer care to people throughout South Florida.

*Dr. Louise E. Morrell is medical director of Lynn Cancer Institute which, along with Miami Cancer Institute, is part of Baptist Health Cancer Care.*



## You've done your research. We have too.

When you're faced with cancer, it's important to know all your options. Cleveland Clinic Florida is not only a leader in cancer care – we're also a leader in cancer research.

At the Florida Research and Innovation Center, local, national and international partners come together to expand critical research at Cleveland Clinic's world-renowned Lerner Research Institute and the health system's five Florida hospitals. This important hub furthers Cleveland Clinic's powerful mission of transformative research where scientists and clinical experts collaborate to accelerate discoveries into cures.

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## Innovations in Cancer Diagnosis and Treatment Are Improving Patient Outcomes

In 2020, we predicted that delayed cancer screenings due to COVID-19 were a ticking time bomb with a 10-year fuse. We now have evidence to confirm that this ticking time bomb is starting to slowly explode, as we see more and more patients presenting with later-stage disease.

At Baptist Health Miami Cancer Institute, in collaboration with Florida International University's Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine, we looked at approximately 1,200 patients before and an equal number after the COVID-19 time period. In two areas in particular – breast cancer and colorectal cancer – we saw that patients were presenting with more advanced disease after the pandemic. We saw a 12 to 13 percent rise in the number of colorectal cancer patients presenting with stage 4 or more advanced disease, and a similar increase in the number of breast cancer patients presenting with stage 2 disease.

What accounts for these increases? During the pandemic there were virtually no screening colonoscopies, and there was also a dramatic decrease in the number of mammograms. Without those screenings, we're not going to catch patients early before their cancer has had a chance to spread.

### Minimizing racial disparities in cancer care

As part of our ongoing effort to address disparities in both cancer care and clinical trial enrollment, Miami Cancer Institute recently launched the Center for Equity in Cancer Care & Research. Funded through the generous support of donors in our community, the Center allows us to tackle the social determinants of health both on the research side and on the care side.

Nationwide, of the hundreds of thousands of patients treated at cancer centers every year, only about six percent are invited to participate in clinical trials. Clinical trials are notoriously expensive and difficult to successfully run, which is why we're directing much of the philanthropic funding received by Miami Cancer Institute to broaden the clinical trials we're leading or participating in. It's a crucial part of cancer care delivery.



BY MICHAEL ZINNER,  
MD

### Trends and predictions for 2023

As another year comes to a close, what are we excited about at Miami Cancer Institute, and what can we expect for cancer care in the year to come? Here are a few highlights:

- Detecting cancer through blood tests: There are four major areas of cancer screenings currently available – colonoscopy for colorectal cancer, mammograms for breast cancer, PSA tests for prostate cancer and low-dose CT scans for lung cancer (in patients who have a history of smoking). A new screening area on the near horizon is the liquid biopsy test for patients who have had no symptoms or history of cancer. With this new diagnostic tool, which has been in development and testing for more than a decade but is only now beginning to be used more widely, we could potentially detect cancer through something as non-invasive as a blood sample.

Liquid biopsies are not yet FDA-approved so the cost isn't covered by insurance, but we know that the test is accurate and very good at detecting stage 3-4 disease. The question now is how sensitive it is for detecting stage 1-2 disease. I believe liquid biopsies will become more common as we accumulate more data and the tests improve. Our goal is to be able to eventually use liquid biopsies to detect all types of cancer.

- Starting cancer screenings even earlier: We are continuing to revise cancer screening guidelines to apply a personalized approach. For example, 10 years ago, the screening guideline for colorectal cancer was age 50 but if you had a family history, the recommendation was to start at age 40. Over the past decade, however, we've noticed that younger and younger patients are presenting with colon cancer – some as early as their late 20s and early 30s. So the recommended age to begin screenings has moved from age 50 to 45.

We're seeing the same thing happen with breast cancer, which is affecting an increasing number of younger women, even in their 20s. As a result, screening guidelines have now moved from age 50 to 40. My guess is that we'll continue to see those guidelines move even earlier until we can better understand why these cancers are showing up earlier in life.

- Leveraging the body's own defense system to treat cancer: We're continuing to

*Continued on following page*

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Continued from previous page

discover and provide new treatments for cancer care. If we look historically at how we treated cancer for most of the 20th century and the early part of the 21st century, our only options were limited to surgery to remove the tumor, radiation to burn it or chemotherapy to poison it. But then, roughly 25 years ago, we began to see the rise of targeted therapies. By that, I mean we figured out that certain cancers have certain mechanisms that can be targeted with a specific drug, with few if any side effects.

Targeted therapy eventually became personalized cancer care and spurred the next great development in cancer care, immunotherapy, which allows us to turn the body's own immune system on the tumor. It's been in development for nearly 50 years and we're just beginning to realize its promise to improve patient outcomes. Cellular therapy is a type of immunotherapy used primarily to treat blood cancers like multiple myeloma, lymphoma and leukemia, as well as other liquid tumors. Now, we're beginning to see immunotherapy and cellular therapy used to treat solid tumors like breast cancer, pancreas cancer and colon cancer. We're not quite there yet but we're moving in that direction.

- Declining cancer death rates: If we look at the treatment of neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's over the past 10 years, there have been only one or two FDA-approved drugs that have made it to market. On the other hand, in cancer treatment, we've seen the FDA approve 10 to 15 drugs a year. We're definitely improving the way we treat cancer, which is why cancer death rates are going down.

- New technologies on the horizon: A new paradigm-shifting technology in the field of cancer care is CRISPR, which is gene editing, essentially. With CRISPR, we can remove part of a broken gene and insert a new gene to fix the gene that's causing the tumor. It's still highly experimental but it could very well represent the future of cancer care.

As part of Baptist Health Cancer Care, Miami Cancer Institute is at the forefront of these and many other innovations. We're learning more and more about cancer every day, and we're getting better and better at developing highly targeted and effective therapies that offer improved outcomes for patients. I hope you share the collective sense of optimism and excitement we have at Miami Cancer Institute for what the future holds for cancer diagnosis, treatment and prevention.

*Dr. Michael Zinner is CEO and executive medical director for Miami Cancer Institute and Baptist Health Cancer Care, part of Baptist Health South Florida.*

## Beating Stage IV Lung Cancer with Broward Health

### "You Don't Have to Fight Alone"

In July 2021, Katrena Rockeymore rushed herself to Broward Health Imperial Point thinking she was having a heart attack. "I felt so much heaviness in my chest, it was like an elephant was sitting on me," Rockeymore said.

Richard Delgado, D.O., an emergency medicine physician at Broward Health Imperial Point, was part of the multidisciplinary team that rapidly assessed Rockeymore and within minutes ran a series of clinical tests, including a CAT scan, which identified Rockeymore had fluid in three-fourths of her lungs.

"If Katrena would have waited one more day, she wouldn't have made it with the amount of fluid she had in her lungs," said Dr. Delgado.

Rockeymore had a procedure to drain the fluid in her lungs and a nurse immediately noticed something was wrong. During a test of her fluid, the medical team discovered that Rockeymore had stage 4 lung cancer.

Additional tests to determine if the lung cancer had spread revealed it had indeed metastasized to her brain.

Despite her complications, Rockeymore remained positive. "I'm a very spiritual person," she said. "I told myself I'm going to fight until the end. I knew God had different alternatives for me."

Rockeymore had an aggressive treatment plan, which included chemotherapy and radiation at Broward Health North. Mehmet F. Hepgur, M.D., a hematologist-oncologist with the Broward Health Physician Group, oversaw Rockeymore's treatment for her lung cancer and brain metastases and recommended targeted therapy for five years.

"Broward Health helped me beat cancer in two parts of my body simultaneously," Rockeymore said. "You don't have to fight alone. Broward Health is there for you." Rockeymore's cancer is in remission, however, she takes medication to prevent the cancer from returning.



**Katrena Rockeymore**

## Cover Story: Anderson Family Cancer Institute Offering Next-Day Appointments, Cutting-Edge Treatments

Continued from page 1

FASCO, senior vice president and chief physician executive at Jupiter Medical Center and director of the Anderson Family Cancer Institute (AFCI).

Believing that patients ought to be able to reach a cancer expert as soon as possible to understand the nature of the disease and what options are available, the AFCI has established next-day appointments for those who are newly diagnosed with the disease.

"Traditionally, the first consultation usually takes place when the doctor has most of the information they need, the majority of studies have been completed, and they are ready to sit down and provide the patient with a personalized treatment plan," said Dr. Lilenbaum. "And while there is great value in doing that, the process can take up to two weeks if not longer.

"Next-day appointments have been shown to alleviate anxiety and suffering on the part of patients and families just by having the opportunity to discuss aspects of the disease, including staging procedures and treatment options," he added.

While this fundamental change in how oncologists approach the first patient

consultation will help to assuage many patients' concerns, operationally, it required a substantial internal shift in how the Anderson Family Cancer Institute operates. "It required a change in how we answer calls; how we process next-day requests; how we obtain information and how we engage team members," said Dr. Lilenbaum. "A process that generally takes up to two weeks now needs to be done in 24 hours."

In addition to seeing patients within a day of diagnosis, the Anderson Family Cancer Institute is also expanding access to clinical trials, which are foundational to the treatment of the disease.

"I can't tell you how many patients I've had who had the opportunity to participate in clinical trials which led to a much-improved outcome," said Dr. Lilenbaum.

Jupiter Medical Center recently developed a partnership with UF Health, the University of Florida's academic health center, which will enable it to bring clinical trials to cancer patients, some of which include treatments that are not available outside a research setting. Some trials test different ways to administer or combine existing drugs, according to Dr.

Lilenbaum, while others are truly experimental.

"It is particularly gratifying for us to have options when the so-called 'standard' options have been exhausted," said Dr. Lilenbaum of the program that will launch in early 2023.

He added that patients already have access to expertise within the AFCI that is not widely available nationwide and especially not within Palm Beach County.

"What we do here is absolutely cutting-edge," said Dr. Lilenbaum. "We have award-winning surgeons and premier medical and radiation oncologists who are nationally known specialists that can manage cases with a degree of complexity outside the expertise of general surgeons or general medical oncologists. This includes one technique that utilizes chemotherapy inside the abdomen for some of the more aggressive cancers."

The Institute was recently named as a Center of Excellence by the National Pancreas Foundation for the work it does in pancreatic cancer and received High-Performing Awards from U.S. News & World Report for colon cancer surgery and lung cancer surgery.

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## **Cover Story: FAU College of Nursing Researcher Aims to Improve Outcomes for Young Breast Cancer Survivors in South Florida**

*Continued from page 1*

pleted genetic testing to rule out hereditary breast and ovarian cancer (HBOC) syndrome, which was negative. She decided to have a double mastectomy for “peace of mind.” However, seven years after the double mastectomy, her doctor felt another lump under the reconstructed breast. After further work-up, she had a recurrence of her breast cancer.

Unfortunately, this is one of many cases of women below age 40 who are diagnosed with breast cancer each year. There is no doubt that the incidence of breast cancer increases with age, with the median age of diagnosis among women 62 years old. However, 4% of invasive cases (10,850) occur among women less than 40 years of age and 13% of new invasive cases (36,710) occur among women ages 40-49 years, according to the American Cancer Society. Younger women are diagnosed with more biologically aggressive tumors such as Triple Negative Breast Cancer (TNBC) compared to older women, advanced stage tumors, higher grade, and more lymph node involvement. Furthermore, racial and ethnic disparities persist. Black women have the highest incidence rate of breast cancer before age 40 and Black women in general have the highest death rate (27.6 per 100,000), which is 40% higher than the rate observed in White women (19.7 per 100,000).

As assistant professor at Florida Atlantic University’s Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and principal investigator of a National Institutes of Health (NIH) K01 Award funded by the National Cancer Institute, titled “Decision Support for Multigene Panel Testing and Family Risk Communication among Racially/Ethnically Diverse Young Breast Cancer Survivors,” my goal is to gain a better understanding of the experiences, challenges, and needs of younger women who are diagnosed with breast cancer and to increase their participation in research. The first phase of the five-year research project involves a group of racially/ethnically diverse women diagnosed with breast cancer within the past five years, completing a survey about their global health, mental health,

family history, risk factors, treatments, surgeries, genetic testing, family risk communication, their needs, interests and more. A subset of these women is invited to participate in a one-on-one qualitative interview and/or focus groups in English or Spanish.

Preliminary findings indicate that most women were diagnosed in their 30’s after discovering their own lump and advocating for themselves to get to a cancer diagnosis. A majority of the women enrolled to date, have completed genetic testing at the time of their diagnosis and had access to quality treatments and surgeries. However, some women shared that they had a recurrence of their breast cancer years later, even after having had a double mastectomy. Research shows that while the risk of cancer recurrence is lower when the whole breast is removed, a recurrence remains a probability. In our study, we are looking closely at differences, based on race and ethnicity to gain further insights into racial disparities. Since young breast cancer survivors may have inherited a pathogenic mutation or variant in a breast cancer gene (BRCA1, BRCA2, PALB2, CHEK2, etc.), we are examining completion rates, genetic testing results, and risk-reduction behaviors taken after diagnosis to reduce the risk of recurrence and the development of new cancers.

Along with my team of incredible mentors, we are moving toward further development and pilot testing of an intervention that is tailored based on the unique needs of young women, race and ethnicity, and cultural preferences. Ultimately, we want to empower these women and their at-risk family members with decision support, knowledge, and resources to survive breast cancer.

*If you are interested in participating, please contact our study team at [breastcancerresearch@health.fau.edu](mailto:breastcancerresearch@health.fau.edu) or (561) 297-4975.*

*Dr. Tarsha Jones is Assistant Professor, Florida Atlantic University Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing, and principal investigator of an NIH funded breast cancer study.*

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# **YESTERDAY I WAS DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER**



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# NYC Hepatologist Relocates to Join TGH Digestive Health Center as Area's Only Liver Transplant Specialist

*Sonja K. Olsen, MD, brings world-renowned experience to Tampa General Hospital's gastroenterological practice on Florida's East Coast*

A board-certified internist, gastroenterologist and transplant hepatologist has left New York University (NYU) Langone Health to join the Tampa General Hospital (TGH) Digestive Health Center, formerly known as the TGH Gastro Group of the Palm Beaches. Sonja K. Olsen, M.D., will serve Palm Beach County patients as the area's only transplant hepatologist, bringing more than a decade of experience in providing world-class digestive and liver care.



**Dr. Sonja K. Olsen**

Having spent her career in academic medicine, Dr. Olsen is at home in the TGH system, which has been Florida's leading academic medical center for more than 50 years. She was the chief resident at NewYork-Presbyterian Weill Cornell and previously served as an assistant professor in the Department of Medicine at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, assistant professor in the Department of Medicine at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City and assistant professor in the Department of Medicine at NYU. Olsen has also served as an associate with Gotham Medical Associates, co-director of the Medicine Sub-Internship clerkship at Weill Cornell and as the program director for Advanced Fellowship in Transplant Hepatology at NYU. She is a member of the American Gastroenterological Association and the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases.

"It's very inspiring to join Tampa General Hospital's expanding presence in Palm Beach County and to help enhance the cutting-edge treatment its providers and staff offer," said Olsen, who will see patients at TGH Digestive Health Centers' West Palm Beach and Palm Beach Gardens locations. "As a lifelong New Yorker, I am eager to explore and learn about this community and to support it through my practice."

Olsen will treat patients with colon, liver and bile duct cancer; gallbladder disease; alcoholic- and nonalcoholic-related liver disease; drug-related liver injury; all forms of hepatitis; and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). As Palm Beach County's only transplant hepatologist, she is the only physician in the region with such specialized expertise in the management of patients with end-stage liver disease, both before and after liver transplantation.

Nearly two years ago, Gastro Group of the Palm Beaches joined forces with TGH

to advance treatment for its patients and to ensure the group was delivering the highest-quality care in the region. Patients who need complex, specialized surgeries now benefit from a convenient, streamlined process when having surgical procedures performed in Tampa with pre- and post-surgery care provided in Palm Beach County. TGH was recog-

nized as one of the top 50 hospitals in the nation for gastroenterology and gastrointestinal (GI) surgery by U.S. News & World Report for 2022-23 and its benign esophageal disorders and pancreatic/hepatic/biliary cancer programs have received disease-specific certification from The Joint Commission.

"Adding a stellar, respected physician like Dr. Olsen is a major step in our efforts to continue providing next-level service to our patients in Palm Beach County and beyond," said Dr. Krumholz of TGH Digestive Health Center. "She brings not only experience and expertise from a discerning and high-intensity health care market, but also extraordinary compassion and care for her patients."

TGH, which is the primary teaching affiliate of the USF Health Morsani College of Medicine, is one of the highest-ranked hospitals in Florida by U.S. News & World Report for 2022-23. Palm Beach County patients who need a higher level of care have a direct connection to TGH's academic medicine and resources, including research breakthroughs, a wider variety of clinical trials and options for advanced immunotherapy procedures, enhanced personal treatment plans and a convenient path to complex surgeries.

TGH has been affiliated with the USF Health Morsani College of Medicine since the school was created in the early 1970s. Today, more than 700 medical school residents and fellows receive specialty training at TGH in areas ranging from general internal medicine to neurosurgery. In addition, USF medical, nursing, pharmacy and physical therapy students all receive part of their training at TGH. Faculty of the USF Health Morsani College of Medicine admit and care for patients at TGH, as do private practice physicians, many of whom also serve as adjunct clinical faculty at USF.

*For a consultation, call (561) 644-0125.*

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# Cover Story: Broward Health Celebrates 85 Years of Excellence

Continued from page 1

was born here, or received care with us. We have been with the community from the beginning and have built a remarkable relationship."

Strum points out that the healthcare system has always been at the forefront regarding healthcare.

"For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we were the first in the area to offer the vaccine to the public and set up monoclonal antibody sites," he explains. "In fact, we partnered with Inter Miami CF and the city of Fort Lauderdale to hold the largest vaccination site in the area and helped deliver many vaccines to everyone in the community."

In addition to being early adopters of technology, Broward Health has become known for its innovative treatments over the years. For example, the health system is at the forefront of Alzheimer's disease research with its launch of a groundbreaking clinical trial, in partnership with the University of Florida and Insightec.

This innovative trial will evaluate the safety and efficacy of the Exablate Model 4000 Type 2.0/2.1 System as a tool to disrupt the blood-brain barrier (BBB) in patients with probable Alzheimer's disease. The clinical trial uses a non-invasive MRI-guided focused ultrasound (MRgFUS) technology to target specific areas in the brain. Focused ultrasound can disrupt the blood-brain barrier through a non-invasive technique, allowing for a temporary opening where the amyloid plaque burden may be reduced.

Strum says Broward Health is proud to lead the charge in finding treatments for Alzheimer's and remains committed to accelerating progress against this debilitating disease.

Broward Health is also investing more funds into its cardiovascular and graduate medical education programs to provide greater access to advanced cardiac care while training physicians of the future.

"We're focused on growing our graduate medical education and nurse residency programs. Those are critical," stresses Strum. "That's a pipeline for tomorrow's talent. These physicians and nurses are the ones who are going to be providing the care for years to come."

There are also some key developments Strum is looking forward to in the short term.

Through a partnership, Broward Health and Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital are coming together to provide emergency services to residents in Sunrise. To better serve the community, the two organizations are bringing an adult and pediatric freestanding emergency room to an area that is currently considered a medical desert.

"We're really excited about this," says Strum. "Both adults and children will soon have access to the highest level of emergency care in the city of Sunrise."

Strum is also excited about Broward HealthPoint, a pioneering healthcare program committed to expanding access to high-quality and comprehensive care for individuals with limited financial means.

As an affiliate of Broward Health, Broward HealthPoint provides health services via multiple outpatient centers and a mobile health unit that operates throughout the county. The mobile unit eliminates transportation barriers for underserved populations who have difficulty accessing health care.

In addition, it offers wellness visits as well as maintenance and preventative care, such as blood pressure checks and diabetes screenings. This convenient and cost-effective program is evidence of Broward HealthPoint's mission to provide greater access to quality health care for at-risk communities.

"This new mobile unit is an exciting development," says Strum. "We're proud of how we have integrated health care provision with advanced technology. It's yet another example of how we are expanding our care delivery model to better meet the full spectrum of patient needs."



## Commemorating 85 years

Broward has several events planned to recognize its 85 years of serving our community.

"This is a time for us to reflect on where we've come from, where we currently stand as a health care system, and where we want to go in the future," says Strum. "We have planned various celebrations to connect with the community and to thank our employees, physicians, and clinicians for their wonderful contributions."

The kick-off event will occur on January 4, 2023, at Broward Health Medical Center. Broward Health will receive special proclamations from local officials announcing the day as Broward Health Day.

"The city of Fort Lauderdale and Broward County will present us with some proclamations," says Strum. "We'll also recognize some of our longtime employees and community partners."

Residents of Broward County should also be on the lookout on January 4, as many buildings and landmarks will be lit blue that night in recognition of Broward Health Day.

On January 8, Broward Health will welcome the community to celebrate the system's anniversary at Huizenga Park in Fort Lauderdale with a special Florida Panthers watch party, food trucks, free activities for families and much more.

Two weeks later on January 23, Broward Health will host its State of the System address at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts.

"This will be an event for our physicians, community leaders, and other VIPs," Strum explains. "It's going to be a phenomenal way to showcase our talented workforce and clinicians, recognize 85 amazing years here in Broward County, and chart the future for our health system."

Throughout these and other 85th anniversary internal events, Broward Health will also recognize its dedicated team.

"It wouldn't be a true celebration if we didn't honor our doctors, staff, and other employees who have been instrumental in our success," says Strum. "There will be a variety of ways in which we show our appreciation for them."

Throughout its 85 years, Broward Health has been committed to providing access to comprehensive services in various specialties, such as cardiology, neurology, oncology, and women's health. Additionally, the organization has expanded its capabilities with state-of-the-art technologies and treatments. Looking to the future, its list of accomplishments and achievements continues to grow.

In celebration of this momentous achievement, Broward Health looks forward to continuing its legacy of delivering high-quality patient care, medical innovations and clinical excellence.

"This is truly an exciting time for our healthcare system," says Strum. "All signs point to a bright future for Broward Health, and we encourage everyone to celebrate this 85th anniversary milestone with us. Then, now, forever – Broward Health will always be here to serve our community."

For more information, visit [www.browardhealth.org/85](http://www.browardhealth.org/85).



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## *A message from our President*

### ***Is the Shifting Healthcare Paradigm Becoming More Obvious?***

I want to take this opportunity to welcome you to the new and exciting 2023! I hope that you had a wonderful New Year and that you took some time off to rest, recharge, and reflect.

Thomas S. Kuhn in his book titled, "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions," posited for "an episodic model in which periods of conceptual continuity where there is cumulative progress, which Kuhn referred to as periods of "normal science", were interrupted by periods of revolutionary science. The discovery of "anomalies" during revolutions in science leads to new paradigms."

I read this book for a graduate class looking at the evolution of economic theory, but his principles can be applied much more widely. Take healthcare for instance, the fee-for-service model that we have operated under for nearly a century is experiencing some of the classic signs of change where the model no longer fits the facts. So, if healthcare is undergoing change, indeed a paradigm shift, what further changes might we be looking at in 2023?

If you take an afternoon and do some research with the help of Google, here is what you might conclude after looking at gaggle of articles on the subject of healthcare forecasts for 2023. Let's look at just a few common themes.

First, employee health and wellbeing as well as shortages. Employers are going



**Jaime Caldwell**

to do more to deal holistically with employees to ensure that they remain vital to their organizations. Employers will also be working with other stakeholders to remove barriers to the education of more trained and educated workers.

Second, mental health. While mental health was a growing concern before 2020, the effects that COVID-19, with its forced isolation, brought have exacerbated the problem. Look for many more wellness programs, digital health solutions and outright concerns to be evident.

Third, the patient experience. I am not a big believer that the insured American public really wants more involvement in their medical decision-making. Although, now

having said that, I do believe that they want more timely access, a quality experience, and access to their results and data. I think what we will see is growing competition between retail medicine (retailization of medicine as embodied by CVS, Walgreens, Amazon, and Optum) and traditional providers like hospitals and independent practice physicians. Making the experience more memorable will be key. Capturing the patient data, thus the patient, will be critical in this competitive struggle.

Yes, the paradigm is changing and we have a chance to experience that change. I look forward to sharing insights with you throughout 2023 as we witness the change taking place.

Happy 2023!

## **SFHHA Annual Dinner Celebrates Outgoing 2022 Board Chairman Jared Smith and Installs Joe Stuckzynski as the 2023 Board Chairman**



Pictured (l-r): Board Members Jaime Caldwell, Alex Romillo, Patti Greenberg, Alex Fernandez, Joe Stuckzynski, Jared Smith, Lincoln Mendez, Stephen Demers, Bill Ulbricht, David Wagner, Charles Michelson, and Charles Felix





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# Dr. Canipe Helps Student Nurses Become Their Best

BY LOIS THOMSON



**Dr. Julia Canipe**

In her role as Nursing Program Director at South University College of Nursing and Public Health, Dr. Julia Canipe isn't too concerned about trying to recruit nursing students. As she explained, "I don't have to encourage them to become a nurse, because they come here to be a nurse, that decision was already made."

She said students who come to the college have made that choice long before they apply to a nursing program – perhaps something happened in their lives that turned them in that direction, or they learned something about the profession when they were young and decided that's what they wanted to do. "We just continue to foster their desire to become the best nurse they can be."

Dr. Canipe stressed, however, that even though applicants are confident about their choice of career, they are still likely to encounter obstacles along the way. She said, for example, "Studying in the nursing program is not like any other discipline. It requires an overhaul of your study skills, of priorities, of your life management." For that reason, she said much time is spent supporting the students in managing their responsibilities.

"Nursing is not a side hustle. They are fully emerged in schooling, and it overtakes their lives." She said it's a challenge because the students are different ages and come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Some are single parents; some students must work to be able to support themselves. "All of these obstacles vastly interfere. Our job is to be supportive, provide resources for them, teach them how to manage and fit nursing into life."

Dr. Canipe said that while the pandemic did not impact enrollment at the College of Nursing, it nevertheless turned everything upside down. "Nursing schools had to operate under unprecedented circumstances as we couldn't send students to a clinical site and provide them with practical experiences." She said a large part of becoming a nurse is having practicum at the bedside, working with instructors, learning hands-on skills, developing critical thinking, and having overall exposure to the profession. "When that part was removed, nursing academia was challenged on how to educate nurses without providing that environment."

She did, however, discover a bright side to the pandemic. "The silver lining that I've seen post-pandemic in nursing education is that clinical sites are embracing us. They are welcoming to students; they are going the extra mile to accommodate our clinical experiences – even when they are very short staffed. We have a great variety of clinical sites and resources, and work closely with health care agencies, acute care facilities, and the department of health." She said something else that came out of the pandemic is a greater appreciation of the role of nurses – what they do and how a shortage of nurses can affect society.

She added that everyone has to work as a team to educate nursing students and graduate nurses, and in saying that she can speak from her own experience. Dr. Canipe said she was raised to pursue education from an early age, and she knew that as a Doctor of Nursing Practice she could make a difference and continue her passion for nursing education.

"Education doesn't stop at completion of one degree, and that's what we'd like to foster within our students." She said every degree provides students with opportunities to open doors and reach potential they might have. "So, it's important that some of us who are nurses go into academia, because without educating nurses, we won't have a nursing workforce."

In looking at the future of nursing, Dr. Canipe said she believes nursing education will be defined as pre-pandemic and post-pandemic. "Nothing that was done pre-pandemic has transferred into the post-pandemic time. Policies are different, priorities are different, curriculums are changing, clinical hours are changing. It's a new world for us. I think change is at the core of nursing; it always has been, but we deal very well with change because it's inherent to our profession, and we will continue to overcome obstacles whenever they come."

She said her role changed as she is mostly focused on retaining those students who expressed a desire to become a nurse, but perhaps were not as prepared because of virtual classes they had to take. "So, my role is to provide students with resources and support and retain them in the program. We want to give students every opportunity to succeed and pursue their dream."

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# 2022: A YEAR IN REVIEW

## New Locations Will Expand Reach of UHealth and University of Miami Miller School of Medicine

With the opening and construction of several new facilities, 2022 was a banner year for the University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine and UHealth – University of Miami Health System. New locations will expand UHealth's reach to serve more of South Florida's communities and improve access to world-class academic-based health care, part of the University's larger strategy to offer health care closer to patients.

### Doral

In September, UHealth launched a satellite location to care for patients in Doral. The opening marked the first phase of a two-phase project, which will culminate in 2024 with a six-story, 150,000-square-foot multidisciplinary UHealth facility modeled after the health system's flagship Lennar Foundation Medical Center in Coral Gables.

Phase One of the Doral project, now open, includes an 18,000-square-foot facility at 8333 Northwest 53rd Street in Downtown Doral. The site currently offers services in urology from the Desai Sethi Urology Institute's specialists and a broad array of cancer services from Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, the region's only NCI-designated and nationally ranked cancer center and South Florida's only academic cancer center.

Phase Two of the project will be the state-of-the-art UHealth at Doral facility, being built inside the mixed-use development of Downtown Doral. Slated to open in late 2024, UHealth at Doral will offer a wide range of health care services in addition to oncology and urology, including primary care, cardiology, neurology, and ophthalmology through the No. 1-ranked Bascom Palmer Eye Institute.

### SoLé Mia



Also in September, UHealth broke ground on a world-class medical center at SoLé Mia, the 184-acre mixed-use development in North Miami, a joint venture between real estate developers LeFrak and Turnberry. When completed in early 2025, UHealth at SoLé Mia will be the health system's largest ambulatory site to date.

The seven-story, 363,000-square-foot medical center will offer the communities of North Miami, Aventura, and the surrounding areas access to academic medicine focused on healing, wellness, and prevention.

The medical center will include cancer specialists from Sylvester; advanced vision care from Bascom Palmer; urological treatments from the Desai Sethi Urology Institute; top-notch care from UHealth's nationally ranked neurology and neurosurgery programs; and specialties such as cardiology, endocrinology, otolaryngology, gastroenterology, dermatology, physical rehabilitation, and others.



### Desai Sethi Urology Institute

In a major step toward becoming a global leader in urology, the Miller School officially dedicated the Desai Sethi Urology Institute in February. The new institute, which was established with a \$20 million commitment from the Desai Sethi Family Foundation, is housed in the newly named Desai Sethi Medical Center building at 1150 NW 14th Street on the Miller School campus.

The Desai Sethi Urology Institute will be a beacon for urologic care, attracting top talent, accelerating innovative approaches, and fostering collaboration between specialties such as basic and translational sciences, biomedical engineering, and technology.

### Transformational Cancer Research Building

In a bold move to accelerate cancer research, Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center broke ground in June on the 244,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art Transformational Cancer Research Building (TCRB). Slated to open in 2024, the 12-story facility on the Miller School campus will be a unique hub for cancer research, innovation, wellness, and patient-centered care.

The TCRB, being built at 1425 NW 10th Ave., will be an ultramodern patient care and research facility to support new and emerging directions in cancer treatment.

The new facility will focus on total-body wellness during cancer treatment to improve quality of life. It will set the standard for survivorship programs that prioritize recurrence prevention for the benefit of patients and their families. The goal is to leverage technology, outstanding researchers, and multidisciplinary collaboration to create a central location for cancer care innovation.

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

## Delray Medical Center Advances its Endovascular Program as the First Hospital in Florida to Acquire the AI-Powered Viz™ Vascular Suite

Delray Medical Center is the first hospital in Florida to acquire the Viz Vascular Suite. This is a comprehensive software its vascular care team can use to detect disease, optimize workflow, and coordinate care. The Viz Vascular Suite uses artificial intelligence (AI) to automatically detect suspected pulmonary embolism, right/left ventricle dilation, aortic dissection, and abdominal aortic aneurysm[1] to facilitate informed and efficient treatment decisions.

"Being able to identify a patient with a serious vascular condition, such as an abdominal aortic aneurysm, early – before they have an emergency, is a game changer and literally a lifesaver," said Dr. Joseph Ricotta, professor of surgery and program director of the vascular surgery fellowship at Florida Atlantic University College of Medicine, and national medical director of vascular surgery and endovascular therapy at Tenet Healthcare. "For example, there are roughly 1.5 million abdominal aortic aneurysms in the US per year; however, only 10 percent get diagnosed and treated. We don't often find out about them until it's too late and, even then, there's only a 25 percent chance of living through a ruptured aortic aneurysm. From my experience as an early adopter of this technology, the Viz Vascular Suite will help enhance screening and coordinate care across my vascular team."

The Viz Vascular Suite is designed to automatically analyze imaging and data and, in turn, eliminate futile patient transfers between departments and decrease the time patients spend in the emergency department. Using the Viz.ai platform, care can be coordinated for any vascular pathology, and managed remotely within a hub and spoke network, which expedites diagnosis and treatment. It also aids Delray Medical Center in activating its Pulmonary Embolism Response Team (PERT), which is a multidisciplinary team that rapidly assesses and provides treatment for patients with acute pulmonary embolism.



## Lee Health Opens Mobile Health Care Clinic in Dunbar Community

Lee Health has opened a new mobile health care clinic to help serve the Dunbar Community.

The mobile clinic was established to provide services to Dunbar residents after Lee Health's Lee Community Healthcare office was heavily damaged during Hurricane Ian.

Located at 3637 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Fort Myers, the mobile clinic is open Monday through Friday from noon to 4 p.m. It will be on-site until the new Dunbar office is open, which is slated for April 2023.

"Even though our office was badly damaged in the hurricane, it's imperative that our community members in Dunbar can still get access to health care," said Bob Johns, executive director of Lee Community Healthcare. "This mobile health care clinic will be able to provide them with the services they need in their own neighborhood. We can't thank Treasure Coast Community Health enough for generously loaning us the mobile clinic. We are so grateful for their kindness and support."

The mobile clinic is accompanied by two tents in the parking lot that will collectively provide a lobby with chairs for patients to wait, a check-in and checkout center, and two exam rooms.

If patients need transportation to the mobile unit, they are encouraged to call (239) 481-4111.

Until the new building is complete, patients can also see their medical provider at Lee Health's Outpatient Center at Sanctuary, 8960 Colonial Center Dr., Fort Myers.



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



The Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce is now accepting nominations for the 2023 Health Care Heroes® Awards Program; deadline is December 19. The 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Health Care Heroes® Awards Luncheon will take place on May 17, 2023.

### WHO IS A HEALTH CARE HERO?

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

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

## Physicians Lend Helping Hand to Colleagues: Dade County Medical Association Donates \$13,500 the Lee County Medical Society Foundation



(l-r) Dr. Joshua Lenchus, President of the Florida Medical Association; Angel Bosch, Managing Director of the DCMA; Dr. Rafael J. Fernandez, President of the DCMA; Dr. Tracy Vo, President and Julie Ramirez, CAE, Executive Director of the Lee County Medical Society Foundation

At the direction of their leadership, the membership of the Dade County Medical Association (DCMA), recently held a fundraiser to benefit physicians from Lee County who have been impacted by Hurricane Ian's devastation. As a result of their efforts, over \$13,500 was raised to help physicians in the impacted areas through the Lee County Medical Society Foundation (LCMSF).

"This contribution is from doctors for doctors because, in addition to being physicians, we are humans, and we go through situations that are not in our control. We must help each other in times of need," commented Dr. Rafael J. Fernández, President of the DCMA.

"A special thank you to all members and the DCMA Executive Committee for their donations. This means a lot to our physicians. This contribution will be used to help and support doctors who have experienced stress, anxiety, losses, and other situations due to the hurricane" said Dr. Tracy Vo, President of the LCMSF.

Those interested in contributing to the Lee County Medical Society can visit the page [www.lcmsf.org/reliefresources](http://www.lcmsf.org/reliefresources).

## Broward Health Medical Center First in South Florida to Launch March of Dimes NICU Family Support Program

Broward Health Medical Center is the first South Florida hospital to partner with the March of Dimes to offer its NICU Family Support® Program, providing additional information and support to families with babies in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). The hospital recently added a NICU coordinator to its staff, whose responsibilities will include administering this program, which offers parent education, staff education and other initiatives to improve the patient and family experience.

"Most NICU families are having a very different experience than they expected when welcoming their child to the world, and they are usually quite overwhelmed," said Rose McKelvie, administrator of women's & children's services at Broward Health Medical Center. "Supplementing our staff with a NICU coordinator and launching this program enhances our ability to provide these families with compassionate guidance and support."

In addition to a parent education curriculum, the program provides on-demand web series for hospital staff, including free CNEs and NICU Grand Round presentations on trending topics. The program also provides quality improvement consulting that positively impacts the patient experience and family-centered care, such as annual patient experience projects and connections to the network of NICU Family Support partner hospitals.

"Having a baby in the NICU can be overwhelming for the entire family," said Kara Gilardi, senior director of NICU family support at March of Dimes. "The NICU Family Support® Program provides wrap-around support to empower, educate and support families when their baby needs NICU care. We are absolutely thrilled to begin partnership with the team at Broward Health Medical Center to improve the patient and family experience during their NICU journey."

## Mobile ECMO Saved the Life of a Port St. Lucie Woman Who Now Fights to Reclaim What She Once Had

Melissa Stagg no longer takes for granted what comes naturally to most people. Walking, bathing herself, and living a life without potent medications are all recent milestones, ones the Port St. Lucie woman doctors call a "medical unicorn" couldn't have imagined just six months earlier.

Less than a year ago, Stagg's world turned upside down. The mother of three with no pre-existing medical conditions had a cough and fever just before Christmas 2021; within four days she was intubated and on a ventilator with a COVID-19-complicated case of pneumonia. By December 29 it was determined that an extraordinary level of care not readily available was Stagg's only chance of survival. "I was the sickest person in St. Lucie County," she says matter of factly.

Stagg's dire situation required ECMO, an acronym for extracorporeal membrane oxygenation, an advanced therapy that not all hospitals are equipped to provide. It requires a special machine that replaces the function of the heart and lungs of critically-ill patients by pumping and oxygenating blood outside the body. The blood is then returned to the individual, allowing the heart and lungs to rest and recover from damage caused by illness.

Stagg had to be put on an ECMO machine immediately, but doctors feared she could die during the transport to a properly-equipped facility. Thankfully, Memorial Healthcare System had a solution, dispatching nine professionals from its specially-trained transport team to Port St. Lucie and connecting Stagg to a mobile ECMO device. Once her condition was stabilized, the Hollywood-based team was then able to facilitate a safe transfer from her hospital to Memorial Regional Hospital.

"We were the first in South Florida to offer mobile ECMO services," said Dr. I-wen Wang, chief of Memorial's Adult Heart Transplant & Mechanical Circulatory Support Program. "Without it, Mrs. Stagg would be in a much different situation than she is today."

"I would have been dead without mobile ECMO. My husband watched Memorial's team take control of the situation and work like a well-oiled machine," she added.

While ECMO is traditionally a temporary solution in the most critical situations, Stagg's condition required she spend 65 days connected to the machine. During her time in the intensive care unit at Memorial Regional Hospital, she also dealt with blood clots in her brain, leg, and kidneys, infections, and a host of COVID-related issues.

Finally, on May 8, Mother's Day, Stagg was discharged from a rehab facility and able to return home to Port St. Lucie. "It was a long journey that has been much harder than expected, but I'm grateful to be alive," she said.

With the one-year anniversary of the start of her medical ordeal in sight, Stagg is preparing for a much different holiday season than the last. While still actively engaged in physical therapy, she is back to being a wife to husband, David, and mother to Stephen, Kaitlyn, and Nicholas. She continues to work to regain all she lost earlier this year. "People can't believe the progress and recovery I've made. I'm continuing to improve, so if that makes me a unicorn, I'll take it."





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## Marla and Steve Garchik Make Generous Gift to Boca Regional's Keeping the Promise Capital Campaign

Marla and Steve Garchik have generously gifted \$1 million to Keeping the Promise...The Campaign for Boca Raton Regional Hospital. Steve is the founder of The Garchik Family Foundation, which was started in memory of his father. Marla is an active board member of the Foundation.

Marla and Steve only moved to the area 11 years ago, but during that time as permanent residents, they have made multiple visits to Boca Regional for their parents' care. For that reason, they both feel very close to the hospital and its mission to provide the highest level of healthcare in South Florida.

"From the moment we walked through the doors, we believed you can truly feel this is a community-driven hospital," Marla explained. "The staff and facilities are a step above. Honestly, we feel so lucky to have found this special place of care for our family members. The hospital is critical to the care of our community. For generations to come, this hospital promises to provide stellar healthcare to the greater Boca Raton region. We're grateful to the extraordinary nurses, doctors, the foundation and the community outreach of the hospital. Therefore, our promise is to do everything in our power to support this special place. We are honored and proud to support the foundation and the other donors who are keeping the promise."

Marla is a philanthropist and the founder of Peace Love Solve, a lifestyle brand that spreads awareness, acceptance, kindness and inclusion for children and adults on the autism spectrum. She is also an Advisory Board member for Autism Speaks (Washington, DC and Palm Beach Chapters) and an Advisory Board member of the Charlie Fund. Steve is the President of SJM Partners Inc., a Commercial Real Estate Development firm based in Delray Beach, Florida. The Garchik Foundation has issued numerous grants and gift dollars primarily to hospitals (curing diseases), to education for underserved communities, as well as donating an endowed professorship at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.



## DOH-Broward Launches Swat (Students Working Against Tobacco) Clubs in 24 Schools in Broward County

SWAT is Florida's statewide youth organization working to mobilize, educate and equip Florida youth to revolt against and de-glamorize Big Tobacco. SWAT is a united movement of empowered youth working towards a tobacco free future.

SWAT provides an opportunity for Florida youth to stand up to big tobacco and voice their opinions. There is a SWAT Chapter in every county in Florida. SWAT clubs operate in middle schools, high schools and community centers across the state. Within Broward County, there are 24 active clubs existing in both middle schools and high schools for the 22-23 school year.

SWAT clubs are comprised of an advisor and an executive team of students which includes a president, vice president, secretary and media relations coordinator. SWAT clubs participate in National Tobacco Observances and facilitate presentations in order to educate their peers and influence policy makers. This club gives these students the opportunity to gain leadership and advocacy skills.

"It is amazing to see schools, teachers and students stand up to big tobacco," DOH-Broward's Tobacco Program Manager Jaden Bell said. "Tobacco prevention among youth is a multi-collaborative effort in which SWAT is the acting force. Students and advisors are eager to make a difference on their school campus."



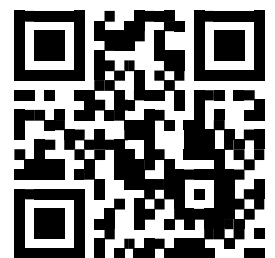
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For more information about SWAT and DOH-Broward's Tobacco Prevention Program, please contact Jaden Bell at [Jaden.Bell@flhealth.gov](mailto:Jaden.Bell@flhealth.gov).



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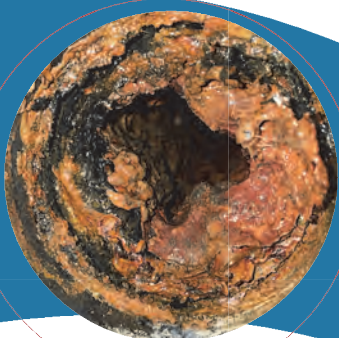
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# Accolades Accolades Accolades Accolades

## HCA Florida Woodmont Hospital Achieves Center of Excellence in Robotic Surgery Accreditation



HCA Florida Woodmont Hospital has recently achieved accreditation as a Center of Excellence in Robotic Surgery, recognized for providing the highest quality of care and patient safety by Surgical Review Corporation (SRC).

Status as an accredited Center of Excellence means that Woodmont Hospital has met nationally and internationally recognized standards in providing the safest, highest quality of care and surgical services. To earn the Robotic Surgery Center of Excellence accreditation, Woodmont Hospital underwent an extensive assessment and inspection process where all aspects of the robotic surgical program were closely examined.

Surgeons on staff at Woodmont Hospital have performed more than 5,000 robotic-assisted procedures.

## U.S. News & World Report Names the Edward J. Healey Rehabilitation and Nursing Center Among Best in Florida

The Health Care District of Palm Beach County's skilled nursing home, the Edward J. Healey Rehabilitation and Nursing Center, has again been recognized as a Best Nursing Home for Long-Term Care for 2022-2023 by *U.S. News & World Report*, earning a "High Performing" rating, the highest possible achievement. The Healey Center, which earned an overall rating of five out of five, is a modern, 120-bed facility in Riviera Beach, Florida that is home to some of the county's most vulnerable residents.

"It's an honor to receive the Best Nursing Homes designation for the fourth year in a row," said Darcy J. Davis, the Health Care District's Chief Executive Officer. "Without the Healey Center, many of our residents would have nowhere else to turn for skilled nursing care and comprehensive rehabilitation. Our safety net facility provides a home of hope and healing and has a more than 100-year history of serving our community."

## Holy Cross Health Named to Newsweek's America's Best Physical Rehabilitation Centers 2022 List

Holy Cross Health in Fort Lauderdale has been named to Newsweek's 2022 list of America's Best Physical Rehabilitation Centers.

Presented by Newsweek and Statista Inc., this prestigious award highlights the nation's top inpatient rehabilitation facilities (IRFs) based on quality of care, quality of service, quality of follow-up care and accommodation and amenities. Facilities in the 25 states with the highest number of inpatient rehabilitation facilities, according to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, were part of this study. The rankings feature the top 255 centers nationwide.



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# Sylvester Attracts World's Top Epigenetics Experts for Fifth Biennial Miami Epigenetics and Cancer Symposium

Top epigenetics researchers from around the world gathered in South Beach for the Fifth Biennial Miami Epigenetics and Cancer Symposium, hosted by Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine.

Sylvester began hosting the meeting in 2014, when epigenetics researcher Ramin Shiekhataar, Ph.D., was recruited to work with Sylvester's Director Stephen D. Nimer, M.D., to develop the cancer center's focus on epigenetics. Genetics is the study of genetic changes that are not part of the DNA code and how those changes impact cancer.

"Since 2014, we have made great progress in growing Sylvester's epigenetics program," said Dr. Nimer, who is the meeting's co-organizer along with Dr. Shiekhataar. "Today, we host a global meeting in epigenetics — one of cancer's most exciting specialties — as a National Cancer Institute-designated cancer center and one of the nation's top 50 cancer hospitals in U.S. News & World Report's Best Hospitals rankings."

## Highlighting Innovations

Sylvester's symposium stands out globally as a meeting that highlights innovations in basic science as well as clinical epigenetics, according to Dr. Shiekhataar, co-leader of the Cancer Epigenetics Research Program, chief of the Division of Cancer Genomics and Epigenetics, and professor in the Dr. John T. Macdonald Foundation Department of Human Genetics at the Miller School.



(From left) Dr. Lluís Morey; Dr. David Lombard; Dr. Ramin Shiekhataar; Dr. Maria "Ken" Figueroa; Dr. Stephen D. Nimer; Dr. Justin Taylor

"Most epigenetics meetings are either clinically oriented or focus on the basic science of our specialty," Dr. Shiekhataar said. "Our goal of this meeting was to feature an amalgam of these different disciplines. As a result, the symposium is a great place to have interesting conversations about potential new cancer therapies."

Sylvester is at the forefront of epigenetics research and showcased its progressive work at the meeting, with senior faculty and junior and mid-level researchers presenting.

David Lombard, M.D., Ph.D., co-leader of Sylvester's Cancer Epigenetics Program, chaired the "Epigenetics in Development and Disease" session, which featured a panel of experts including Sylvester's Luisa Cimmino, Ph.D., and researchers from Peter MacCallum Cancer Center in Victoria, Australia; Memorial Sloan

Kettering; and Stanford University.

Dr. Lombard also presented on a line of research that is a focus of his laboratory, "Functions of the SIRT5 deacetylase in benign and malignant cells."

"SIRT5 modulates epigenetic marks and does other things in the cell, such as affecting metabolism of both normal physiology and cancer. We think SIRT5 is an exciting protein, and we are working to develop inhibitors of it specifically for cancer therapy," Dr. Lombard said. "Sharing this work at the Miami Epigenetics and Cancer Symposium is important because it exposes the research to an audience of leaders who are doing groundbreaking work in the field."

Many other experts from the world's top cancer centers presented, including Emily Bernstein, Ph.D., professor of oncology sciences and dermatology and co-leader of the Cancer Mechanisms Program at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. Dr. Bernstein and her colleagues shared their work on a melanoma phenotype in macroH2A-deficient animals; they associate this histone variant with the non-immune tumor stroma, an area of increasing relevance to cancer biology. Tumor stroma includes a tumor's non-cancer cell and non-immune cell components that make up the structural components holding tumor tissue together.

In previous work, Dr. Bernstein reported that macroH2A suppresses tumor progression of malignant melanoma, while loss of macroH2A is associated with increasing

melanoma cells. The new research looks at further defining macroH2A's role in the deadly skin cancer.

"We believe that deciphering the role of macroH2A in suppressing transcriptional and cellular plasticity in the tumor microenvironment will allow us to understand how its depletion contributes to human melanoma," Dr. Bernstein said.

## New Discoveries and Technology

The meeting has hit its stride in the specialty at a time when epigenetics is coming to the forefront of cancer research.

"There are a lot of major new discoveries being made routinely in epigenetics, and some of that is driven by new technology," Dr. Shiekhataar said. "Today, we can profile different epigenetic changes in whole genomes and even at the single cell level. Some of that excitement is driven by the availability of small molecules that can alter these modifications, which may ultimately provide new therapeutics."

Epigenetic drugs are important tools because cancer is an epigenetic disease, Dr. Shiekhataar explained. The epigenome becomes altered during the genesis, progression, and metastasis of all cancer types, so understanding the vulnerabilities in the epigenome is key for developing targeted therapies, he said.

"This is the kind of a meeting that brings out the best scientists who are working on epigenetic mechanisms therapeutic approaches, so we can have those important discussions and share global findings," Dr. Shiekhataar said.

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### **FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY MASTER OF HEALTH ADMINISTRATION / ON-SITE**

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

### **MIAMI DADE COLLEGE - MEDICAL CENTER CAMPUS**

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

### **SOUTH UNIVERSITY**

South University is a nonprofit institution offering educational opportunities for intellectual, social and professional development. With a 120-year story, our community is one where you can belong, believe and become. Providing excellent student services since 1981, the beautiful West Palm Beach Campus, with its landmark Clock Tower, is ideally located in the Palm Beaches of Florida. Regardless of pursuing an associate degree, baccalaureate, masters, or doctorate, our campus offers something for all. † South University - West Palm Beach University Centre 9801 Belvedere Road Royal Palm Beach, FL 33411 (561) 273-6500 Toll-free 1-866-242-1840 [www.southuniversity.edu/westpalmbeach](http://www.southuniversity.edu/westpalmbeach)

## **FIRE DOOR INSPECTIONS NATIONAL FIREDOOR**

AHCA, CMS and TJC require Annual Fire-Door Inspections because it only takes one defective or non-Compliant FIRE DOOR to enable a small fire to turn into a deadly inferno. National FireDoor (NFD) can ensure your buildings Fire, Smoke and Egress Doors are compliant, both now and into the future. Call National FireDoor for a no-obligation consultation and a proposal; NFD can ensure your fire safety doors are code compliant. You can contact National FireDoor at 305-233-1477 or [info@nationalfiredoor.com](mailto:info@nationalfiredoor.com)

## **FULL SERVICE PRODUCTION COMPANY CROWN STREET FILMS**

Crown Street Films is a full-service, bi-coastal production company with locations in Miami and Los Angeles. Crown Street Films produces premium content for any medium, social channel, or network. We work with healthcare providers to showcase the Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How compellingly and creatively. Crown Street Films understands the needs and goals of providers and can quickly understand a project's scope, making everything run smoother from conception to completion. For more information, visit the website [www.crownstreetfilms.com](http://www.crownstreetfilms.com).

## **HEALTHCARE ACCOUNTING AND ADVISORY**

### **BDO**

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

## **HEALTHCARE STAFFING SAFEGUARD HEALTHCARE**

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

## **HEALTH CENTER-CONTROLLED NETWORK HEALTH CHOICE NETWORK**

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Health Choice Network, Inc. (HCN) is a successful nation-wide collaboration among health centers, health center-controlled networks and partners. For over 25 years, HCN has been improving the quality and accessibility of medical, dental and mental health care provided in underserved and uninsured communities. HCN is a mission driven organization seeking talented, qualified individuals to join a first-class team as we continue to advance our mission. If you are interested in joining our HCN Team, visit [www.hcnetwork.org](http://www.hcnetwork.org) to discover over 30 career opportunities. For more information, contact [communications@HCNetwork.org](mailto:communications@HCNetwork.org).

## **HOSPICE**

### **VITAS® HEALTHCARE PATIENTS AND FAMILIES COME FIRST**

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## **INSURANCE SPECIALISTS RISK STRATEGIES**

Danna-Grace, the largest independent medical malpractice insurance agency in Florida, dedicated to providing insurance coverage placement for doctors and other health care providers over the past 20 years, is now a part of Risk Strategies. Risk Strategies is a leading national specialty insurance brokerage and risk management firm offering comprehensive risk management advice and insurance and reinsurance placement for property & casualty, and employee benefits risks. With more than 30 specialty practices, Risk Strategies serves commercial companies, nonprofits, public entities, and individuals, and has access to all major insurance markets. For more information, contact Matt Gracey at [matt@dannagracey.com](mailto:matt@dannagracey.com), or you can call (561) 276-3553.

## **MARITAL AND FAMILY LAW ATTORNEY**

### **NEAVE FAMILY LAW, P.A.**

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

## **MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS BOARDROOMPR**

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

## **MEDICAL ASSOCIATION DADE COUNTY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**

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

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# The Business of Health Care

## Managing Through Uncertainty



**February 24, 2023 | 8:30 am – 3:30 pm ET**

**Donna E. Shalala Student Center, Coral Gables Campus**

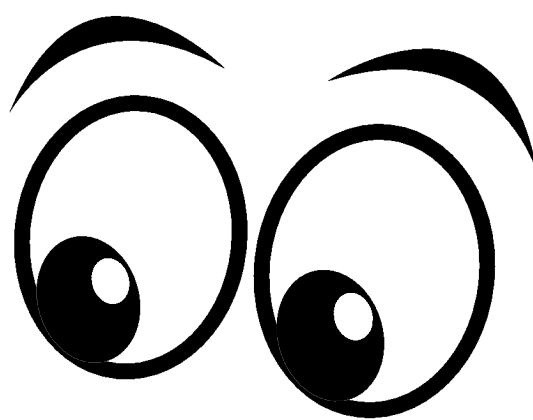
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