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**THE REGION'S MONTHLY NEWSPAPER FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS & PHYSICIANS**  
**OUR 19TH YEAR SERVING THE HEALTHCARE COMMUNITY!**



**Julie Danna**

## BY VANESSA ORR

“Cyberattacks like this occur almost every day - it’s not if it will happen, but when,” said Julie Danna, Senior Vice President, National Health Care Practice, Danna-Gracey, a Division of Risk Strategies. “A trusted staff member might open a spreadsheet that they think was sent from their employer, but it is a breach designed to put the computer system on lockdown until the company pays a ransom. If the company doesn’t have cyber insurance, they might have to come up with hundreds of thousands of dollars to pay the ransom, get their sys-

**Continued on page 51**

## BY VANESSA ORR

“We have a number of different courses designed to attract students, whether they’re pursuing bachelor’s, master’s or doctorate degrees,” said Dr. Joy Longo, PhD., RNC-NIC, CNE, interim associate dean, Academic Programs and associate professor. “In

**Continued on page 48**



**Dr. Safiya George**



**Dr. Joy Longo**

BY YENNY RODRIGUEZ, BSRT, RRT-ACCS

The trouble began on the flight back to Miami. While I fell asleep soon after take-off, I woke up feeling drowsy, weak, and nauseated. I thought I might throw up but wasn't even able to open the bag they provide for those situations. I remember asking my husband to open it but passed out right after that. When I came to, I remember everyone calling my name. At one point I heard one of my friends say, "does she have a pulse?" and I knew that something was seriously wrong. I felt I had wet myself, was



**Yenny Rodriguez**

**Continued on page 38**



**Jay Juffre**

## BY LOIS THOMSON

The crux of Juffre's and ImageFIRST's message could be summed up by encouraging leaders to connect the dots. For example, he tells his audiences, "You really have to know what employees today – post-COVID – are looking for, and then you have to have a leadership team that can connect the dots with what you can offer. If you blend what they're looking for with what you can offer, and how you lead

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National Nurses Week 2023

# Decades of Making a Difference



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## Publisher's Note

**“A hero is someone who, in spite of weakness, doubt or not always knowing the answers, goes ahead and overcomes anyway”**

– Christopher Reeve



May is a big month for all of us at *South Florida Hospital News & Healthcare Report*. Not only will we celebrate Mother's Day AND the 24th Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce Health Care Heroes®, but we also observe National Nurses Week. Where would we be without all of the nurses in this multi-faceted profession, the unsung heroes of healthcare? Whether we depend upon them in our professional lives or, quite literally, place our lives in their hands when we fall ill, nurses are truly the glue in the healthcare puzzle. And although their profession has changed radically and is constantly evolving, can any of us imagine a healthcare facility without nurses?

Just since the New Year, we've all been witness to more than enough villains and terrible occurrences, so I hope everyone takes a little time to read about and honor the individuals noted within our pages.

Congratulations and thank you to our Health Care Heroes and Nurses. This one's for you!

Charles Felix



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# Nurses, we're **Thankful** for you.

During Nurses Week, we are so proud to recognize you for your vital role in caring for others and making an impact, whether it's at the patient bedside, working on a clinical trial or educating the community. Thank you for being welcoming and ready to help anyone who comes through our doors. You make a difference, and we couldn't be more grateful for you.



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## When It Comes to Patient Care, Prevent Staff Burn Out

When it comes to the great resignation, no one is being hit harder than the medical community. Fifty-six percent of medical professionals, more than any other group, cite job burnout as the number one reason for their resignation. I have my ear close to the ground on this one. We have tens of thousands of customers across the country and keeping up with the revolving door of key personnel at some of them is a job. However, at others, we have had the same contact for years. My wife and son are also both in medical staffing and their companies have never been busier. The medical profession is one of the most demanding and stressful professions in the world. Medical staff work long hours, deal with life and death situations, and are often under immense pressure to perform. As a result, it is not uncommon for medical staff to experience burnout. Therefore, it is essential for hospitals and healthcare organizations to take steps to engage burned out medical staff. One way our company fights job burnout and keeps our team engaged is by training and developing our people. This can be even more powerful in a healthcare setting. Medical staff are highly skilled professionals who are constantly seeking to improve their skills and knowledge. By providing them with opportunities for professional development, such as attending conferences or taking courses, they can feel more engaged and motivated in their work. The idea is what do you offer that other organizations do not. Developing your people does not reduce the day-to-day stress of the job, but it can be a key differentiator when someone decides to stay or go. Looking forward to completing a course to complete their skillset or an upcoming seminar will keep them focused on the positive aspects of working for you. Happy staff means happier patients. Prevent the burnout.



BY JAY JUFFRE

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).

## The Physician Advocate

As the 2023 Florida Legislative streaks to a close it offers an opportunity to reflect on missed opportunities and hope for future efforts to advance the practice of medicine in our state. The real story of the session will be written over the coming months as we witness the implementation of new laws and the regulation and legal challenges that are likely to linger on. What is clear is the start of our efforts as physicians to advocate for meaningful reform starts in our community and it needs to start immediately.

As your Dade County Medical Association delegation recently spent a productive week in Tallahassee I was struck by the sheer volume of voices that are ever present in Tallahassee. Countless passionate advocates supported by their hired lobbyists fill the halls pressing Legislators to consider the value of their requests. I empathize with our elected officials as they weigh the numerous issues before them and the well-articulated perspectives all of their constituents bring to the forefront.

The most glaring observation however is that physician voices need to be heard now more than ever. As professionals we view our current practice climate with trepidation. We see the influx of external influences that impede our ability to practice quality medicine in the manner we sought when we started our journey on this calling. All of those external influences are actively engaged in the legislative process seeking to enshrine their desires to control care delivery in state law and regulations.

As physicians we must advocate for ourselves. If we abdicate our responsibility to speak for our profession, those that seek to expand their influence will continue to do so.

Over the past several years I have had the opportunity to travel to Tallahassee and appreciate the process now more than ever. What is clear is that the education and relationship building with legislators must start long before the professional advocates engage them in Tallahassee. We must dedicate our time and resources to educate our elected officials on the plight we face. Too commonly the realities we face are not portrayed in what they hear in Tallahassee. And we are the only ones who can share our stories.

I encourage you to learn more about our advocacy efforts this year in the next issue of *Miami Medicine* where I will go further in depth on our efforts. And I implore you to reach out and ask how you can help the DCMA expand our efforts.

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



BY RAFAEL J. FERNANDEZ, JR., MD

## FREE MED MAL EXPERT REVIEW



### HOW HARD WILL YOUR MED MAL CARRIER FIGHT FOR YOU?

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

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

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- Do you have the right to consent to any settlement or will they settle against your will?

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

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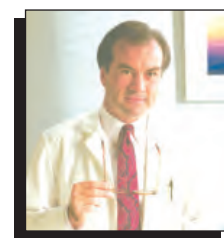


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# Survivor Clinic for Childhood Cancer Patients Offers Multidisciplinary Services for Comprehensive Care

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

Pediatric cancer is a devastating illness that affects not only the patients but their families. Surviving cancer is a significant accomplishment, but the journey doesn't end there.

Children who have beaten cancer face unique challenges, including long-term health effects, emotional trauma, and adjusting to life after treatment. That's where the KIDZ Medical Cancer Survivor Clinic comes in. This specialized clinic offers comprehensive care to pediatric cancer survivors, addressing their unique needs and helping them to live healthy, fulfilling lives.

The Pediatric Cancer Survivor Clinic is a vital resource for childhood cancer survivors who require long-term care and support. The clinic provides a range of services and resources to help survivors manage the long-term side effects of their treatment and improve their quality of life, according to Matthew D. Ramirez, M.D., a pediatric oncologist at KIDZ Medical and a childhood cancer survivor himself. Dr. Ramirez is the clinic's medical director. The clinic is held in the KIDZ Medical office on the campus of Palm Beach Children's Hospital.

Dr. Ramirez had non-Hodgkin's lymphoma at 13 and was treated by a physi-



**Dr. Matthew D. Ramirez**

cian who inspired him to become a pediatric oncologist. The lack of information about the long-term side effects of cancer treatment during his survivorship motivated him to establish the survivor clinic.

"I found there wasn't much information or knowledge back then," says Dr. Ramirez. "Basically, they knew some of the medicines could affect my heart. They

said, 'Oh, just get an echocardiogram once a year and have a great life.' That was it. I found it very lacking."

The clinic offers services to support survivors and their families, including monitoring for growth and developmental issues, side effects of oncology treatment, psychosocial evaluations for depression and anxiety, nutritional counseling, and genetic counseling. Board-certified specialists in oncology, endocrinology and cardiology are part of the clinic team. Dr. Ramirez emphasized the importance of having different disciplines working collaboratively to provide the best care for childhood cancer survivors.

"We sit down and look over the patients together," Dr. Ramirez explains. "We evaluate the potential risks for our patients based on their initial cancer treatments and current health, and then determine what services we need to pull in. That could be some counseling or an

endocrinologist focused on diet and exercise. It could be cardiac-related or we may need to refer them to another specialist. Whatever it is, we bring those specialists in to provide comprehensive care."

Dr. Albert Tano, neonatologist and co-founder of KIDZ Medical, commented that, "Medicine has evolved and pediatric cancer is survivable although treatment can result in secondary effects which appear years later. The potential list of secondary effects is vast, including other cancers, cardiac issues, osteoporosis and infertility.

Recently, new malignancies were identified and treated amongst the patients of the KIDZ Medical Cancer Survivor Clinic, lending credence to the importance of a multi-disciplinary team of specialists.

"The three malignancies in our patients weren't picked up by other doctors," Tano adds. "In the end, we improve the quality of life of the post-cancer patient and ensure that any health challenges are identified and treated."

Additionally, Dr. Tano highlighted the importance of following the Baylor protocol for treating cancer survivors, which is the gold standard in the U.S.

Meanwhile, the biggest challenge facing childhood cancer survivors today is the knowledge gap. Dr. Ramirez believes in involving patients and families in decision-making and ensuring their voices are heard and respected. He mentions

that an online file-based portal provides families with access to their treatment summaries, patient information material, and more. In addition, the portal allows families to print and share their treatment summaries with other providers.

Dr. Ramirez emphasized the need to close this gap and raise awareness about survivor clinics. He also mentioned the growing population of cancer survivors and the need for advocacy and legislation to support them.

"The survivor world is very much based on information sharing," he says. "We need to empower our families and patients to have that information at their fingertips."

In the past few years more focus has been placed on pediatric survivorship. "There's legislation such as the Childhood Cancer STAR Act," he says, "which emphasizes pediatric cancer survivor research and in particular funds research into late effects of cancer therapies."

In summary, Dr. Ramirez stresses the importance of childhood cancer survivors being seen in a survivor clinic for the rest of their lives. He takes great joy in seeing his patients graduate high school, go to prom, and live their lives without the burden of cancer or its side effects.

*For more information, visit [www.kidzmedical.com](http://www.kidzmedical.com).*

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## Unwinding Medicaid Eligibility Means Making Sure Patients Have the Right Coverage

During the COVID-19 PHE, the number of Floridians qualifying for Medicaid coverage increased from 3.8 million in March 2020 to 5.7 million in January 2023. With the end of continuous eligibility, on April 1, the Department of Children and Families started disenrolling individuals who are no longer eligible for coverage due to income changes that happened between 2020 and 2023. An estimated one million enrollees may be new to the redetermination process, having not experienced one before.

For the first time in three years, the state has begun redetermining eligibility for Medicaid enrollees, as is required by federal law with the end of the federal public health emergency. To avoid disruption to ongoing care that could result from Medicaid redeterminations, hospitals are working with state agency partners and community-based organizations to ensure that all individuals are aware of Medicaid eligibility redeterminations and understand other options for coverage if continued Medicaid enrollment is not possible.

To manage the redetermination process, the Department of Children and Families is prioritizing redeterminations for individuals who are no longer eligible based on information on file from their last redetermination date. The second priority is redeterminations for enrollees who have not used their Medicaid benefit in the last 12 months. The remaining enrollees will be reviewed on their next regularly scheduled renewal date except when DCF can align the renewal date, when possible, to coincide with the date of other members within the household/family unit, or their renewal date for SNAP or TANF benefits. Vulnerable populations such as children with complex medical needs will be last in the review/redetermination schedule.

Consistent health care coverage is critical for timely access to preventive, primary, specialty, and behavioral health care and for treatment plan adherence. And it helps to lower the expense of charity care incurred by hospitals. Florida hospitals are committed to their role as not just health care providers but as patient advocates and are encouraging all Medicaid enrollees to be aware of the redetermination process by:

**Updating Their Contact Information:** Make sure DCF has the enrollee's current mailing address, phone number, email, or other contact information. This way, they will be able to contact the individual about their Medicaid coverage.

**Checking the Mail for an Envelope with a Yellow Stripe:** DCF will mail individuals a specially marked letter about their Medicaid coverage. This letter will also let them know if they need to complete a renewal form to see if they still qualify for Medicaid.

**Completing the Renewal Form:** Individuals receiving a renewal form should complete and return it to DCF as quickly as possible to help avoid a lapse in Medicaid coverage.

These resources and more are available online at [fha.org](http://fha.org).

Florida's hospitals are also working with patients to identify alternatives to Medicaid coverage, such as Florida KidCare or the federal health insurance marketplace, and providing enrollment assistance.

Florida's hospitals are extremely concerned about individuals losing health care coverage and subsequently losing timely access to care. As such, hospitals are committed to helping individuals secure reliable coverage. For Florida's hospitals, care means not just providing medical and behavioral health treatment, but also improving the health status of their communities.

*Mary Mayhew is President and CEO, Florida Hospital Association*



BY MARY MAYHEW

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# The Advantages of Partnering With a Nationwide Talent Provider Like HIMpros for Healthcare Staffing Needs

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

Ensuring high-quality healthcare relies heavily on finding suitable staffing; that's where HIMpros comes to the rescue. Based in South Florida, this niche staffing agency provides facilities and organizations with the perfect talent to ensure patients are in good hands.

As a unique agency which has chosen to specialize in a small yet significant subset of healthcare specialists, HIMpros focuses on providing services related to cancer registry, trauma registry, coding, and CDI. They have established themselves as an invaluable resource for healthcare facilities and organizations nationwide looking for reliable staff that meets their needs while helping them follow all regulatory requirements.

Unlike other healthcare specialists, they have built a strong team of cancer registrars, trauma registrars, and coders. The CEO and founder, Betsy Johnson, stands out due to her fierce dedication to forming client relationships. She values her internal team and consultants as if they were family.

HIMpros also understands the importance of creating a sense of trust and support for their staff, ensuring their clients feel confident, comfortable, and ready to tackle any problem. As a result, HIMpros has become more than just an agency; it is a dependable partner in helping its clients succeed. According to Johnson, their agency is different from others because they "focus on a minimal subset of healthcare data management specialists" and have a "solid group of cancer registrars and trauma registrars as well as HIM coders."

HIMpros stands out from other healthcare staffing agencies in the industry for its niche specialization in cancer registry, trauma registry, coding, and CDI. Their team is passionate about providing a tailored experience for every consultant they hire. In addition, they go the extra mile to ensure their consultants are adequately trained and supported.

Besides their niche specialization, Johnson notes that their partners want to feel supported and know they have a trusted advisor in HIMpros.

"We want to be a partner for our clients to make them feel comfortable," she says. "We want to provide solutions and meet them where they are."

Technology is vital in improving efficiency and patient care in today's healthcare landscape. HIMpros recognizes this and has integrated technology into its services.



Betsy Johnson

"We're very active in growing our team," adds Johnson. "We have a core group of experts to accommodate your every need. So, when you come to us, you're really coming to a trusted advisor who can help provide what you need, when you need it, and how you need it."

The benefits of partnering with a nationwide talent provider like HIMpros include access to an extensive network of specialized professionals with years of experience in the field.

Furthermore, they emphasize building relationships by highlighting top-performing consultants. This commitment to fostering solid connections allows them to better understand client and consultant needs and provide effective solutions.

HIMpros' thorough screening and hiring process for healthcare professionals ensures they partner with the best talent.

"We do multiple interviews with them," emphasizes Johnson. "We review their background and experience and go over their resume. Our recruiters discuss any desired career advancements, professional development and if they're interested in furthering their education within their field."

HIMpros' success is evident in their successful partnerships with healthcare facilities and organizations. Johnson shared several examples, such as a hospital that had a large backlog and had gone through several contract companies before partnering with HIMpros. As a result, they cleared the backlog and even helped them transition to outsourcing their registry work.

Looking forward, Johnson sees challenges in the healthcare staffing industry, particularly with the shortage of healthcare professionals.

"We already need more CTRs. There are enough trauma registrars and coders available, but the challenge is that many people are retiring. We feel there are not enough students aware of this industry so we have to get the word out. As the needs increase at hospitals nationwide, there will not be enough specialists to meet this demand."

However, even as healthcare staffing faces challenges in the coming years, HIMpros remains committed to bridging the gap and ensuring that healthcare professionals have the necessary support to provide quality data and accurate reporting.

For more information, visit [www.thehimpros.com](http://www.thehimpros.com).

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# Americans Are Thinking About End-of-Life Care But Fall Short of Making Necessary Plans, Especially People of Color

In its annual survey of attitudes about end-of-life care and planning, VITAS® Healthcare found that Americans' words and actions are not aligned when it comes to advance care planning. Although more than half of Americans say they know the type of medical treatment they want to receive at their end of life, only about one in four (22%) have formally documented their wishes. These discrepancies, which are even more stark for people of color, highlight a gap in American awareness and education on advance care planning.

In its annual Advance Care Planning Report, VITAS Healthcare details Americans' attitudes and opinions on planning for end of life, as well as insights among different generations and racial groups on the topic. The findings come from a nationwide study commissioned by VITAS.

"Advance care planning is something that can benefit all people. Unfortunately, there is a gap between thinking about end-of-life planning and actually documenting those wishes," said Dr. Joseph Shega, VITAS executive vice president and chief medical officer. "I can't stress enough how valuable advance care planning is for all Americans. It allows patients to make their preferences known early and is useful as they become seriously ill and enter advanced disease stages. Knowing a patient's wishes for end of life ensures care aligns with their goals and values. It also relieves the burden on families to make critical medical decisions on behalf of their loved ones."



The VITAS Advance Care Planning Report highlights the survey's key findings on differences in advance care planning by race. Results indicate disparities in advance care planning understanding, resource seeking and documentation:

- Advance care planning is unbalanced across racial groups, and those who could benefit from a plan don't have one.
- Few Asian Americans have formally documented their plans (7% compared to white (25%), Black (22%) and Hispanic (21%) Americans).
- Nearly half of Black Americans do not know the type of medical treatment they want at the end of life (46% compared to 25% of white individuals).
- 10% of Black Americans have no intention of preparing an end-of-life plan.

did not act on those thoughts (compared to 27% Black and 24% white).

- Clinicians play an important role in advance care planning, especially for communities of color.
- People feel most comfortable having advance care planning conversations with their partner/spouse. However, Hispanic (12%) and Asian (14%) Americans prefer to speak with a healthcare specialist (compared to 6% in general).
- Most Americans believe that end-of-life planning should begin in their 50s, yet people of color are more likely to indicate that planning should start in their 30s or 40s.

"As healthcare professionals, it is our privilege and responsibility to initiate advance care planning conversations with our patients and guide them through the process," said Dr. Shega. "For patients of color, having an advance directive in place can especially help to ensure an individual's culture and traditions are respected and taken into account in their end-of-life care."

This study follows newly published research conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago that finds hospice provides patients with improved clinical outcomes, improved pain control, and reduces their physical and emotional distress compared to those who decline palliative care. Greater utilization of hospice benefits during the last six months of life was associated with increased patient satisfaction and quality of life, as well as \$3.5 billion in tax savings.

## Jupiter Medical Center Foundation's 46th Annual Black-Tie Ball Raises More Than \$1 Million

Nearly 450 of the region's top philanthropists, business icons, and Jupiter Medical Center's biggest supporters attended the foundation's 46th Annual Black-Tie Ball, which raised more than \$1 million for the new Johnny and Terry Gray Surgical Institute.

Jupiter Medical Center Foundation returned to The Breakers for the fundraiser on March 4, 2023. Jeffrey and Lee Ann Alderton chaired the event along with Noel Martinez, president and CEO of the Northern Palm Beach Chamber of Commerce, who served as emcee.

"We are honored to support this signature event and shine a spotlight on the tremendous healthcare advancements happening in our region," said co-chair Jeffrey Alderton. "Jupiter Medical Center is second to none in providing quality health care and excelling in patient advocacy. We are proud to be associated with JMC and all they do for our community."

The event was another boost for the Johnny and Terry Gray Surgical Institute, expected to open at the end of 2023. A little over half of the funds for the \$100 million project have been raised to date. The highly anticipated 90,000-square-foot complex will feature "operating rooms of the future," built with state-of-the-art "smart" equipment.

"This Surgical Institute supports our vision to deliver world-class health care to our region," said Amit Rastogi, MD, MHCM, President and CEO of Jupiter Medical Center. "Philanthropic support is vital to our hospital's not-for-profit mission. We are so grateful for these funds, which will help us deliver the highest levels of clinical excellence and better outcomes for patients."



Jeffrey and Lee Ann Alderton  
PHOTO CREDIT: LILA PHOTO

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# Tampa General Hospital Bridges the Gap to Complex Cancer Care

## When Palm Beach County and Treasure Coast residents need specialized cancer treatments, they now enjoy a seamless connection to the TGH Cancer Institute.

Palm Beach Gardens resident Arthur “Steve” Barnes has been battling various types of skin cancer since 1981. His 42-year journey has taken him to dermatologists, radiation oncologists and medical oncologists, and last year, it took him to Tampa General Hospital (TGH).

“Most of my cancer has been pretty easy to treat — basal cell carcinoma and even squamous cell. But about three or four years ago, it started to get aggressive. It got complex,” Barnes explained. “I’ve been so blessed to have doctors who cooperate with or work at TGH.”

Barnes’ local dermatologist and surgeon referred him to Dr. Abraham Schwarzbarg, a Palm Beach County medical oncologist who serves as chief of the TGH Cancer Institute, executive vice president of Network Development, and vice president of Clinical and Translational Research.

“There are a lot of things about TGH that are unique and important, as well as hard to appreciate until you need a certain level of care,” said Dr. Schwarzbarg. “There are wonderful physicians and pieces of the cancer treatment puzzle in Palm Beach County, but the lack of a unified, academic backbone limits access to translational research, clinical work and new drug development. Our relationship with TGH and the University of South Florida has been invaluable for our patients.”



Steve Barnes and Dr. Tapan Padhya greeting a guest at Tampa General Hospital's recent community event in Jupiter.

Dr. Schwarzbarg referred Barnes to Dr. Tapan Padhya, chief of the TGH Ear, Nose & Throat Institute, and professor and chairman for the Department of Otolaryngology — Head and Neck Surgery at USF Health Morsani College of Medicine. Dr. Padhya performed a surgical intervention on Barnes in Tampa within one month of first seeing him.

“Dr. Padhya saved all the nerves in my face and removed all the cancer because he and Dr. Schwarzbarg were so on top of everything,” Barnes said. “I was worried I was going to come out looking like Frankenstein, so it’s really amazing I look as much like Brad Pitt as I do now.”

East Coast patients who need a transfer to TGH enjoy a seamless transition to Tampa through the hospital’s Health Ambassador Program, which helps schedule appointments, submit paperwork, arrange hotel and travel accommodations, and coordinate follow-up care back home.

“This is the experience that we offer our patients on the East Coast of Florida,” explained Dr. Padhya. “The home team of doctors in Palm Beach County establishes the initial trust with the patient and provides the ongoing care 364 days of the year, and then I come in for the surgical event. But it’s a continu-

um of care. The TGH network has flourished and bridged the gap across the state.”

Barnes credits his successful outcome to the entire medical team, but also, his family. His wife, daughter and son participated in his telehealth visits and encouraged him throughout the process.

“My family and prayer warriors pushed me to keep going when it got discouraging. My wife hugged me when I needed it during the battles with chemo and radiation. They prayed for me and for the doctors to do a good job,” said Barnes. “And I can’t say enough about how wonderful the medical staff was. They treated me like I was their grandfather or father. There’s something that Theodore Roosevelt once said that could be a theme for this hospital: ‘No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care.’ TGH really cared about my case.”

Patients like Barnes now have access to the complex care they need in the environment where they need it. “The continuity and integration is so valuable because we don’t have that in our backyard,” Dr. Schwarzbarg added. “But now we have it as an extension, and patients can come back home to heal.”

For more information, please visit [TGH.org/ThePalmBeaches](https://TGH.org/ThePalmBeaches) or call (561) 739-4TGH.

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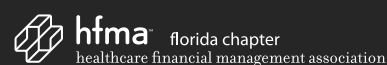
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# Blockchain for Your Life Sciences and Healthcare Organization



BY ALFREDO CEPERO

## What is blockchain?

Blockchain is a distributed ledger technology that maintains a digital record of transactions. Data is stored in blocks, and as those blocks are filled, they are linked to the previously completed block, in chronological order. This forms a chain, hence the name “blockchain.”

## What are the characteristics of blockchain?

These are the main characteristics that make blockchain unique:

- **Enhanced security.** Blockchain helps prevent fraud and unauthorized activity by creating a record that cannot be altered and is encrypted end-to-end.
- **Greater transparency.** All transactions are immutably recorded and are time- and date-stamped, which elimi-

nates any opportunity for fraud.

- **Instant traceability.** Blockchain creates an audit trail with all documented transactions. Traceability of data can also expose companies’ weaknesses.
- **Increased efficiency.** Traditional paper-heavy processes (which are time-consuming, prone to human error and may require third-party mediation) can be completed faster and more efficiently with blockchain.
- **Advanced automation.** Blockchain transactions can even be automated with ‘smart contracts’, which increase efficiency and speed up the process even further.

## What isn’t blockchain?

One of the most common misconceptions about blockchain is that it’s synonymous with cryptocurrency. Blockchain is actually the underlying technology rather than the cryptocurrency itself. Non-fungible tokens (NFTs) also use blockchain technology but are not a cryptocurrency. Most business use cases for blockchain technology will not involve cryptocurrencies or NFTs.

Another common misconception is that blockchain is 100% tamper-proof. While one of the major advantages of blockchain is its heightened security, nothing is completely tamper-proof, and there’s always security risks involved with digitizing information.

## What are the different kinds of blockchain?

There are three different variations of blockchain. Let’s take a look at what differentiates them and their advantages and disadvantages:

|               | Public Blockchain                                                                                                                                                                                   | Private Blockchain                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Consortium Blockchain                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Definition    | These blockchains are open to the public and permission-less. Essentially, anyone with internet access can join a public blockchain. These are the types of blockchain that support cryptocurrency. | This variant is characterized by a restricted network and operates under the control of a single entity. It has permission levels for enhanced security.                                                                                         | These blockchains are also called federated blockchains and act as a type of hybrid between public and private blockchains. In a consortium blockchain, multiple organizations manage the chain. So, there’s no one controlling organization, but it also isn’t open to the entire public. |
| Advantages    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Highly secure due to complete decentralization</li></ul>                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can prevent third parties from accessing information</li><li>• More scalable than public blockchains</li><li>• Faster than public blockchains</li><li>• More efficient than public blockchains</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enables communication with collaborators outside of your organization</li><li>• More scalable than public blockchains</li><li>• Faster than public blockchains</li><li>• More efficient than public blockchains</li></ul>                          |
| Disadvantages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can be slow</li><li>• Not as scalable</li><li>• If hackers can gain 51% or more of a public blockchain, they can unilaterally alter it</li></ul>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More centralized, so there’s some debate over whether these count as true blockchains</li><li>• More centralization opens the possibility of attacks from bad actors</li></ul>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More centralized, so there’s some debate over whether these count as true blockchains</li><li>• More centralization opens the possibility of attacks from bad actors</li></ul>                                                                     |

## How can blockchain be used to benefit life sciences and healthcare companies?

Blockchain can be a game-changing technology for both life sciences and healthcare, as it offers opportunities for efficient collaboration, transparent data-sharing and enhanced security. Here are three use cases to help you better understand the value of blockchain for your organization:

### Use Case 1: Managing Pharmaceutical Supply Chains

Fraud is a serious concern for pharmaceutical supply chains because fake drugs and vaccines can be lethal. Blockchain, and in particular a consortium blockchain, can be used to ensure that nothing on the supply chain has been tampered with or stolen. Furthermore, blockchain makes the documentation needed to transport across international lines accessible and easy to find. Blockchain can also be used to simplify track and trace requirements, which can be cost- and labor-intensive for manufacturers.

### Use Case 2: Transforming Patient Care

A challenge facing the U.S. healthcare system — and systems around the world — is document sharing. Because of the privacy concerns related to protected health information, it can be extremely difficult to transfer medical records from one provider to another. Some countries, such as Estonia, have implemented blockchain to allow for more efficient and secure medical record management. Other countries like the UK are considering similar approaches. The ability to securely transfer medical records would allow patients to share information among providers more easily and avoid common complications, such as different doctors prescribing medications that cannot be taken together.

### Use Case 3: Supporting Clinical Trials

Blockchain makes it easy to store, preserve and access accurate clinical trial data, which is critical to the regulatory process. Blockchain also allows clinical trials to be conducted remotely while still maintaining the same standard of governance as in-person trials. Patients are able to take measurements from the comfort of their homes and upload them into the blockchain, creating an indelible record of their clinical outcomes without needing a clinician to come to their door. This expands your potential pool of clinical trial participants and allows trials to continue even in the face of delays, such as those posed by COVID-19.

## What’s next for blockchain?

Blockchain offers significant benefits, and not just for life sciences and healthcare companies. It’s likely that the technology will achieve wider implementation in the future. As blockchain becomes more commonplace, however, certain questions arise.

One of those questions is related to privacy. Because blockchain allows all users on the network to see the same data in line with their permission levels, and data cannot be altered or removed once it is entered into the blockchain, the technology poses challenges to personal privacy, which is enforced by laws such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the EU, the Personal Information Protection Law (PIPL) in China and the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) in California.

Currently, there isn’t a lot of regulatory guidance in terms of processing private data on the blockchain. As with almost all technology, blockchain is developing faster than regulations are created. As a result, there is some uncertainty as to how blockchain will be permitted to be used in the future, and what its relationship to data protection legislation will be.

For companies considering implementing blockchain, these are considerations that must be weighed now. Fortunately, there are some existing rules in the data protection world that can reduce or mitigate the risks blockchain poses to personal data. For example, companies should take a privacy by design approach to blockchain implementation to ensure there is no unnecessary exposure of protected data. In addition, companies should complete privacy impact assessments prior to deploying blockchain so they are fully aware of the potential risks involved.

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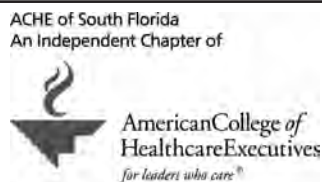
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## Let's Connect: ACHE of South Florida Spotlight



### Monica Puga, APRN, RN

BY LOIS THOMSON

Monica Puga began her career more than 21 years ago as an RN at Memorial Healthcare System, but since that time has moved into the role of senior vice president & chief nurse executive. As she pointed out, "There are significant alignments between nursing and other healthcare disciplines; we are all a family of caregivers."



Monica Puga

Puga said that when she stepped into this position in October, she brought with her other areas of healthcare that already reported to her, namely population health and value-based care. She also mentioned a new service line called the care coordination center. She likened it to an air traffic control center for a healthcare system, saying that "it manages patient flow and patient throughput, so we are delivering the right care in the right setting at the right time, safely and efficiently."

Puga started in 2001 as an interventional radiology nurse, and then moved into various leadership roles. "I was nurse manager of the cardiac cath lab and interventional radiology department at Memorial West. That's where I received a lot of my training with respect to hospital-based nursing, as well as a strong leadership foundation."

Further to her experience, Puga said Memorial was looking for an electronic health record system in 2009 and made the decision for Epic software. "While I had no technology background, I embraced technology, and I was recruited to join the IT team. I spent 13 years in IT leading and collaborating with people from across the healthcare system in deploying many of the Epic applications. About seven years in I also started to focus on building the foundation for population health."

According to Puga, part of Memorial's mission and vision has always been to care for the community. "My team and I took technology and started to build a heavy value-based care and population health

infrastructure, so we could focus on community needs like social determinants to health. We built a data warehouse and analytics infrastructure so we could further understand what our patients and families needed over and above medical care. That was a great passion of mine and our team." Also, of note, this infrastructure was pivotal in helping Memorial's Medicare accountable care organization, Broward Guardian ACO, to be the number one high revenue ACO in the country for 2021 performance in quality and cost savings.

A fairly new joiner to the American College of Healthcare Executives, Puga has already come to realize how the organization's goals mesh with hers. She said those working in healthcare can no longer do things as they were done a couple of years ago. "We have to look at ways to innovate, to put a lot of emphasis on our leaders so that we are helping them to redesign the way we deliver care. We also need heavier reliance on data so that we're using it for decision-making at the point of care. I can say these are all things ACHE embraces."

Puga also appreciates that ACHE focuses on helping young leaders develop critical leadership skills. "They support networking that empowers new leaders to engage with other leaders for professional growth and development. This provides rising leaders with opportunities to build their professions. In addition, they have a great focus on mid-level and senior executives to continue to build relationships and share ideas – all for the benefit of advancing healthcare."

Puga added, "ACHE brings these real-world healthcare challenges to the table, and through their market research and analysis can help us make better decisions for our organizations. I think it's great that our South Florida chapter brings the right topics and people together so we can address our greatest healthcare challenges, all with the goal of transforming care."



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## A message from our President

### **What Next? Bed Bath & Beyond Files Chapter 11**

"Bed Bath & Beyond (BB&B) tanked premarket after filing for Chapter 11 yesterday. It plans to shut all stores and liquidate inventory by June 30. The big-box chain, which still hopes for a buyer, expects net proceeds of about \$718 million from sales." [Bloomberg The Open April 24]

Sobering news from a stalwart big-box chain that just couldn't remain competitive and that failed to pivot during the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 epidemic. Those arm-length economic transactions that became so vital in a "lockdown" economy just didn't keep pace. I, for one, will be disappointed to see them leave the market.

These shocking headlines aren't only reflective of what's happening in the consumer goods sector, it is also impacting other sectors, including healthcare. In a recent article in *Modern Healthcare* [Friday, April 21, Modern Healthcare's Don't Miss] entitled, "When safety-net hospitals close, what happens to nearby providers?" we see the BB&B scenario playing out in healthcare. "I have been a CEO since 1988, and this is the worst operating environment I have ever seen," said Michael Young, president and CEO of Temple University Health System, which operates safety-net hospitals in Philadelphia. "We are going to continue to see closures of not just services and programs, but entire safety-net hospitals."

It is probable that some tertiary hospitals may face economic challenges in the future due to various factors such as rising healthcare costs, changes in healthcare policies and regulations, and increasing competition. However, it is important to



**Jaime Caldwell**

note that the situation may vary depending on the location and specific circumstances of each hospital.

Tertiary hospitals often provide specialized care and services that are not available at other healthcare facilities, making them an essential part of the healthcare system. They may also have access to more advanced technology and equipment, which can attract patients seeking high-quality care. These factors may help some tertiary hospitals to maintain their financial stability.

However, tertiary hospitals may also face financial pressure due to increasing healthcare costs, including the cost of new technologies and drugs,

as well as the cost of attracting and retaining highly skilled medical professionals. Changes in healthcare policies and regulations may also have an impact on their economic sustainability, especially if they result in reduced reimbursement rates or increased administrative burden.

To survive economically, tertiary hospitals may need to explore new revenue streams, such as partnerships with other healthcare providers, offering specialized services or programs, and improving operational efficiency. They may also need to consider implementing cost-saving measures, such as reducing waste and optimizing their use of resources.

Overall, while some tertiary hospitals may face economic challenges in the future, it is important to recognize their critical role in the healthcare system and support their efforts to maintain financial sustainability. It is in all of our best interests!

In this community we rely on our tertiary and quaternary hospitals/systems and protecting those community resources is a community responsibility.

## **Case Study Shows COVID-19 Can Be Transmitted from Mother to Baby Through Placenta, Causing Brain Injury**

Researchers at UHealth/the University of Miami Health System and the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine have shown that, in two cases, COVID-19 infection breached the placenta and caused brain damage in the newborn.

While admitted to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Holtz Children's Hospital at University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Medical Center, a teaching hospital affiliated with UHealth and the Miller School, both infants had tested negative for the virus at birth, but had significantly elevated SARS-CoV-2 antibodies detectable in blood, indicating that either antibodies crossed the placenta, or passage of the virus occurred and the immune response was the baby's.

Both infants experienced seizures, small head sizes and developmental delays, and one infant died at 13 months of age. The study titled, "Maternal SARS-CoV-2, Placental Changes and Brain Injury in Two Neonates" was published April 6, in the journal *Pediatrics*. This is the first study to confirm cross-placental SARS-Cov-2 transmission leading to brain injury in the newborn.

"Many women are affected by COVID-19 during pregnancy, but to see these kinds of problems in their infants at birth was clearly unusual," said Shahnaz Duara, M.D., professor of pediatrics at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, the medical director of the NICU at Holtz Children's Hospital, and senior author on the study. "We're trying to understand what made these two pregnancies different, so we can direct research towards protecting vulnerable babies."

Early during the COVID-19 pandemic, this group of neonatologists had observed transient lung disease and sometimes blood pressure issues among newborns who had similarly tested negative at birth but were born to COVID-19 positive mothers. This was hinted at infection but left unclear whether the problems were caused by inflammatory placental cytokines or whether the SARS-CV-2 virus crossed the placenta and injured the baby.

"If we saw a baby who presented this way, we would call it hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy (brain damage caused by decreased blood flow)," said Michael Paidas, M.D., professor and chair of the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine and Jackson's chief of service for obstetrics and gynecology. "But it wasn't lack of blood

flow to the placenta that caused this. As best we can tell, it was the viral infection." Hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy in newborns, by definition, requires a sentinel event in the mother during labor prior to detecting neurological injury in the newborn at birth.

Ali G. Saad, M.D., a Miller School professor, neuropathologist, and director of the pediatric and perinatal pathology service at Holtz Children's, examined both placentas and found signature placental pathological changes caused by SARS-CoV-2 in both placentas, and also examined major changes in the brain that came to autopsy: "I was struck by the unexplained severity of the loss of the white matter and the presence of features of hypoxia/ischemia in the cerebral cortex. We became suspicious that the virus, somehow, managed to breach the placental barrier to damage the central nervous system, but this had not been documented before."

Jayakumar Aramugam, Ph.D., a neuroscientist and molecular biologist in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences, who along with Dr. Paidas showed the presence of virus in both patients' placentas and also in the brain of the infant who died. Analysis of both placentas clearly demonstrated severe inflammatory changes in each placenta. Also striking, was the absence of a critical placental hormone, human chorionic gonadotrophin, which while essential for all fetal development is particularly important for brain development.

The authors stress that these were rare occurrences. UM clinicians have seen hundreds of pregnant women and delivering mothers with COVID-19 positivity; however, these were the only two women whose babies experienced the devastating brain injuries described in the paper. In both cases, the mothers contracted the infection in their second trimesters, and subsequently cleared it, but one had a repeat infection in their third trimesters, suggesting an unusual maternal and/or fetal immune response to the virus may have played a role.

"We need to continue our research to figure out why these two babies experienced such devastating results," said Merline Benny, M.D., assistant professor of pediatrics, a neonatologist and first author on the paper. "Once we fully understand the causes, we can develop the most appropriate interventions"



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

## Health Care District of Palm Beach County Welcomes Four New Leaders

The Health Care District of Palm Beach County welcomes Geoffrey Washburn as Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, Daniel Scott as Vice President and Chief Information Officer, Roger Chen as Associate Vice President Performance Excellence and ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) Project Manager and Alicia Ottmann as Associate Vice President and Executive Director of Federally Qualified Health Center and Pharmacy Services.

A career human resources professional, Washburn has more than 30 years of multi-faceted human resources experience in health care, including more than 20 years in senior leadership. Washburn most recently served as Chief Human Resources Officer for Palomar Health. Prior to Palomar, Washburn was Vice President, Human Resources at Los Robles Hospital and Medical Center and also held executive-level human resources roles at several hospital and health care systems in Florida and Michigan.

Scott has more than 30 years of information technology (IT) experience with half of that dedicated to IT health care. He most recently served as Chief Information Officer for Good Samaritan Hospital. Previously, Scott held several IT leadership roles at Ascension Health.

Chen has more than 25 years of corporate and health care Six Sigma and Lean leadership experience developing organizational systems and high-performing teams. Chen most recently presided over his own Lean training consultancy firm. Previously, he served as the Executive Director of Transformation at a private cardiology group in Florida and at a statewide health system in the Midwest. Before that, Chen served as Vice President of Organization Transformation at Lee Memorial Health Systems and was the Corporate Director of Performance Excellence at Martin Memorial Health Systems.

Ottmann brings a decade of community health care experience as a practicing physician assistant as well as a leader of clinical operations and integrated care models. She most recently served as Director of Operations for Neighborhood Outreach Access to Health (NOAH) in Scottsdale, AZ. Ottmann originally joined NOAH as a certified physician assistant in family medicine, treating patients at the community health centers and serving as a clinical preceptor. Previously, she served as Director of Practice Transformation at Innovation Care Partners.



**Geoffrey Washburn**



**Daniel Scott**



**Roger Chen**



**Alicia Ottmann**

## West Palm Beach VA Healthcare System Selects New Deputy Director

The West Palm Beach VA Health Care System has selected Julia Spence, MBA, MHA, FACHE, as the Deputy Director.

Spence brings abundant experience to this new role, previously serving in various roles in the department for over 20 years, culminating with her current role as Assistant Director. Within this role, Julia has led the operations of our outpatient clinics, overseen strategic engagements, steered improvements in Veterans experience, and brought innovative change across services.

In addition to her leadership experience, she brings a background in administrative and clinical skills. Julia began her VA career as a clinical provider, serving as a Physician Assistant after receiving her Master's Degree in Medical Science from Alderson-Broadbudd College. She also sought additional graduate training when she was uniquely selected to attend the U.S. Army's Baylor Graduate Program, where she earned a Master's Degrees in Healthcare Administration and Business Administration. Additionally, Spence is board certified in healthcare management as a Fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives.



**Julia Spence**



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## BROWARD HEALTH IMPERIAL POINT

### Andrea Tomczak, BSN, RN, WCC, CHRN

Andrea Tomczak is a charge nurse and wound care specialist at Broward Health Imperial Point where she has worked for more than 14 years. She appreciates the flexibility and the many different specializations the nursing profession offers. She also enjoys the challenge of balancing her administrative duties with patient care in providing advanced treatment for difficult-to-heal wounds. "Finding the specialty you love and pursuing advanced training and certifications in that field not only makes you a valuable expert to your organization, but it's incredibly fulfilling," Tomczak said. Tomczak earned a bachelor's degree in family and child sciences from Florida State University before earning her bachelor's in nursing from Keiser University. She is certified as a hyperbaric registered nurse by the Baromedical Nurses Association Certification Board and has earned a wound care certification from the National Alliance of Wound Care and Ostomy.



### Valerie M. Matthews, MSN, RN, CBN

Valerie Matthews is passionate about managing the bariatric program at Broward Health Imperial Point, where she has worked since 2020. After seven years of focusing on cardiac care, she pivoted to bariatrics after her own life-changing weight loss surgery in 2014. In her current role, Matthews maintains and ensures compliance with policies and procedures for the bariatric service line and works closely with a medical director to identify program needs and solutions. She also makes daily rounds on patients, leads monthly patient support groups, and ensures effective staff education. "For me, the most rewarding part of nursing is witnessing patients overcoming their health challenges to live a happier, healthier life," Matthews said. "Nursing is the most rewarding profession anyone could hope for." Matthews is a certified bariatric nurse who received both her bachelor's and master's degrees from King University in Tennessee.



## BROWARD HEALTH NORTH

### Antoinette Buckham-Charles RN, BSN, EMHA, CNRN, CDP, LSSGB

Antoinette Buckham-Charles, a 23-year nurse, is the coordinator for Broward Health North's Memory Disorder & Alzheimer's Center. In this role, she develops and implements programs to treat patients with Alzheimer's and related types of dementia using a personalized, multidisciplinary approach. She says she feels fortunate to collaborate with a team of dedicated and highly trained professionals and believes the team approach allows for better patient outcomes and standards of care. "I consider the nursing profession to be a calling," Buckham-Charles said. "It adds purpose to one's life and is a great career for anyone who has a passion for helping others." Buckham-Charles has a bachelor's degree in nursing and an executive master's degree in healthcare administration from Florida Atlantic University. She is a certified neuroscience registered nurse by the American Association of Neuroscience Nurses, a certified dementia practitioner by the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners and Lean Six Sigma Green Belt Certified.



### Meghan R. Santos, RN

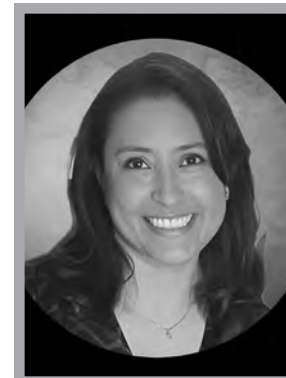
Six years ago, Meghan Santos changed her career aspirations from physical therapy to nursing, following in the footsteps of her grandmother and after encouragement from a nursing professor at Broward College. Today, Santos is an RN in Broward Health North's cardiac special care unit, where she is always willing to step up and help out when needed. In addition to her RN duties, she trains new hires, leads a staff action committee, participates in rounding and more. "After five years in nursing, there is absolutely no other profession I would rather have," Santos said. "I constantly think about my late grandmother and know this is right where I was meant to be." Santos has a bachelor's degree in exercise science and health promotions from Florida Atlantic University, an associate degree in nursing from Broward College and has an advanced cardiac life support certification.



## BROWARD HEALTH CORAL SPRINGS

### Laura Herrera, RN, BSN

Laura Herrera, R.N., B.S.N., is a passionate robotics coordinator at Broward Health Coral Springs. For 18 years, Herrera has risen through the healthcare ranks. She started her career as a surgical technologist in 2005, and while working as a scrub tech, she completed her associate degree in nursing at Broward College. "It's a rewarding experience to see that my patients are safe under my care," Herrera said. "It's also gratifying to have the opportunity to share my knowledge with those who are starting their journey in this field." Herrera is responsible for overseeing the supply management, equipment availability and functionality and the daily operations of the robotics service line at the 250-bed hospital. Herrera is a proven dedicated nurse inspired by her faith and family. "God has equipped me to demonstrate His love to others by attending to their needs," Herrera said. Herrera earned her bachelor's degree in nursing from Broward College.



### Melissa Frankenhauser, RN

Melissa Frankenhauser, R.N., is a labor and delivery nurse at Broward Health Coral Springs. Frankenhauser knew from an early age she wanted to be a nurse. "It was an ambition and a calling that I knew someday I would fulfill," Frankenhauser said. With nearly 20 years of healthcare experience, Frankenhauser is known to be a constant source of compassion and empowerment to patients and staff. "It's motivating to know I make a difference in the lives of my patients and colleagues every day," Frankenhauser said. Frankenhauser plays a pivotal role in helping women throughout their childbirth experience. She works alongside obstetricians and other medical staff to provide clinical care, guidance, and support for normal to high-risk pregnancies. "Nursing is a meaningful opportunity to give back and make an impact," Frankenhauser said. "I truly love what I do!" Frankenhauser earned her associate of science in nursing at Keiser University and her bachelor of science in nursing at Florida Atlantic University.



## BROWARD HEALTH MEDICAL CENTER

### Kimberly Oakman, RN

Kimberly Oakman, R.N., is the assistant nurse manager of surgery and cardiovascular surgery coordinator at Broward Health Medical Center. Oakman is a devoted nurse who has worked at Broward Health's flagship hospital for more than 25 years. She enjoys working with multidisciplinary teams that collaborate to provide high-quality care to our South Florida community and beyond. "I'm motivated by the teamwork and dedication of my coworkers, who are committed to achieving optimal patient outcomes," Oakman said. "I love hearing success stories from our patients who we have cared for here at Broward Health." Oakman's can-do attitude and leadership have led her to manage more than 20 surgical rooms and 150 staff members. She finds great satisfaction in knowing that she contributed to making a lasting impact on a patient's life. "I love to take care of people," Oakman said. "It's a very enriching experience." Oakman holds an associate's degree in nursing from Broward College.



### Kirsten Buckler, MSN, RN

Caring for sick patients hits close to home for Kirsten Buckler, M.S.N., R.N., the assistant nurse manager of the pediatric Emergency Department at Broward Health Medical Center. "I was inspired to be a caregiver by the nurse who took care of my father when he was battling leukemia," Buckler said. "She left me with three lessons: to be compassionate, caring and provide optimal wellness to my patients." Buckler has worked for Broward Health for nearly 14 years. She is responsible for seeing incoming pediatric patients based on the level of injury and illness, conducting health assessments and providing education to patients' family members. "I am proud to work beside such an amazing team to provide encouragement and enjoy their wins when they flourish within their career and aspirations," Buckler said. Buckler earned her associate's and bachelor's degrees in nursing from Broward College and her master's from Nova Southeastern University.



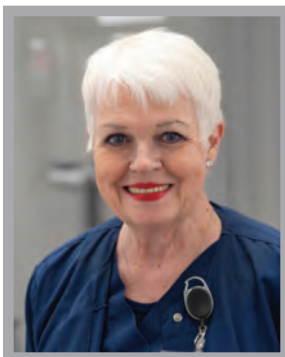


## HEALTH CARE DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY

### C. L. BRUMBACK PRIMARY CARE CLINICS

#### Barbara Gough, RN

Barbara Gough, R.N., is a registered nurse at the Health Care District of Palm Beach County's C. L. Brumback Primary Care Clinics' Mangonia Health Center, where she works in the substance use disorder outpatient treatment program. She compassionately cares for patients, treating them with patience, dignity and respect as they work to overcome their battles with addiction. Her care and support for patients played an integral role in the Health Care District recently receiving a 2023 Florida Blue Foundation Sapphire Award recognizing the outpatient addiction treatment program. Gough has more than 30 years of nursing experience, with the majority of her career in addiction recovery centers in Pennsylvania and Florida. She attended Geisinger Medical Center's School of Nursing in Danville, PA for her registered nursing diploma and earned a Bachelor of Arts in Addiction Studies from Alvernia University in Reading, PA, where she graduated Summa Cum Laude.



#### Kassandre Dacilia, RN

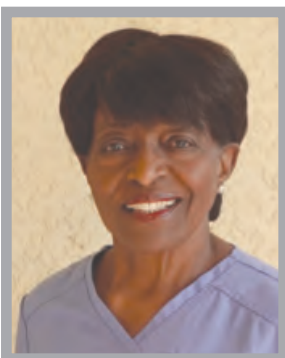
Kassandre Dacilia, R.N., is a registered nurse at the Health Care District of Palm Beach County's C. L. Brumback Primary Care Clinics' Delray Health Center where she provides primary nursing care. Her kind, gentle demeanor puts patients at ease during their nurse visits as she patiently educates them on their health conditions and medication compliance and recommends lifestyle changes that will help improve their health. She worked as a registered nurse at hospitals and at a skilled nursing and rehabilitation center before joining the Health Care District. Dacilia received an Associate of Science in Nursing from Keiser University's College of Nursing in West Palm Beach, FL and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Florida Atlantic University's Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing in Boca Raton, FL. She is fluent in English and Creole.



### EDWARD J. HEALEY REHABILITATION AND NURSING CENTER

#### Magdalene Ducreay, RN

Magdalene Ducreay, R.N., delivers high-quality, compassionate care to the residents of the Edward J. Healey Rehabilitation and Nursing Center in Riviera Beach. The Healey Center is the Health Care District's 120-bed skilled nursing facility, which provides high-quality short-term and long-term rehabilitation and 24/7 care for eligible adult Palm Beach County residents. With almost 30 years of critical care nursing experience, Ducreay has worked at the Healey Center for close to 13 years. Previously, she was a registered nurse in the intensive care unit (ICU) at Wellington Medical Center and in the ICU and emergency room at Palms West Hospital. Ducreay received her licensed practical nurse (LPN) degree from Lindsey Hopkins Educational Center in Miami, FL and her registered nurse (RN) degree from the Miami Dade Community College nursing program. She is certified in advanced cardiac life support (ACLS), basic life support (BLS) and pediatric advanced life support (PALS).



#### Carrie Phelps, MSN, RN

Carrie Phelps, M.S.N., R.N., is the nursing manager at the Edward J. Healey Rehabilitation and Nursing Center. With more than 10 years of experience in nursing and leadership, Phelps is passionate about continuously learning and educating her team. Before joining the Health Care District, she was the relief charge nurse at Boca Regional Hospital in the neurology ICU where she was also a preceptor to students and new employees. Previously, Phelps was the assistant nurse manager in neurology telemetry and stepdown and a critical care RN at Delray Medical Center. She holds an Associate of Science in Nursing from Corning Community College in Corning, NY and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Master of Science in Nursing Administration and Leadership from Capella University in Minneapolis, MN. Carrie is certified in basic life support (BLS). She is a member of the American Association of Neuroscience Nurses and the Florida Association Directors of Nursing Administration/LTC (FADONA).



### LAKESIDE MEDICAL CENTER

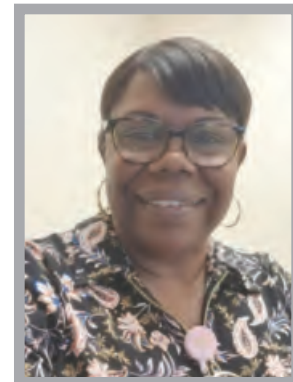
#### Milacoya Latimore, RN

Milacoya Latimore, R.N., is a registered nurse in the medical-surgical unit at Lakeside Medical Center, the Health Care District's acute-care teaching hospital in Belle Glade, FL where she provides best-in-class direct patient care from admission through discharge. She prioritizes clear communication with her patients and their families so they are educated on their diagnosis and prognosis, treatment options and recovery. Latimore started her almost 30-year nursing career at the former Glades General Hospital. She has also worked at other hospitals in the Glades including Hendry Regional Medical Center in Clewiston and Everglades Regional Medical Center in Pahokee. She holds an Associate of Science in Nursing from Palm Beach Community College in Lake Worth, FL. She is certified in basic life support (BLS), pediatric advanced life support (PALS) and advanced cardiovascular life support (ACLS).



#### Sylvia Hall, RN

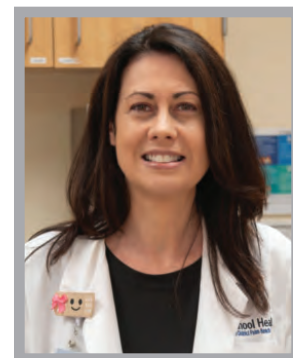
Sylvia Hall, R.N., is the quality improvement coordinator at Lakeside Medical Center in Belle Glade, FL. In this role she coordinates quality improvement initiatives and facilitates compliance for the Joint Commission and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, among other responsibilities. She has more than 25 years of experience as an obstetrical nurse in labor and delivery, mother-baby and level one newborn nursing care and is certified in inpatient obstetrics. She was the assistant nurse manager for women, infant and children's services at Lakeside Medical Center before moving to her current role. Hall holds a practical nurse license from West Technical Vocational School in Belle Glade, FL, an Associate of Science in Nursing from Palm Beach State College in Lake Worth, FL, a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, FL and is currently working toward a Master of Science in Nursing.



### SCHOOL HEALTH NURSES

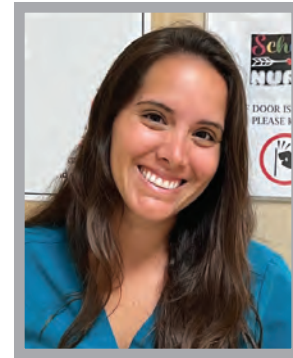
#### Juliua Gidman, RN

Juliua Gidman, R.N., is a registered nurse at Everglades Elementary School in West Palm Beach with the Health Care District of Palm Beach County's School Health program. In this role, she goes above and beyond to care for the health care needs of the students at the school and to foster an environment of communications and teamwork. Recently, Gidman played a crucial role in a student's care, assessing a student with a rapid heart rate and recommending a follow-up with a physician, which led to surgery to correct an undiagnosed heart problem. She is a seasoned registered nurse with more than 10 years of experience. Previously, she was an RN in orthopedics and general surgery at Jupiter Medical Center. She holds an Associate of Nursing from Palm Beach State College in West Palm Beach, FL. Gidman is certified in basic life support (BLS) and advanced cardiac life support (ACLS).



#### Alexandra (Alex) Storey, RN

Alexandra (Alex) Storey, R.N., is a registered nurse at Jupiter High School with the Health Care District of Palm Beach County's School Health program. In this role, she cares for the health care needs of the students at a very large, busy high school. She has a knack for putting her student patients at ease from the moment they step into the clinic throughout their treatment. Born in Peru, Storey moved to the United States in middle school. She is fluent in Spanish and English which enhances communication with the school's diverse student population, their parents and guardians. Previously, she was a registered nurse in the emergency room at JFK North Hospital and a pre-op and post-anesthesia care nurse at the Laser Surgery Center. She received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Palm Beach State College in West Palm Beach, FL.





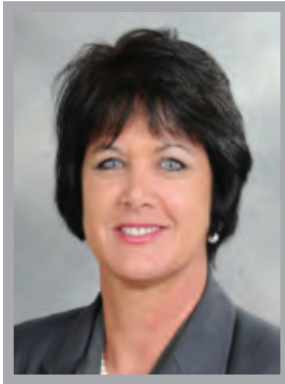
## NURSING CONSORTIUM

### New Board Officers Named at Nursing Consortium of Florida

#### President

##### Jean Seaver, MSN, RN

Associate Vice President, Learning & Development, Broward Health



Jean Seaver, Associate Vice President Learning & Development at Broward Health, is the new President of the Nursing Consortium of Florida. As President-Elect during the midst of the COVID crisis, Jean convened a committee of executive nurse leaders at member hospitals, schools of nursing, and nurse staffing agencies to assess what the pandemic had done to nursing and revealed about nursing in Florida. No other nursing organization is known to have engaged in such an initiative during the height of the pandemic other than the Nursing Consortium of Florida. The initiative found seven factors unique to hospital nursing in South Florida that caused the pandemic experience to be much more challenging, proposed specific recommended initiatives for addressing each, and identified ways that foundation executives, elected officials, and other leaders interested in addressing the current nursing shortage can help. Seaver was born in Burlington, Vermont and grew up outside of Boston. She says, "I knew I wanted to become a nurse when I was three years old when I had my tonsils removed." That early instinct was realized when she graduated from Salem State College, Massachusetts with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing. Seaver put herself through school, working all sorts of service jobs. She earned a Master of Science in Nursing Administration from Florida Atlantic University. She additionally pursued a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership. Seaver also holds a Certificate of Training and Development from Vanderbilt University.

#### Past President

##### Maria A. Suarez, DNP, MSN, APRN, ACNP-BC

Assistant Vice President, Nursing Administration, Miami Cancer Institute



Dr. Maria A. Suarez, Assistant Vice President, Nursing Operations at Baptist Health South Florida's Miami Cancer Institute, is the Past President of the Nursing Consortium of Florida. During Maria's tenure as president, the Nursing Consortium of Florida significantly grew its membership to more than seventy organizations adding hospitals and schools of nursing in the Treasure Coast counties and in Lee County. Maria's insistence that nursing's voice needed to be heard during the pandemic, resulted in the Consortium's joining the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce as a Non-Profit Trustee Member, the creation of an advocacy committee, enhanced interaction with regional workforce boards, collaboration with member-led grass roots initiatives such as the statewide Nursing Advisory Council formed by Keiser University to secure greater support for nursing from state government, and enhanced collaboration with the Nurses on Boards Coalition to facilitate service by executive nurse leaders on foundation and community organization boards. Maria also obtained Board approval for a change of the prior Nursing Consortium of South Florida name in order to signal to nurse employers beyond the tri-county area that their interest in Consortium membership was welcomed. She has been an active participant on Nursing Consortium committees since 2007, supporting the growth of Day in the Life of a Nurse, the Centralized Clinical Placement System (CCPS), and other Nursing Consortium initiatives. She was first inspired to become a nurse as a student at Miami Beach Senior High School and she has been a nurse for more than 30 years.

#### President-elect

##### W. Jason Dunne, DNP, MN, RN, CNE

Vice President, Operations, Arizona College of Nursing



Dr. W Jason Dunne, Vice President, Operations Arizona College of Nursing, is the new President-elect of the Nursing Consortium of Florida. During the past two years, Jason served as Board Secretary, and proved himself to be an extraordinarily creative and resourceful director. As chair of the Consortium's Youth Engage-

ment Committee, Jason faced a pandemic forced end to the twenty year run of the Nursing Consortium of Florida's acclaimed Day in the Life of a Nurse™ program which had annually welcomed as many as 1,000 public high school students from Miami Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties to host hospitals and schools of nursing. Instead Jason solicited video contributions from member organizations, and led the creation of a two-week long virtual experience, consisting of interactive and curated video content for teachers to share with students learning remotely rather than in classroom settings. The virtual Day in the Life of a Nurse™ experience reached more than 5,000 middle and high school students. Once students returned to the classroom changes were made to the content to facilitate optimized in-classroom experiences to reach greater numbers of students than could be accommodated for in-person experiences at member hospitals and schools of nursing. a strong believer in community service and has served on a variety of voluntary board and advisory positions including the National League for Nursing Awards Committee, Nurses on Boards Coalition State and National Integrated Strategies Work Group, and others. He has been a nurse for 23 years.

#### Board Secretary

##### Nancy Gonzalez, MSN, APRN-BC, PPCNP-BC

Associate Dean, Nursing, Broward College

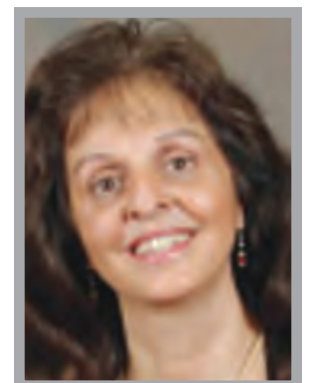


Nancy Gonzalez, Associate Dean, Nursing, Broward College, is the new Secretary of the Nursing Consortium of Florida. During her initial two-year term on the board, Nancy was an active member of the Consortium's Conference Planning, Youth Initiative, and Recruitment and Retention Committees. In 2023, she will co-chair the Conference Planning Committee in addition to serving as Board Secretary. Among her achievements Gonzalez marketed a new part-time option for ASN program to area hospitals, resulting in a 100% increase over projected beginning enrollment. She developed and implemented an online student document tracking system that streamlined the clinical management of students in the nursing clinical rotations; planned, coordinated and developed new and revised nursing program policies and procedures to increase retention, lower attrition, and improve processes in clinical coordination. She increased number of part-time and full-time personnel and facilitated their training to increase the faculty flexibility across all campuses of the nursing program and to ensure maximum utilization of clinical resources. Gonzalez holds a Doctor of Nursing Practice, University of North Florida; Master of Science in Nursing and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, from Florida International University; Associate of Science in Nursing, Miami-Dade Community College; Diploma from Jackson Memorial Hospital School of Nursing, and a Certificate in Forensic Nursing, Kaplan University. She has been a nurse in South Florida for 40 years and a board-certified pediatric nurse practitioner for 27 years.

#### Treasurer

##### Joanne Masella, EdD, MSN, RN

Nova Southeastern University



Dr. Joanne Masella, Assistant Dean for Community Engagement and Integration at Nova Southeastern University Ron and Kathy Assaf College of Nursing, is the new Treasurer of the Nursing Consortium of Florida. Joanne has served multiple two-year terms on the Consortium Board and served as chair of the Youth Initiatives committee for a number of years; helping to significantly increase participation in Day in the Life of a Nurse™; particularly in Palm Beach County.

Joanne has also been a very active member of the Consortium's Conference Planning Committee for a number of years. In 2023, she will co-chair the Community Engagement Committee, which develops opportunities for nurse leaders to serve on foundation and community organization boards, in addition to serving as Treasurer. Dr. Masella was born in Philadelphia and has been a nurse for 46 years.

She started her career as a clinician prior to moving on to teaching and developing nursing educational programs. As a teacher she tells students that nursing is both an art and a science. She stresses the value of compassion and love and says patients remember the little things you do, more than your technical skills.

Her car has a bumper sticker that reads "Do Small Things with Great Love" (Mother Teresa). She sees the role of the Nursing Consortium "as essential to marketing the nursing profession, especially to young people to gain the next generation of the profession."





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It happens without fanfare, but it changes everything.

Your skill and compassion bring the gift of better health to individuals, families and the community. It's lifesaving, life-giving, life-changing care.

Each life you touch is connected to others — by helping one you touch us all.

To our nurses and nurses everywhere, thank you for leading us to embrace hope, and for **transforming care** to create a healthier, brighter place to live.

**#NursesWeek2023**



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## MOUNT SINAI MEDICAL CENTER

### Guerna Blot, RN, MSN

Guerna Blot, Director of Nursing, has been an employee at Mount Sinai Medical Center since 1989. For over 33 years she has excelled in the field of nursing, garnering accolades from her colleagues and supervisors. A consummate professional, Guerna inspires those around her and is admired by patients and peers alike. She has a contagious energy and bright smile--which often lights up a room. She currently serves as a director of our oncology medical unit.

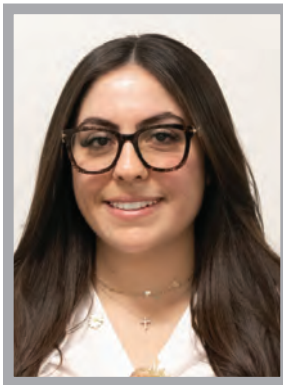
She was recently selected as one of three finalists in the category of "Nurse" for the 2023 Healthcare Heroes award, presented by the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce. We are extremely proud of Guerna's recent, well-deserved acknowledgment.



### Iris Moya, BSN, RN

Mount Sinai Medical Center is proud to present our first-ever DAISY award to Iris Moya, who works in the cardiac step down unit. The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses is a recognition program that honors the superhuman work nurses do for patients and families every day. Iris' nomination forms cited many amazing attributes, including her extreme professionalism, the caring attention she gives to patients, and her willingness to always go the extra mile.

Iris helped organize a special in-hospital ceremony for the son of a terminally-ill patient who couldn't leave the campus. She helped coordinate all of the arrangements for the wedding to take place, and the patient was able to participate in her son's special nuptials. It was a magical moment for all involved. This is the kind of next-level dedication we encourage and admire here at Mount Sinai. We are grateful to Iris and salute her for the elevated compassion and care she provides to all of her patients.



## CLEVELAND CLINIC FLORIDA

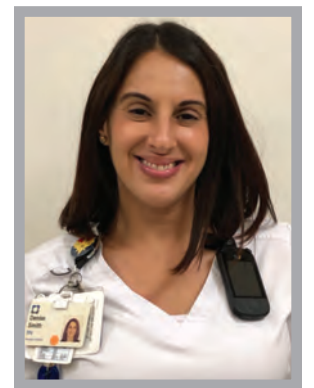
### Elaine Forero-Pardo, RN

Elaine Forero-Pardo has been a nurse in 3 Tower, an inpatient cancer unit at Cleveland Clinic Weston, for over three years. Elaine came to the unit with experience in nursing and surgical services. Her calm demeanor has continued and she is frequently recognized by patients and families for helping them navigate the many challenges of advancing cancer treatment. She is a quiet, steadfast patient advocate, there with a tissue or a hug, whatever the situation calls for. She is always helping others, answering someone's call light regardless of who is assigned, or picking up an extra shift when the team and the unit is in need of help. Her peers look to her for her knowledge and skill. Elaine became a preceptor, training and mentoring new nurses during the pandemic when the unit became a COVID floor. She has continued to mentor new staff as the number of cancer patients in the unit increases.



### Denise Smith, RN

Denise Smith has been with Cleveland Clinic Weston for over 14 years, a demonstration of her dedication and loyalty to Cleveland Clinic Weston. She is conscientious and consistently performs her duties diligently and with the highest standards. She strives for perfection in the execution of every task, and encourages her peers to do the same for patients. Denise is a true servant leader, with shared vision of delivering safe, quality care, and a positive experience. She is an advocate for patients, addressing patients' needs from a holistic perspective. She encourages open dialogue with team members and provides a safe environment for staff to voice concerns or express ideas, empowering them and promoting shared decision making. She is a resource for new and seasoned nurses. As a leader in the Charge Nurse and Assistant Nurse Manager Educator role, Denise leads change, inspires, coaches, drives results and connect teams.



## ***Cultivating the Dimensions of Powerful Partnerships*** ***Advancing Nursing Academia & Practice Leadership***

**Friday, June 23, 2023 at the Signature Grand in Davie, FL**



**Jeff Doucette**  
DNP, RN, NEA-BC, FACHE, FAAN  
**Keynote Speaker**



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Join leading and emerging nurse leaders for a day focused on the critical importance of collegiality and collaboration, by nurse leaders in practice and academic settings, to the advancement of the nursing profession.

The program will include a poster session, a panel discussion, and a keynote presentation by Press Ganey's nationally renowned Senior Vice President & Chief Nursing Officer Jeff Doucette, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, FACHE, FAAN in the morning.

The afternoon will feature a number of concurrent sessions allowing attendees to focus on the topics of greatest professional relevance while building relationships with colleagues that have shared interests.

The day will also include ample opportunities for interaction with sponsor representatives over breakfast, breaks, and lunch.

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## JUPITER MEDICAL CENTER

### Jason Herrle, RN, BSN

Jason Herrle has dedicated his career to providing care to the community as a nursing professional for over 15 years throughout the northern Palm Beach County region. With progressive experience in Telemetry, Critical Care, Cardiovascular Intensive Care and Interventional Radiology, Jason brings his expertise and commitment to providing the highest caliber of care to every patient at Jupiter Medical Center. With an Associate Degree in Nursing, Herrle began his career; after ten years in the field his decision to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Nursing set him on the nursing management path that he excels in today. As Clinical Manager of Interventional Radiology and Pain Management, Jason oversees a diverse nursing team throughout the Jupiter Medical Center network. "With every patient interaction, I strive to provide high-quality care in a kind, compassionate environment," says Herrle. "This approach carries through as I coach the next generation of nurse leaders and caregivers."



### Deborah J. Cardenas, BSN, RN, CCRN

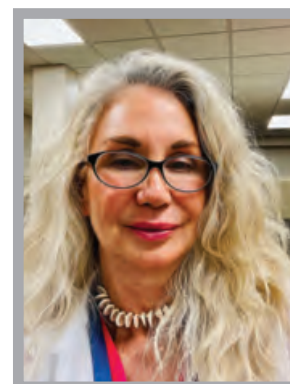
"Being a part of the planning and opening of the Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit at Jupiter Medical Center has been a dream come true," says Deborah J. Cardenas, RN, BSN, CCRN, Nurse Manager CVICU. "I am immensely proud of being a part of the Cardiology and Cardiovascular care team." Jupiter Medical Center has seen tremendous growth in this service area, with the launch of the Open-Heart Program and the Structural Heart Program in just the past three years. Cardenas graduated from Florida International University with her Bachelor's of Science in Nursing in 1984, and began her nursing career at Miami Heart Institute in the Surgical Intensive Care Unit caring for Post Open Heart surgical patients and others requiring Critical Care, followed by other nursing roles at area hospitals. Cardenas joined Jupiter Medical Center in 2018, in the ICU before being promoted to the PCU/CVICU Nurse Manager role.



## SOUTH UNIVERSITY

### Dr. Priscilla Baer

The desire to help the sick led me into the profession of nursing more than 25 years ago. It enabled me to experience a journey of caring within various specialties including emergency and critical care nursing, home care, and even owning my own nursing business. All throughout my career I found myself creating and implementing teaching and learning opportunities for a variety of medical professionals and nursing students, sparking a passion for becoming an educator. Eventually, I turned this passion into a profession by earning a Master of Science in Nursing Education degree and a Doctoral degree, enabling me to teach at the baccalaureate level. Having been an educator for nearly five years, I have found a place I call my teaching "home" at South University, which aligns closely with my own philosophy of student-centered education, and where my greatest reward is helping students develop into burgeoning professionals.



### Dr. Mary McMullen

I feel blessed to have a career in nursing. It wasn't what my younger self thought I would be doing. I started my career as an LPN. After achieving my BSN and MSN (legal nursing and forensics), I was driven to keep learning and achieved my DNP (leadership). I love bedside nursing and caring for patients. I have worked in nursing leadership and as a bedside educator. I love critical care nursing and have worked with some of the brightest and most caring individuals through my journey. As fulfilling as these roles were, I have found my passion to lie somewhere in the middle. As a professor of nursing at South University, I am hoping to instill values and knowledge into the next generation of nurses. Nursing is an adventure no matter what role you play. Thank you to everyone who has been a part of my journey.



*(Salute to Nursing, continued on page 35.)*



## Happy Nurses Week.

You show up with compassion and purpose to bring hope, strength and healing to every patient — no matter where they are in their care journey.

Thank you for your tireless dedication to everyone we serve.

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MAY 17, 2023

### TO HEALTH CARE HEROES SUPPORTERS:

#### To Health Care Heroes Supporters:

South Florida is becoming a global destination for top-quality health-care, and the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce has been at the forefront of the industry's evolution. Our annual Health Care Heroes celebration recognizes the leaders who have fueled that growth and contin-

ue powering our best future. For more than two decades, Health Care Heroes has been the premier community gathering where our local outstanding professionals are honored by top leaders from hospital systems, physician groups, managed care providers, biomedical innovators, goods and services suppliers, and other pillars of the healthcare economy. There may be no industry changing as quickly, and no local economy better positioned to harness the power of that change. South Florida is also uniquely vulnerable to business and regulatory movement due to our unique population. That's why it's more important than ever for the healthcare leaders of South Florida to find common ground and work together in ways that benefit all our neighbors. That work starts with close, collaborative relationships that celebrate our shared success at events like Health Care Heroes.

This 24th Health Care Heroes® Awards program will celebrate and recognize the tremendous efforts, dedication, and achievements of our healthcare professionals and first responders. The luncheon program will feature a video tribute to first responders for Hurricane Ian. We also will be honoring the achievements of physicians, nurses, researchers, institutions, volunteers, and others who have contributed to the health care delivery system and overall welfare of South Florida and its residents. We are excited to announce that Equitable Advisors will be the Chamber's partner in this program for the 24th consecutive year. Consistent partners like Equitable Advisors and presenting sponsor Florida Blue are the foundation for us to strengthen and grow our healthcare community.

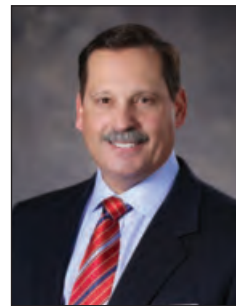
Every year the number and strength of our Health Care Heroes nominees grows, making it more difficult for judges to pick just one recipient from each category. This is a testament to the relentless pursuit of excellence that defines this honor and, indeed, the mission of healthcare in South Florida and around the world.

Sincerely,



Bryan Stewart, PhD  
Chairman, Healthcare Committee  
Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce

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



## JUDGES

#### Cliff Bauer

Vice President Government Relations  
and Joint Ventures  
Miami Jewish Health

#### Ashaki Bronson-Marcellus

Business Banking Market Leader  
BankUnited

#### Jorge Martinez

Senior Regional Communications Lead  
Florida Blue

#### John W. Newcomer, M.D.

President & Chief Executive Officer  
Thriving Mind South Florida

#### Bridget A. Pelaez, MA, BSN, RN, EMT-P, CEM

Director-FIU Disaster Response Team  
Assistant Director, Division of  
Operations and Safety  
Florida International University

#### Whitney Schiffer, CPA

Director, Audit and Attest Services  
Berkowitz Pollack Brant

#### Evelyn Terrell, OTD, MHSA, OTR/L

Director of Telehealth  
and Special Projects  
Nicklaus Children's Health System

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SAVE  
THE  
DATE

May 17, 2023

Jungle Island  
11:15 A.M.-1:30 P.M.

#### AWARD CATEGORIES

Join us for a special tribute to first responders for Hurricane Ian and to present the Health Care Heroes® Awards in the categories of Lifetime Achievement, Health Care Professional, Individual of Merit, Organization/Program, Nurse, First Responder and Youth Volunteer.

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## EQUITABLE ADVISORS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT

### DANIEL ARMSTRONG, PHD

Professor & Executive Vice Chair, Department of Pediatrics

Director, Mailman Center for Child Development, University of Miami Miller School of Medicine

Since 1999, Dr. Daniel Armstrong has been the director of the Mailman Center for Child Development, a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities and the only center at the University of Miami to have a federal statutory designation. He is also the executive vice chair in the university's Department of Pediatrics. But his administrative appointments and various responsibilities have provided a launching platform to go far beyond the boundaries of the University of Miami.

Dr. Armstrong is a fervent advocate for children with developmental and acquired disabilities, and has secured funding at the local, state, and federal levels to support research, center-based and community-based pediatric healthcare, and innovative new programs for community outreach, leadership training, and specialized pre-professional training. He has provided testimony to the Florida Legislature and state agencies, served as a leader of local, state, federal, and national foundation advisory councils and boards, and through advice or consultation, has been a source of influence for diagnostic and treatment standards of care, greater understanding of disease processes, and establishing a foundation for short-term and long-term treatment and follow-up.

A premier researcher whose initial focus was pediatric chronic diseases including sickle cell, acute lymphoblastic leukemia, cystic fibrosis, HIV, malignant brain tumors, short-term and long-term effects of anti-cancer therapies in children, and new diseases such as Zika and COVID-19, Dr. Armstrong's research efforts have improved quality of life for these affected children and have influenced treatment regimens.

As the senior associate dean for child health, Dr. Armstrong was responsible for coordinating integration of child health services across all child health programs in the Miller School of Medicine, UHealth System, and Jackson Health System. He was also responsible for leading the early development of an interdisciplinary, cross-departmental system of basic, clinical, translational, community, and health services research in child health. He is a champion for community outreach, and supported his faculty in development of partnerships between the Mailman Center and the East Little Havana community and Overtown. These focused on enhancing community capacity to address the needs of children with special health care needs. Community representatives have access to

Mailman Center faculty and facilitate opportunities for community education designed to improve developmental (health and education) outcomes and quality of life.

Dr. Armstrong and his leadership team initiated a reorganization of the Mailman Center to enhance collaboration across professional disciplines, bringing professionals of different backgrounds together to develop new programs and activities and enhance older programs with new purpose and direction. Five IPCs (Inter-Professional Collaboratives) were developed through the reorganization: Neurodevelopmental Intervention Science, Community Wellness, Lifespan, Neurodevelopmental Discovery Science, and Promoting Behavioral Health. It is important to note that all five IPCs have a community focus toward individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities and persons with chronic illnesses.

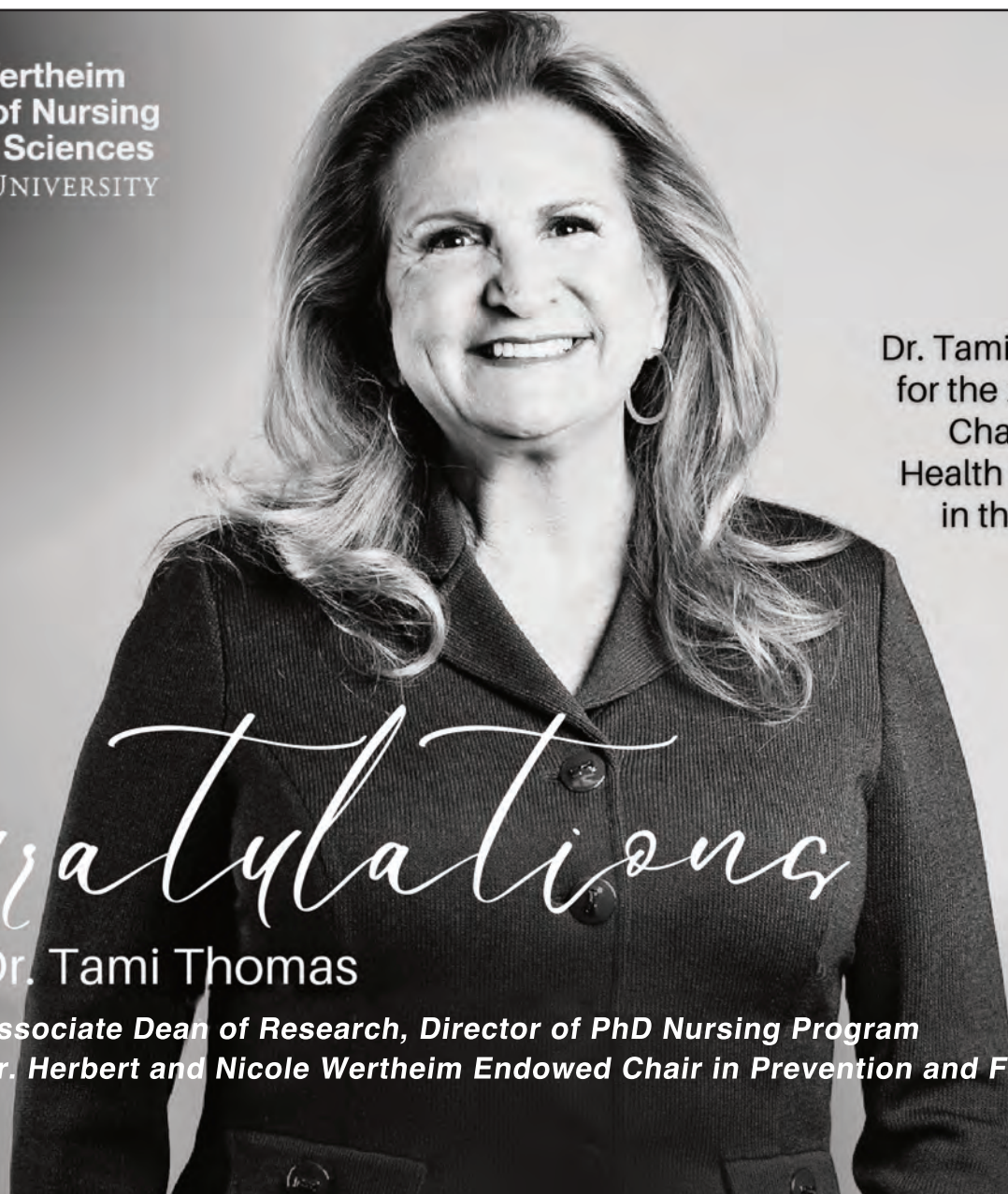
Having spent his entire professional life as an advocate for children, Dr. Armstrong's efforts have been supported by local, state, and federal funding for healthcare programs and research, systems change to improve quality of life for children with chronic diseases, children who had minimal or no access to healthcare, and children with previously unknown diseases. Through innovation, he laid the programmatic foundation for development of leadership qualities among self-advocates with disabilities, their allies, and family members.



*"His kindness, generosity, humility, professionalism, and dedication are qualities that should be emulated by all professionals. Dr. Daniel Armstrong has applied these characteristics to develop and enhance a far-reaching, comprehensive program of the highest standards to improve the lives of children families."*

-Robert Fifer, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor and Director  
of Audiology and  
Speech-Language Pathology  
University of Miami, Mailman  
Center for Child Development

**FIU** | Nicole Wertheim  
College of Nursing  
& Health Sciences  
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY



Our very own  
Dr. Tami Thomas is a finalist  
for the 2023 Greater Miami  
Chamber of Commerce  
Health Care Heroes Award  
in the category of Nurse

*Congratulations*  
Dr. Tami Thomas  
Associate Dean of Research, Director of PhD Nursing Program  
Dr. Herbert and Nicole Wertheim Endowed Chair in Prevention and Family Health



## HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

**LILIAN ABBO, MD, FIDSA**

Associate Chief Medical Officer,  
Infectious Diseases,  
Jackson Health System  
Professor of Clinical Infectious  
Diseases at University of Miami Miller  
School of Medicine and Miami  
Transplant Institute

For more than 20 years, Dr. Lilian Abbo has been passionate about delivering the highest quality, evidence-based health care for all of her patients. She is currently the associate chief medical officer of infectious diseases at Jackson Health System.

Since joining Jackson and UHealth–University of Miami Health System in 2008, she has dedicated her career to making innovative contributions across the health systems in antimicrobial stewardship, infection control and prevention, and outbreak investigations, with special expertise in multidrug-resistant bacterial infections.

Dr. Abbo was at the forefront of the COVID-19 pandemic, leading Jackson, Miami-Dade County's academic and safety net health system, through these challenging times. Under her leadership, the system developed a coordinated, effective, and safe response to the pandemic across a complex multi-campus health system serving a diverse and multiethnic community. Jackson had to plan, prepare, and adapt clinical and organizational operations with standardized protocols, therapeutics, testing, education, and supply chain of personal protective equipment (PPE) across four adult acute-care hospitals; pediatric, behavioral, and rehabilitation inpatient hospitals; two long-term care centers; three in-jail clinics; a network of primary and specialty care centers; a network of urgent care centers, and employee health services.

Dr. Abbo worked tirelessly through the pandemic as a key clinical leader and decision-maker and became a trusted voice in the community through her collaboration with elected officials. She also educated the public through various interviews in English and Spanish with local, national, and international media.

Aside from leading the COVID pandemic efforts, she also led the Monkey Pox epidemic at Jackson, and worked closely with the county to open a vaccination site for high-risk patients. Through her entire healthcare career, Dr. Abbo has been devoted to patient care, infection prevention, public health, education and research.



*"Dr. Lilian Abbo is a dedicated infectious disease physician who is passionate about delivering the highest quality, evidence-based healthcare for all of her patients. Because of her contributions during the pandemic, lives were undoubtedly saved—not just in Miami-Dade County, but throughout the world."*

Carlos A. Migoya  
CEO  
Jackson Health System

**ILEANA LEYVA, MD, FAHPM**

Regional Medical Director  
South Florida & Georgia  
VITAS Healthcare

As a regional medical director and top oncology expert for VITAS® Healthcare, Dr. Ileana Leyva oversees and leads the VITAS hospice teams throughout South Florida. With her vision and passion for end-of-life care, she is a champion of standardizing care across inpatient units (IPUs). At MedSquare Kendall's IPU, she designed a staffing model to enable physicians to work with interdisciplinary teams the entire day rather than brief check-ins, providing optimal collaboration and yielding the highest CAHPS survey results of the VITAS programs.

Especially remarkable during the COVID pandemic, Dr. Leyva advocated for the ventilator withdrawal program, revising policies and procedures so patients could realize their preference for dying at home, sensitively tailoring her approach toward the local South Florida culture. With her enthusiasm, professionalism, and clinical care delivery, Dr. Leyva inspires fellows to choose hospice as their career path in medicine.

As a faculty member at the University of Miami Hospital, Dr. Leyva trains medical students, residents and fellows. A recent graduating class witnessed four out of five fellows choosing to work for hospice, which demonstrates the potency of her mentorship and leadership. Dr. Leyva fosters relationships throughout the South Florida medical education community, especially with administrators, to expand HPM education. As a seasoned medical practitioner, faculty member, and HPM quality leader, Dr. Leyva exhibits the characteristics of a dynamic role model. Her colleagues describe her as an approachable leader who provides both direction and support to ease patients' and families' concerns in facilitating patients' dying wishes.



*"Dr. Ileana Leyva is a proven hero among her team members, students, patients, and families, and has been for many years. As one of her medical directors told us, former colleagues from nearly two decades ago remain amazed at her influence and still ask about her work."*

Betty Bel, RN, MHS  
Vice President of Operations  
VITAS Healthcare

**M. SANDRA SEVERE, PhD, MPH**

Senior Vice President and Chief  
Executive Officer  
Jackson North Medical Center

M. Sandra Severe is senior vice president and chief executive officer of Jackson North Medical Center Hospital, a 382-bed acute care hospital located in North Miami Beach that is affiliated with Jackson Health System. Dr. Severe was the executive lead on Jackson Health System's robust COVID-19 lab operations during the pandemic, which provided nearly 200,000 COVID tests to patients, physicians, and employees, and was a model for other healthcare entities in developing testing algorithms used to ensure patient safety and throughput. The child of Haitian immigrants who made their way to the U.S., Dr. Severe is the first of her family born in the U.S. in the very health system where she is now a senior vice president and CEO. In addition to her role at Jackson North Medical Center, she has also been an adjunct professor at Florida International University's Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing and Health Sciences and Florida Atlantic University's College of Business, as well as a regular guest lecturer and panelist at Florida Atlantic University's College of Business's Executive Master of Health Administration (MHA) Leadership Bootcamp.

Dr. Severe serves as a mentor and sponsor to many aspiring healthcare administrators both at Jackson and other healthcare systems throughout Miami-Dade and Broward counties. She is also a proud member of the United Way of Miami's Women United affinity philanthropy group, one of 2,500 purpose-driven women who are passionate about making a difference through philanthropy and service. Dr. Severe is also a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., a public service sorority, and has been involved in the Dr. Betty Shabazz Delta Academy, which augments scholarship in math, science, and technology of young girls and promotes opportunities to provide service in the form of leadership through service-learning.



*"Sandra believes in paying it forward and leaving a legacy, which is evidenced by her commitment to her community outside of a very demanding, executive role."*

Merdochey T. LaFrance  
Director,  
Local Engagement Verizon



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## NURSES

**GUERNA BLOT, DNP, APRN,  
FNP-BC, MBA/HM, OCN**

Director of Nursing  
Mount Sinai Medical Center



*"Guerna Blot fully and wholeheartedly dedicates herself to whatever task/projects she undertakes. She strongly believes that anyone can make a difference in the lives of others. Her enthusiasm is contagious and influences people around her to participate and be more involved in their communities."*

Agatha Samuel, RN, MSN  
AVP, Nursing  
Mount Sinai Medical Center

Guerna Blot's achievements and contributions to the nursing profession are unparalleled. Since the inception of her nursing career in 1989, she has devoted herself to improving her community here and abroad through volunteerism, community work and humanitarian medical missions. Ms. Blot conducts weekly health fairs to help improve the health of the underserved population of Miami Dade County, Broward County, Homestead and Immokalee, FL among many other locations nationally and internationally. In the early '90s, she was involved in a door-to-door campaign educating young women and families on the importance of breast self-exam while promoting the importance of mammography, and this work has continued throughout the years with Ms. Blot encouraging other nurses to participate and get involved in the fight against cancer. Her nursing experience encompasses many specialties including oncology nursing, emergency medicine, telemetry and medical surgical, and Advanced Practice Nurse. In her 33 years as a nurse, she has occupied different leadership roles and engaged in mentoring new nurses, serving as an advocate for patients and helping nurses transition to leadership positions. She provides leadership and expertise at an Annual Leadership Institute conducted by the Haitian American Nurses Association of Florida to assist nurses to develop their leadership skills. Devoting herself to educate others, she is a host on a weekly radio and television show on health education, teaching and presenting relevant topics such as diabetes, hypertension, stroke, mental illness and more to improve the health of the constituents of her district. She works to promote community health and well-being to help eliminate health care disparities that plague underserved groups.

**JOSEPH FALISE, MSN, RN,  
CCRN, CSC**

Director of Nursing,  
Critical Care & Progressive Care  
University of Miami Hospital



*"Joseph Falise's deep experience in critical care, team leadership, planning and launching programs, and creating new systems during a health crisis helped the hospital confront the pandemic, save lives, and prepare for future public health challenges."*

Tanira B.D. Ferreira, MD, FCCP  
Chief Medical Officer  
University of Miami  
Hospital and Clinics

Joseph P. Falise, M.S.N., R.N., CCRN-CSC has served at the University of Miami Hospital since 2008 in positions of increasing responsibility, earning a reputation as a role model and leader who routinely goes above and beyond the call of duty. He currently serves as the director of nursing in critical care and progressive care/dialysis where his duties include implementing infection-prevention procedures, shift changes, recruitment, onboarding nurses and allied health professionals, and training new nursing staff. He also plays a key role in developing goals for staffing and standard of care. His recent accomplishments include spearheading the opening of the COVID-19 unit in the health system's 560-bed hospital, which he launched in just 36 hours. Over the following weeks, he worked up to 14 hours a day, often coming in on his days off to gather input from the nurses, set up new processes, and manage the expectations of staff and the community. He volunteered to publicly receive the first COVID-19 vaccination administered on the University of Miami campus and actively encouraged thousands of UM employees to get vaccinated as well. He has also served as a part-time flight nurse since 2012, flying into dangerous situations to assess patients and manage all aspects of patient care prior to and during the flight, and during ground transportation to local hospitals. The son of a nurse who followed in his mother's footsteps, Falise's achievements and contributions in patient care, nurse management, and overall leadership have made a lasting impact on the nursing profession and healthcare in South Florida.

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 **Miami Jewish Health**

**Congratulations  
to all of the  
Healthcare Heroes!**



## NURSES

### TAMI THOMAS, PhD, RN, APRN-CPNP, FAANP, FAAN

Associate Dean, Research/Director of PhD Nursing Program  
and Professor, Florida International University  
Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing & Health Sciences



Dr. Tami Thomas is a nationally recognized collaborative and innovative thought leader who spent much of her career developing and implementing community-specific programs in underserved and rural communities. She is a tireless advocate for victims of sexual assault and citizens living in areas with health disparities.

Her leadership, commitment and passion have led to successful programs designed to improve the mental health of victims of sexual assault, domestic violence and opioid abuse as well as families residing in rural areas with no access to primary care. Since graduating with her PhD from the University of Florida in 2006, she has conducted 12 funded studies and served as principal investigator on 10 of them.

These studies included a variety of focuses, such as examining the intersection of health behaviors, culture and acceptance of healthcare innovations like the HPV vaccine in vulnerable populations; identifying and addressing health inequity in rural areas through education of Advanced Practice Nurses (APRNs) and traineeships in rural underserved areas; and the training and development of a network of sexual assault nurse examiners (SANEs) in rural and underserved areas.

As the program director and author of the Regionally Underserved Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (RUSANE) program, she overcame numerous challenges to recruit and train 22 emergency room nurses who now successfully serve as trained SANEs in seven rural Florida counties caring for victims of sexual trauma.

The successful, high-impact SANE program is currently expanding to nine additional rural Florida counties while Dr. Thomas is also establishing a new sexual assault exam center at FIU, which will serve highly diverse students and residents in the surrounding medically underserved communities. Since 2014, Dr. Thomas has also served on the steering committee of the National HPV Vaccine Round Table (NHPVRT), helping to shape national approach to HPV vaccine messaging as well as addressing vaccine hesitancy.

*"Raised in rural Florida, Tami Thomas always envisioned a brighter future for healthcare where services were available to everyone and better access to healthcare could improve not only the physical health but also mental well-being of those in need. Through this vision, her emphasis on geography, culture and economic opportunity as well as being a leader and collaborator in research and culturally appropriate academic and clinical training has increased the quality of health and wellness in rural and underserved communities."*

Ora Strickland, PhD, DSc (Hon), RN, FAAN  
Dean and Professor, Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing  
and Health Sciences, Florida International University

## Congratulations to Our Hero, Finalist Dr. Ileana Leyva

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palliative care, consistent support  
for patients and family, and  
influence on peers and students,  
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## INDIVIDUALS OF MERIT

## BRIDGET LISA MCKINNEY

President &amp; CEO

Professionals Sharing with a Purpose  
Principal, Scott Lake Elementary

*"During Bridget McKinney's 34 years of providing water safety to economically and marginalized children and adults in underserved communities, she has trained over 5,000 children and 500 adults of Hispanic, African American, Haitian, and other descent. Most inspiring is the opportunity Bridget provided to returning learn-to-swim students, who mastered the skills and are now swim instructors and lifeguards in the PSWAP learn-to-swim program held each summer."*

Dr. Linda Washington-Brown  
President and CEO  
Xspurt Provider Services, Inc.

Over the past 28 years, Bridget McKinney has served as principal, assistant principal, district supervisor, activities director, and as a classroom teacher with Miami Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS). She also served as an aquatics specialist, pool manager, and lifeguard for Metro-Dade County Parks and Recreation and is currently an aquatics specialist with the American Red Cross.

Ms. McKinney has been among the most visible activists for educationally marginalized populations, directly involved in revolutionizing education, mobilizing urban communities and leaders, and providing water safety and learn-to-swim programs in Miami Dade County (MDC) to underserved children, aimed at preventing unintentional drowning through her PSWAP-Mentorship and Swim Organization, Inc., founded in 2014. As the principal of Scott Lake Elementary School (SLES), she expanded the learn-to-swim program by bringing in a MDCPS portable pool and water safety instructor, as well as brought in an American Red Cross (ARC) certified Basic Life Support (BLS) instructor to train teachers and students in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first-aid.

As a member of the ARC Scientific Advisory Council, Aquatics, Ms. McKinney has been engaged as the lead in the redesign and update of the ARC water safety instructor program that impacts swimming instruction nationally and globally.

Through her advocacy efforts, she was able to encourage Miami Dade County Public School (MDCPS) board members to implement water safety and swimming education to over 300,000 students in kindergarten through grade 12. Teens successfully completing the learn-to-swim program are eligible to train as water safety instructors and certified lifeguards, providing summer job opportunities and apprenticeship, thus fostering future career opportunities. Significant emphasis has also been placed on safety through her required ARC Water Watcher Safety Program and pledge that must be initiated by trained water watchers whenever children are in or around open water.

Dr. McKinney has also partnered with a community funeral service that provides free burial support to parents facing the death of a child due to unintentional drowning, and mental health counseling connected to bereavement support for parents.

STEPHANIE EPSTEIN, MM,  
MT-BC, NICU-MTMusic Therapist  
Holtz Children's Hospital

In spring 2014, Stephanie Epstein began her graduate clinical rotation as a music therapist at Holtz Children's Hospital at the University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Medical Center. While there, she saw that the children would light up and their moods improve when she sang and engaged in group music sessions with them, and she immediately knew that it was her calling to establish a music therapy program. That program has since become an instrumental part of patient care.

During procedures, Ms. Epstein provides individualized music therapy to help reduce patients' pain and/or anxiety until they reach a level of relaxation that can allow doctors and nurses to give treatment with little sedation or none at all. Benefits also expand to the medical team, who say that music therapy helps their young patients stay focused, grounded and calm while they perform a PICC line placement, port access, or dressing changes on burns—all procedures that are typically anxiety-provoking and sometimes painful. Ms. Epstein also expanded music therapy services into the Holtz Children's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and the outpatient BOTOX clinic at Jackson, where children with cerebral palsy and other muscle spasticity disorders receive BOTOX injections.

She is also passionate about bringing healing to patients' families and hospital staff. Every week, she runs a parent and caregiver support group called C.A.M.P. Caregivers, and also holds music relaxation sessions with nurses at Holtz Children's at least once a month that encompass music, breathing exercises, muscle relaxation and meditation to help them reflect and decompress.

*"Stephanie Epstein is considered the Mary Poppins of music therapy at Holtz Children's Hospital. As the founder of Holtz Children's music therapy program, she has managed to bring magical moments to hundreds of children and their families dealing with devastating medical diagnoses."*

Barry Gelman, MD  
Chief Medical Officer  
Holtz Children's Hospital

## SUSAN RACHER

Board Chair  
NAMI Miami-Dade

Susan Racher is a passionate advocate for mental health education and suicide prevention. Her mental health volunteer work began following her son's serious mental illness episode in 2011 and his journey toward recovery. Seeing firsthand the unmet need for mental health education, access to care, and peer support, as well as the potential for recovery when these three pillars are present, Ms. Racher committed herself to promoting mental health.

She volunteers as chair of the board of directors of NAMI Miami-Dade (National Alliance on Mental Illness) and as the volunteer board secretary and Strategic Planning Committee chair of Thriving Mind South Florida, the nonprofit that manages the Miami-Dade and Monroe counties' behavioral health provider network. At NAMI Miami, Ms. Racher, whose professional career is in finance and investments, put the floundering nonprofit with a budget of \$7,000 and no full-time staff on solid financial and programmatic ground.

Through 100 percent volunteerism, she reached out to community partners and foundations like the United Way of Miami, the Health Foundation of South Florida, Thriving Mind South Florida, as well as securing corporate sponsorships and matching grants from her employer, the Wallace H. Coulter Foundation. Today, NAMI Miami has grown its English and Spanish programs to 36 support groups a month, classes for families and peers, and hundreds of vital educational and outreach programs annually. Now with a full-time staff of 12 plus more than 50 part-time and volunteer colleagues and an outstanding board, NAMI Miami-Dade addresses the significant need to promote mental health, education, access to resources, support and reduction of stigma. Under Ms. Racher's leadership, NAMI Miami also established the community's first Walk for Mental Health, which takes place in May of each year (May 20, 2023) during Mental Health Awareness Month.

*"Susan's goals are to educate our community about mental health, to raise awareness of signs of mental unwellness, and to help improve access to care. She believes that if mental health literacy is raised, we can improve recovery outcomes and save lives through early intervention and suicide prevention education."*

Susan O. Holtzman  
CEO, President  
NAMI Miami-Dade



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## ORGANIZATIONS/PROGRAMS

FOUNDATION FOR SICKLE CELL  
DISEASE RESEARCH

South Florida has the nation's highest number of individuals living with sickle cell disease, and the Foundation for Sickle Cell Disease Research is the only medical center in South Florida dedicated solely to the medical treatment, research and advocacy of the disease, which disproportionately impacts African Americans, Hispanics and other people of color.

With seven centers in Florida, FSCDR is impacting thousands of patients each year, providing personalized treatment and care, which allows sickle cell patients to live better quality lives with less pain. By providing these services, FSCDR frees up emergency department beds in hospitals, and has reduced hospital admissions and readmissions by 60 percent. President and Chief Research Officer Dr. Lanetta Bronte-Hall has devoted her career to improving access to care for patients with the disease.

A leading national and international researcher and population health scientist in the field of sickle cell disease, rare blood disorders, community-based participatory research, and chronic disease management, Dr. Bronte-Hall plans to continue FSCDR's work through expansion into multiple locations to help more patients. FSCDR is also impacting thousands of patients each year through its 13 current clinical trials, and annual in-person symposia that draws hundreds of international speakers and attendees to share research studies and best practices, including focuses on new therapies, innovation, cannabis treatment and legislative advocacy.

*"The Foundation for Sickle Cell Disease Research (FSCDR), under the leadership of Dr. Lanetta Bronte-Hall, is a true healthcare hero. She works tirelessly to create an environment of trust, sustainability and relevance, which has significantly increased participation in research by all members of the community."*

Christie Grays Chambers  
Vice President & Lead,  
Culture & Inclusion  
Blanca Commercial Real Estate

MIAMI TRANSPLANT INSTITUTE  
JACKSON HEALTH SYSTEM/  
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI HEALTH SYSTEM

For more than 50 years, the Miami Transplant Institute (MTI), a unique affiliation between Jackson Health System and University of Miami Health System, has been giving the gift of life to thousands of patients in need of a lifesaving transplant. It began in 1970 when Jackson Memorial Hospital performed its first kidney transplant: the program has since become one of the nation's largest transplant centers, according to the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network/United Network for Organ Sharing (OPTN/UNOS).

The only center in Florida that performs all types of solid transplants on adults and children, MTI is comprised of a full multidisciplinary team of physicians with medical, pediatric, and surgical sub-specialties. Patients also receive care from an internationally revered team of doctors, nurses, and healthcare professionals. In the past 52 years, MTI has made international headlines for performing unique and first-of-its-kind transplant surgeries including the first adult heart transplant in South Florida's history; the first adult liver transplant in South Florida; and Florida's first whole pancreas transplantation.

Since 1988, MTI has performed more than 14,900 transplants in adults and children. In 2019, MTI claimed the nation's top position, performing more organ transplants than any other hospital; a history-making 747 transplants, breaking every previous American record for transplants in a year. Currently, MTI ranks as one of the top 10 transplant centers in the nation, and its individual programs, including the kidney, intestine, liver, pancreas and combined kidney/pancreas programs, each rank among the top transplant programs in the country.

*"Through the years, Miami Transplant Institute (MTI) has been one of the top centers in the nation to perform solid transplants in adults and children, and currently ranks as the top transplant center in Florida. Each transplant represents a life transformed forever: a father who will walk his daughter down the aisle, a grandmother who will be alive for the birth of her first grandchild, a child who may someday become a surgeon performing transplants of her own."*

Carlos A. Migoya  
Chief Executive Officer  
Jackson Health System

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Health Care Heroes Finalists

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well-being of our entire South  
Florida community.*

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## ORGANIZATIONS/PROGRAMS

## NAMI MIAMI-DADE (NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS)

NAMI helped pioneer the peer recovery model. As an affiliate of NAMI National, the largest peer and family led mental health organization in the U.S., NAMI Miami-Dade's free programs meet a critical need for broad community mental health education and support, with one in four adults and one in five youth having a mental health challenge.

It is the preeminent provider of mental health education, building awareness in the community, and filling the gaps between clinical care and the other elements needed for mental health and well-being including education, self-care, social supports, personal and group connections, resources, and assistance to navigate the complex mental health system.

It provides evidenced-based programs to the faith communities, corporations, community organizations, and to thousands of teens, their parents and teachers in the Miami-Dade Public Schools, which significantly improves individuals' and families' willingness to seek help, gain coping and problem-solving skills, and achieve recovery.

Its programs include a Suicide Awareness Initiative with a media campaign; a free suicide awareness conference at the University of Miami; "QPR," an evidenced-based suicide prevention training; 36 support groups per month, including Miami's first Black mental health peer support group; "Ending the Silence," an education and prevention program for youth; a Helpline; NAMI on College Campuses; Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) for police officers; and many other programs in English and Spanish. In 2022, 5,124 individuals attended its support groups; 3,589 youth and adults attended its Ending the Silence for Youth or Families presentation; 772 individuals attended a QPR presentation; and office staff responded to 1,225 Helpline calls.

NAMI brought the first mental health Walk to Miami and held the first in-person Miami Mental Health Awareness Walk, gaining widespread media attention to shine a light on the importance of early intervention and treatment. This year's walk will be held Saturday, May 20 at loanDepot park—Home of the Miami Marlins.



*"NAMI Miami-Dade is the leader in free mental health education, prevention, awareness and support to youth, adults, and families in Miami-Dade County with reach into The Keys. Its evidence-based programs have been proven to be effective and improve recovery outcomes."*

Reverend Walter T. Richardson, PhD  
Chairman, Public Health Trust,  
Jackson Health System  
Board Director, NAMI Miami-Dade County

## FIRST RESPONDERS

ROBBIE MEEK, EMT  
Chief Operations Officer  
CDR Health Care, Inc.

With a comprehensive background in emergency and critical care medicine, Robbie Meek currently serves as the chief operating officer of CDR Health Care, Inc.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Meek served as the incident commander for the State of Florida Infectious Disease Field Hospital System, where he oversaw the operations and management of the nine-facility system. He served in the design process, training of the clinical staff, and day-to-day operations. In May of 2020 when the state began to focus on community-based test sites, Mr. Meek shifted his focus and began overseeing all of CDR's field test site operations. He designed and opened numerous test sites along with overseeing the creation of a digital process that improved testing accuracy and led to faster results.

Mr. Meek has over 20 years of active clinical experience in prehospital and critical care medicine, while simultaneously remaining an active educator for prehospital and critical care transport specialists.

Prior to joining CDR Maguire, he was the founding director of the Center for Disaster Medicine at Florida International University. Prior to that, he served with the United States Air Force on the Air Force's elite Critical Care Air Transport (CCATT) Team and has recently become one of the leading experts in high-fidelity simulation with the USAF.



*"Robbie Meek has been one of the most selfless, hardworking, and inspirational healthcare professionals throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. He is an amazing leader who has developed a cadre of healthcare professionals under his team."*

Liliana Pulido  
Operations Manager &  
Corporate Secretary  
CDR Health Care, Inc.



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## Congratulations

**Susan Racher,**  
Board Chair of NAMI Miami-Dade  
for being named a finalist for the  
Individual of Merit category.  
And to NAMI Miami-Dade for being  
named a finalist for the  
Organization/Program category.

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education, and advocacy.*



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## FIRST RESPONDERS

## JERRY PARET

Police Officer/Detective  
Gang Intelligence Unit  
Special Investigation Section  
City of Miami Police Department

City of Miami Police Detective Jerry Paret is currently assigned to the Criminal Investigation Divisions, Special Victim Unit (SVU) where he investigates sexual battery, neglect, and abuse incidents. Detective Paret is not the typical SVU detective. He ensures that his tactical vest is equipped in a medical fashion, so that he's available to treat any injury at any time. He also utilizes ShotSpotter—an application used by the department to track shootings—and responds to as many shootings as possible to treat injured victims. Det. Paret has also been known to apprehend the offending person after treating injured persons. Examples of his recent actions include ensuring that a survivor, assaulted at knife point, was transported to the Roxcy Bolton Rape Treatment Center (RTC) for medical treatment before apprehending the offender and recovering the knife used. On another medical emergency, Det. Paret was driving through the back streets of Little Haiti when he noticed a man holding his head and screaming to 911 on the phone. Det. Paret medically assisted the victim, applying pressure to his injuries to minimize the bleeding, until Fire Rescue was able to transport him to the hospital. Det. Paret then identified the offender, who was wanted in other cases, and apprehended him later that day. While responding to investigate a sexual battery incident, Det. Paret received a ShotSpotter report and rushed to the aid of a man who was shot more than 10 times. He applied tourniquets to the victim's limbs and multiple chest seals to his chest and back and began the long process of CPR until Fire Rescue arrived and transported the victim to the hospital.



*"Detective Paret goes above and beyond his scope of duty to ensure victims of all crimes are medically treated as expeditiously as possible. He responds to numerous medical calls although it is not required of him, and treats affected people on scene. He thinks outside the box, allowing him to not only treat the injured victims but to also apprehend their offenders."*

Earnest Lawrence  
Police Sergeant  
City of Miami Police Department

## WILLIE WILLIAMS

Chief, Health and Safety Division  
Miami-Dade Fire Rescue



Chief Willie Williams started his career at the age of 19, working as a firefighter and paramedic for the City of Sunrise Fire Rescue Department. He was promoted to fire lieutenant at age 22, and remained in that position for nine years before being promoted to the rank of fire captain. A person of humility and integrity, he voluntarily tutors students from multiple Emergency Medical Technician programs, which has resulted in his students being highly successful in completing the course as well as passing the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians licensing process. He has taught a large majority of EMT instructors who are currently working within Miami Dade College's Emergency Medical Services program. He has also developed an EMS mentoring program that allows former students to return to his class and assist new students with navigating through the unfamiliar portions of the EMT course. Working with Miami-Dade County political officials and Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue Department's staff, Chief Williams developed and implemented the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department's Emergency Medical Technician Scholarship Program in 2014, which has been successful in giving young men and women from disenfranchised communities the opportunity to become successful in the allied health professions. He most recently taught a diverse group of mental healthcare professionals how to recognize firefighters exhibiting signs and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Chief Williams rose to the rank of division chief of Emergency Medical Services at the start of the pandemic, and was the medical branch director responsible for overseeing treatment and transport of critically ill and injured patients during the Town of Surfside Champlain Towers building collapse. Through his work, he ensures that all rescue workers have emotional support and medical treatment services available to them whenever emergency situations arise.

*"Chief Willie Williams should be considered a hero because he provides healthcare for healthcare providers. He continues to be a positive influence on the emergency response community, fellow firefighters, family, and friends."*

Alwyn Leiba, Ph.D., MBA-HCM  
Dean, School of Health Sciences  
Miami Dade College  
Medical Campus

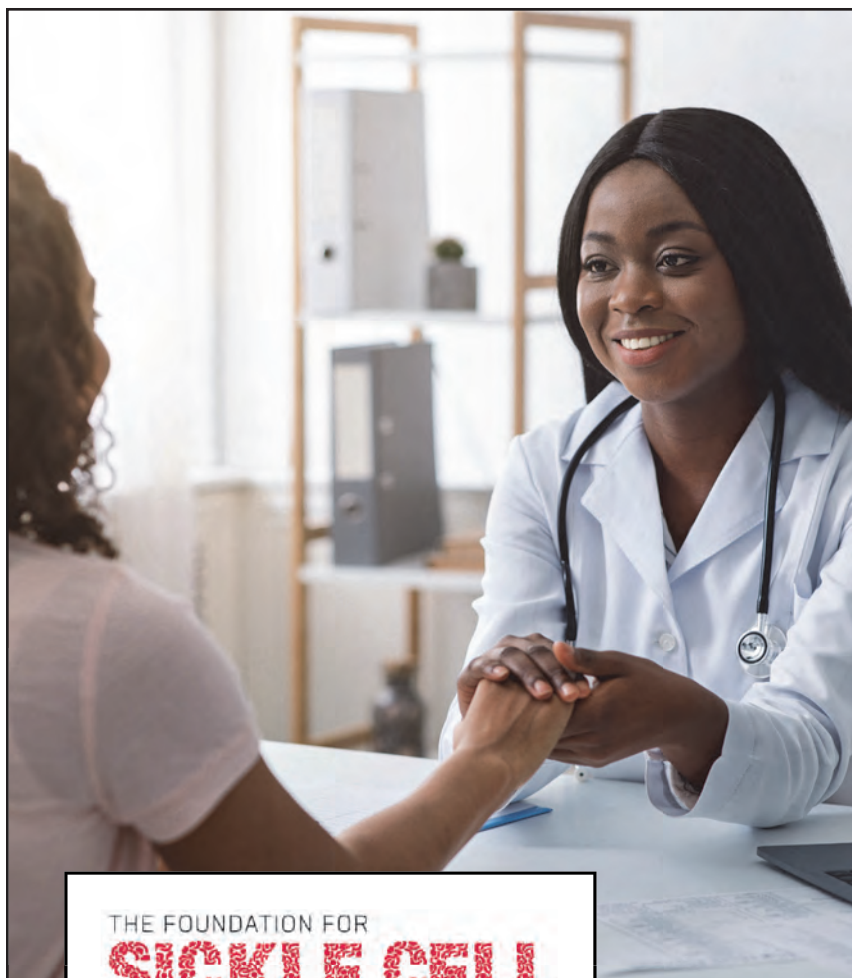
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As the only facility in the United States with a standalone sickle cell center, The Foundation for Sickle Cell Research welcomes patients from all over the world. The team of specialists, care coordinators, case managers, and social work professionals combine to provide all-inclusive care for children and adults with sickle cell anemia.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: [WWW.FSCDRLLC.COM](http://WWW.FSCDRLLC.COM)



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# YOUTH VOLUNTEER RECIPIENT

## SHAWN MARTINEZ

Founder, AVUS Connect

Student,

Belen Jesuit Preparatory School



*"What Shawn started as a community service project in high school during the COVID-19 pandemic has blossomed into a nationally recognized, fully integrated, volunteer program at United HomeCare®. I have the privilege of mentoring Shawn and many youth volunteers from various high schools and colleges, and his dedication to volunteerism has significantly contributed to the growth of the program."*

Blanca Ceballos  
Community Relations Manager  
United HomeCare

Shawn Martinez '23 is a senior student/athlete at Belen Jesuit Preparatory School in Miami, Florida. When not training or competing as a member of the Belen Water Polo team, he carries a rigorous curriculum and maintains a weighted GPA of 4.91.

However, his most fulfilling activity is AVUS Connect, an intergenerational volunteer platform addressing isolation and loneliness in older adults. He founded AVUS, which means "grandfather" in Latin, to address isolation through a Senior Reassurance Program where youth volunteers contact homebound older adults on a weekly basis and conduct a virtual connectivity bridge between younger and older generations.

He also created the AVUS Connect Program website ([www.avusconnect.org](http://www.avusconnect.org)) for volunteer recruitment, participant enrollment and activity coordination, and grew the program beyond Belen Jesuit to other area schools, providing students a meaningful community service opportunity to enhance the lives of older adults.

Over a two-year period, the AVUS volunteer platform delivered a total of 15,126 hurricane preparedness meals to 1,725 homebound older adults living in 10 underserved communities in Miami-Dade County in partnership with Florida Memorial University, Thelma Gibson Health Initiative, Sant La Haitian Community Center and YMCA Allapattah. These meals were donated by FPL/Next Era Energy and coordinated for distribution through United HomeCare, the not-for-profit where AVUS volunteers provided more than 3,200 hours of community service hours. Shawn is also a Posse Miami Scholar and plans to attend Pomona College in Claremont, CA to pursue his studies in pre-medicine, sociology and public policy.



## Health Care Hero

Saluting our Health Care Hero,  
**Chief Willie Williams,**  
our nominated health care hero.

Chief Williams has been on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic, working tirelessly to keep our community healthy and safe. From long shifts to complex cases, he has never backed down from a challenge. He is a true inspiration to us all. Join us in saluting Miami Dade College EMS Professor Chief Willie Williams for his dedication, bravery, and selflessness.

*Thank you,*  
**Chief Williams, for all that you do!**



# Congratulations

**Dr. Bridget McKinney**

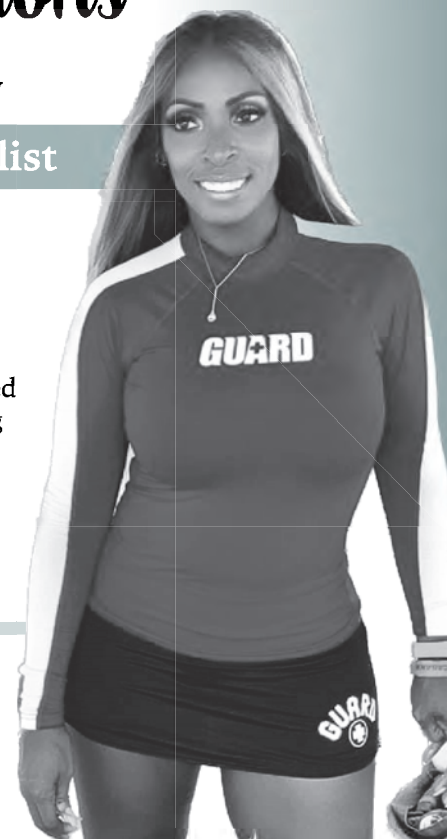
Healthcare Hero Finalist

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# Congratulations

## To our very own 2023 Healthcare Heroes Award Honorees



**DANIEL ARMSTRONG, Ph.D.**  
***Lifetime Achievement Recipient***

Professor and Executive Vice Chair, Pediatrics;  
Director, Mailman Center for Child Development,  
University of Miami Miller School of Medicine



**LILIAN ABBO, M.D., M.B.A., FIDSA**  
***Health Care Professionals Finalist***

Professor of Clinical Infectious Diseases,  
Department of Medicine, University of Miami Miller  
School of Medicine; Associate Chief Medical Officer  
for Infectious Diseases, Jackson Health System



**JOSEPH FALISE, M.S.N., R.N., CCRN, CSC**  
***Nursing Professionals Finalist***

Director of Nursing, Critical Care, Progressive Care  
and Dialysis, UHealth



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[UMiamiHealth.org](http://UMiamiHealth.org)



## HOLY CROSS HEALTH

### Chrisette Duquesney

Chrisette Duquesney began her career at Holy Cross Health in Fort Lauderdale more than 20 years ago. Her colleagues refer to her as the “Amazing Charge Nurse.”

Serving in several positions over the years, Chrisette was initially a telemetry nurse before transitioning to a role as a bedside nurse in the critical care unit. She was eventually promoted to a position in case management and is currently in a clinical lead role.

Chrisette's peers love having her as a colleague, and they enjoy working alongside her. Chrisette is always in good spirits and her energy brings light to any room by making people laugh. Regardless of how busy Chrisette is, her co-workers appreciate her willingness to help, her prompt response to a patient's needs and her ability to stay on top of everything.



## PALM HEALTH FOUNDATION

### Dr. Jinga Oglesby-Brihm, DNP, APRN, NP-C

Palm Health Foundation honors nursing scholarship recipient Dr. Jinga Oglesby-Brihm, founder of the Empower Healthcare clinic in Pahokee, Florida. While a DNP student at FAU's College of Nursing, Dr. Oglesby-Brihm made house calls in the Glades, exposing her to the area's healthcare disparities.

Encouraged by her late husband, Dr. Oglesby-Brihm pursued her dream after graduation: to strengthen the Glades community by increasing access to healthcare regardless of ability to pay via a clinic, virtual visits, and house calls. In 2022, her dream became a reality with the opening of Empower Healthcare on the campus of First United Methodist Church. Funding and partnerships have followed to grow her clinic and services, including adult primary care, women's health, and mental health.

“My moon shot is breaking the chains of healthcare disparity and to help residents achieve the best quality of life they want to have so they can reimagine their future,” she said.

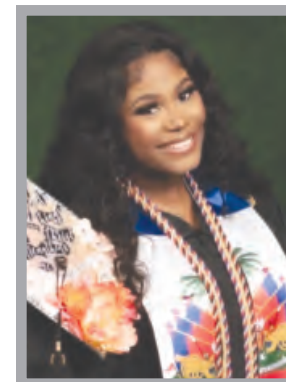


### Dalissa Suprina

Dalissa Suprina, a recipient of the Debra Coffman Howe Nursing Scholarship from Palm Health Foundation, knew she would be a nurse at age 12. In 2010, her home country of Haiti was devastated by an earthquake, killing her mother and leaving Dalissa to become the primary caregiver to her grandmother, sick with cholera. Dalissa spent every day at her side, tending to her needs when doctors and nurses couldn't.

In 2015 Dalissa emigrated to the U.S. She continued to care for her grandmother while she pursued her studies, beginning the nursing program at PBSC with a goal to become a wound care nurse and nurse practitioner working with the elderly.

Today, as a CNA at Delray Medical Center, Dalissa is practicing while she studies, providing the same care to her patients that she did to her grandmother. “Being passionate, understanding, and empathetic is a must when it comes to being a nurse,” she said.



## Salute to Nurses

Thank you for your service, your dedication, and your continued commitment to making a difference in the lives of others.

Happy Nurses Month from  
Catholic Health Services

Learn more:  
[www.CatholicHealthServices.org](http://www.CatholicHealthServices.org)





## NICKLAUS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

### Melissa Olen, MSN, FNP-C, CCRN

Melissa Olen, MSN, FNP-C, CCRN, is a board-certified advanced family nurse practitioner within the Heart Institute who has developed her career at Nicklaus Children's Hospital over the last 19 years. She has cared for patients with heart disease at Nicklaus Children's Hospital, serving in the electrophysiology (EP) outpatient clinic, EP lab, with cardiac device remote monitoring, leading a team of cardiac advance practice providers, and acting as Director of South Florida Project ADAM. Olen is a member of the American Nurses Association, the Vice President of allied healthcare professionals for Pediatric and Congenital Electrophysiology Society (PACES) and serves on the education committee for Heart Rhythm Society (HRS) both, international organizations. Her work is published in peer-reviewed journals, and she has contributed chapters for medical textbooks and presents at national medical symposiums. Most recently, Olen contributed to the development of South Florida Project ADAM in the Dade County community. This work, in collaboration with local Emergency response teams and the public school district, helps to prevent sudden cardiac death in the young. She currently serves as a member of the Nicklaus Children's Pediatric Specialist board and is the first APP member.



### Melody M. Hernandez, PhD, MS, BSN, RN

Melody M. Hernandez, PhD, MS, BSN, RN, serves as the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Telehealth Registered Nurse at Nicklaus Children's Hospital in Miami, FL. She was awarded her associate and bachelor's degrees in nursing from EDP University in Puerto Rico. Hernandez first became acquainted with Nicklaus Children's as a hospital volunteer, then joined the staff as a registered nurse in 2015. She has worked in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) for seven years, providing expert nursing care. Since 2021, she has been instrumental in supporting the hospital's nurse-led Baby Steps Program, which provides telehealth transition of care support for families of infants discharged from the NICU. This program has helped reduce readmissions and provides patient families with anticipatory guidance and expert nursing support during the first two weeks after NICU discharge. Hernandez obtained her master's degree and doctorate in biomedical sciences from the University of Science, Arts and Technology in Olveston, Montserrat in 2018 and 2019 respectively. In 2022, Hernandez received a doctor of medicine degree from Georgetown American University in Georgetown, Guyana.



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## CELEBRATING NURSES

Nurses Week is the perfect opportunity to thank all nurses for their extraordinary commitment to caring for our community. At Jupiter Medical Center, our nurses are a remarkable team of professionals dedicated to providing an exceptional patient experience.

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and build your career with us.

Happy National Nurses Week!





# Our nurses are the heart of **our health system.**



At Jackson Health System, there are teams of highly skilled nurses delivering kind and compassionate care every day. On Nurses' Day, we'd like to thank all of our nurses for their world-class expertise and for making miracles happen daily. Show your gratitude to our nurses by making a donation to Jackson Health Foundation in their honor and sending them a thank-you note at [JacksonHealthFoundation.org](https://www.jacksonhealthfoundation.org).

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# FOR EVERY NURSE



## TODAY. TOMORROW. THANK YOU.

For every patient you put first. For every life you helped change. For everything you do that goes well beyond your job description.

It takes an amazing group of people to care “for every care in the world.” You give your all, day in and day out, to help keep us all healthy. Without you, our “for every’s” wouldn’t be possible.

Thank you.



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## Cover Story: Terror at 32,000 Feet



*Continued from page 1*

weak, drowsy, and could barely talk. At that point, we were at 32,000 feet, off the coast of Africa, and just passing the Azores.

Things progressed quickly from there. I had an oxygen mask on, a pulse oximeter, and someone was checking my blood pressure. I heard Susan say very assertively, “we need to check her sugar!” I heard Yannick say, “her pressure is 52 over something.” Someone asked if she was sure, and Jan responded, “yes, she’s right. I see it.”

They stabilized me and got me off the oxygen. But, several hours later, I had another seizure. I woke to the same voices. When I asked where we were and was told ‘only halfway across the Atlantic Ocean,’ my thought was that I might code and die right there on the plane.

The nurses quickly got a line started, checked my sugar, and stabilized me again. I saw Yanick jump over a seat to start the IV and thought I might have imagined it. I heard Edita say, “a size 7.5 should do.” You never want to hear that. I later learned they were preparing to intubate me in case I got worse.

My friends were my voice when I couldn’t use my own, even getting approval from a physician on land to use the “doctor’s bag” that was on the plane. In a confusing, chaotic, and life-threatening situation, all of them managed to keep their cool, make the correct decisions, and exhibit the professionalism ICU nurses are known for.

The flight was ultimately diverted to Bermuda, where I spent three days under

observation and getting treatment. My husband stayed with me, but my mother continued on the flight to Miami. These women were so kind they even escorted her back to Coral Springs.

My mother speaks limited English and has mild dementia. She later told me, “I didn’t understand what they were saying, but those women were fighting for you!”

The women that saved my life, my dear friends, deserve recognition for what they did. As caring humans, as nurses, as Memorial nurses . . . they were at their best when I was experiencing the worst. In moments of terror and confusion, they put all their critical thinking and expertise together to save a life, something they traditionally do in much more optimal settings.

The staff on Emirates Airlines also deserves kudos. They were professional, kind, and accommodating. Clear about what they could do and what was available, fast getting supplies, calm, and composed. They got the nurses what they needed and repeatedly reassured me I would be OK.

I am grateful for everyone that helped me and know I wouldn’t be sharing this story if not for my life-saving friends, who not only cared for me in my darkest moments, but also had the training as Memorial Healthcare System clinicians to know what needed doing.

*Yenny Rodríguez is a respiratory therapist and clinical ladder co-chair at Memorial Regional Hospital. She has some ongoing health issues but recently celebrated 25 years of marriage with Pedro and their three children.*

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**Happy National Nurses Month!**

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## Conviva Nurses Deliver Excellence in Care, Service, and Aid to Senior Patients

It's been said that nurses are the heartbeat of our medical system.

In honor of National Nurses Month in May, we are recognizing the passion and dedication of our Conviva Care Center team of nurses – an integral part of our network of clinicians focused on providing seniors with personalized care designed to help them age well.

Nursing is not just a profession, it's a vocation, according to Kaveena Sukhram, BSN-RN, a care coach at Conviva Coconut Creek.

"Nursing is a life-changing experience, because you touch the lives of so many people, and in return your life is also touched," she says.

Sukhram speaks from personal experience. On the day her grandmother passed away, she felt the gentle touch of a nurse's comforting hand on her back. And that simple, yet kind gesture is what inspired her to pursue a career in nursing.

A nurse for the past 48 years assigned mostly within hospital systems, Josefina Murphy, BSN-RN, today works as a care coach on the care integration team at Conviva Palm Springs.

"Conviva's nurses go above and beyond, and that includes compassion, involvement with patients and families, guidance

through the treatment and recovery process, and coordinating care needs at home," she says.

### Quality Care

At Conviva, nurses strive to ensure each patient understands the treatment process, the technology involved, the importance of taking prescribed medications on time, and much more.

That mission stretches to all facets of care. "We forged important connections with patients to understand their needs—including any trouble they might have buying food or paying bills," Sukhram says. "Our goal at Conviva is to help patients live longer, healthier lives. It's natural for seniors to experience both physical and mental decline, which is why we make sure to give them all of the support they need."

Prior to starting at Conviva, Sukhram was involved with in-patient nursing. That experience showed her what she calls the meaning of true primary care: "Open lines of communication." At Conviva, patients with questions can call their care centers for advice or in some cases schedule a same-day appointment.

"To my knowledge, no one sees patients in a timelier manner than Conviva," she

says. "In addition, we offer a wellness center, a prescription assistance program for certain members, and many other resources needed by seniors."

Conviva also educates its patients about how to digitally access important information and messages from their doctors and medical support teams.

Working in a senior setting also affords nurses rewarding opportunities to help patients with more personal issues that can impact overall health and well-being, such as the loss of a spouse or loved one, or general loneliness.

"Our seniors know that we are always there for them," Sukhram says. "For me, the greatest satisfaction is to be there for those in need. I want to give patients and their families peace of mind."

Conviva coordinates all aspects of care to ensure its patients have what they need at home, and they're as comfortable as possible. That includes access to direct care from their primary care physicians.

"The key word at Conviva is 'patience,'" says Murphy. "There must be a level of understanding, and it is vital patients tell nurses about their support system at home. After discharge, I call patients weekly to check in on them, because clear and constant communication is key."



### Supporting Our Nurses

Continuing education is available to Conviva nurses. The network offers monthly classes and tuition reimbursement for nurses seeking continued education in their medical field, plus provides support and encouragement from its management team.

"Nursing is a very rewarding profession that provides the versatility to learn and explore many pathways and choice of specialties," Murphy says. "I would never change my decision, because it's been a great career in every aspect. As a nurse, I proudly serve as my patients' advocates and my patients' voice."

*If you're interested in a nursing career at Conviva, visit [ConvivaCareers.com](http://ConvivaCareers.com) to learn more.*



## Camillus Health Concern



## Salutes our Nurses

The Camillus Health Concern family salutes our wonderful nurses for their unwavering commitment, compassion, dedication, and hospitality to the medically underserved population in Miami-Dade County.



Camillus Health Concern  
Greer Building  
336 NW 5th Street  
Miami, Florida 33128  
(305) 577-4840  
[info@CamillusHEALTH.org](mailto:info@CamillusHEALTH.org)

Camillus Health Concern

[www.camillusHEALTH.org](http://www.camillusHEALTH.org)

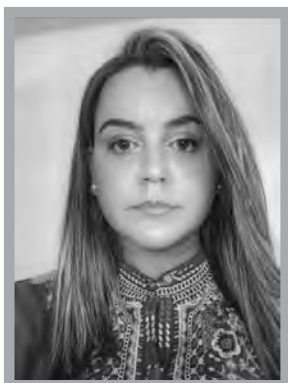
*Providing comprehensive health care, behavior health, and social services – including primary, preventive, and supplemental health services – to men, women, and children who are poor and homeless in Miami-Dade County.*



## CATHOLIC HOSPICE



**Ofelia Chente**



**Elizabeth Fuentes Suarez**



**Ronyd Sanchez Fernandez**



**Jean Daniel Verret**



**Ileana Cabrera**



**Brenda Westcarth**

It is an honor to recognize and show appreciation to all of the wonderful nurses that contribute to the care of the community within Catholic Health Services facilities, home care and hospice programs. This year Catholic Hospice recognized our outstanding employees who made the difference in the lives of many vulnerable patients and their family members in Miami-Dade and Broward counties. While all of our nurses and nurse leaders are highly motivated and strive for excellence, these staff members were selected to represent the best of the best this past year.

Thanks to our award recipients and all of our nurses who strive to achieve the best outcomes for our patients and families every day of the year.

- Ofelia Chente, RN, Triage Manager
- Elizabeth Fuentes Suarez, APRN, Palliative Medicine, Aventura
- Ronyd Sanchez Fernandez, RN, Admissions, Holy Cross Health
- Jean Daniel Verret, RN, Case Manager, Broward Team
- Ileana Cabrera, LPN, Continuous Care
- Brenda Westcarth, LPN, Continuous Care

# Thank You Nurses!

**NATIONAL NURSES  
WEEK**

MAY 6 — 12, 2023



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## Palm Health Foundation Salutes Nurses Striving Toward Their Dreams

*"If not for The Debra Coffman Howe Nursing Scholarship Fund at Palm Health Foundation, I could not have afforded to continue my education. Through the grace of God, I will help others through her generous support."*

*-Sarah Baldeo, FNP*

Sarah knew at age five she wanted to be a nurse. Living in Guyana, and later as an immigrant in Palm Beach County, she did not know what that dream would look like. But with a scholarship from nurse Debra Coffman Howe's fund at Palm Health Foundation, Sarah's dream became a reality. Sarah is now providing compassionate care, studying toward her doctorate, and looking ahead to her goal to open a family practice clinic for those in need with her brother David and sister-in-law Emily, also scholarship recipients.

Debra Coffman Howe is giving back by removing the financial barriers to nursing education for Palm Beach County RN and LPN students seeking careers as bedside caregivers. Learn how you can support nursing scholars, too.

Contact Carrie Browne at [CarrieB@phfpbc.org](mailto:CarrieB@phfpbc.org).





## JOE DIMAGGIO CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

### Aimee Cubillas, BSN

A clinical leader within the pediatric intensive care unit, Aimee Cubillas knew she wanted to be a nurse after having health issues as a child. Having her own children only reinforced how important the work she did in the PICU was. "I'm there to help at the worst times," she said.

"Aimee consistently exhibits high level clinical excellence by caring for some of the unit's most complex patients," said Jineal Shinn, chief nursing officer at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital. "She has been a strong, steady force this past year and we are very fortunate she is a leader within our team."

In the past 12 months, Cubillas oriented to charge duties, joined expansion relocation workgroups, was a preceptor for recent RN hires, and began a professional development journey. She also partnered with PICU's leadership by membership on the scheduling committee, reinvigorating the shared governance councils, and energizing engagement in team activities.



### Amy Eker, RN

There can be no doubt about Amy Eker's commitment to the health and well-being of children.

In addition to nearly 20 years of pediatric nursing, much of it in the intensive care unit, she has fostered seven children, all of them medically complex or survivors of neglect, and adopted four of them. Eker and her husband also have three biological kids of their own. In all, the children range from three months to 24 years old, and include a set of twins. "We just want to help and make a difference," Eker said. For the past six years, Eker has served surgical services as the staff nurse in the pediatric recovery room. She says flexible hours are critical to juggling all her parental responsibilities, as is the support of management and co-workers. The secret at home? "I'm very calm, organized, and we take it day by day. Also, coffee helps a lot."



## MEMORIAL HOSPITAL MIRAMAR

### Bernice Goldson, MEd, CCRN, PCCN

A passion to teach and a desire to give back to a nursing profession she's been part of for 45 years is what motivates Bernice Goldson these days. The senior nurse educator enjoys interacting with newer nurses and encouraging their critical thinking skills. "Nursing is always changing, and we need to be change agents," said Goldson who spent much of her career in cardiovascular critical care. "We need nurses that can engage team members to adapt to changing environments and assist with those transitions."

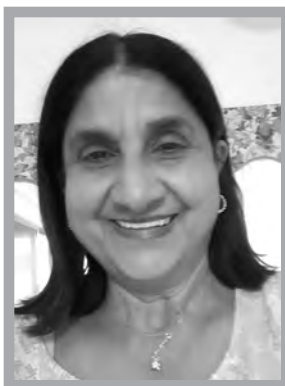
Goldson helped open Memorial Hospital Miramar's intensive care unit in 2005 and is proud of the ICU team that was built there. She says critical care nurses must have knowledge of the disease process, provide customized care, and have a passion for delivering the best possible results in extremely difficult situations. "I was fortunate to have received bedside training with doctors who provided an explanation of the patient care they were providing. Training is different now, but I can still share that knowledge."



### Jennifer Williams, BSN, MSN, RN IV

A nurse for the past 30 years, Jennifer Williams has contributed to the success of two Memorial Healthcare System neonatal intensive care units: first at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital and, since 2005, at Memorial Hospital Miramar. She's done that by focusing on one of the unit's most important audiences. "It's my job to build trust with the parents of the babies and one way to do that is to anticipate what communication is needed," she said.

Williams serves as the clinical ladder committee chair at Miramar. The leadership position enables her to help fellow nurses advance in their careers, a critical part of the effort to energize and retain clinicians working in busy, highly stressful situations. Williams says Memorial's nursing residency program, a one-year curriculum that offers training in all specialties and focuses on leadership, patient outcomes, and professional roles, is also an important part of the training process.



## MEMORIAL HOSPITAL PEMBROKE

### Bibi Baccus, MSN, BSN, RN

Bibi Baccus has spent the last 20 years in nursing, all but one of them at Memorial Hospital Pembroke. She says she enjoys working at a smaller hospital, where you know everyone and it's easy to navigate the system for answers that are needed. Growing up in Guyana, Baccus was inspired by her grandparents and how they were always assisting those in the community. She knew nursing would be a way to continue that legacy. "I love working bedside and the connections made with patients and families," said Baccus. "You can see their progression from the low moments and the positive impact a nurse's advocacy can have on their lives." A clinical manager since 2008, Baccus also brings administrative abilities to the unit, providing training and guidance to the nursing staff, creating patient plans, and overseeing aspects of quality and care.



### Rebecca Hislop, BSN, RN, CNOR

Rebecca Hislop has been a nurse since 2008, starting off in the Intensive Care Unit, but finding her passion and love for nursing inside the Operating Room. "One of the most rewarding things is being an advocate for a patient when they are unable to advocate for themselves. As a circulator in the OR you only have a few moments to make an impact on a patient and reassure them you'll take care of them while they sleep," she said. Hislop says it's a different type of nursing in the OR, and you gain a second family due to the long hours spent with the surgical team. "It's helped me grow into the leader I am today. There's nothing more satisfying than watching staff you mentored grow into amazing leaders," said Hislop. Hislop is currently a surgical services nurse manager at Memorial Hospital Pembroke, a position she's held for the past 18 months. "Everyone here cares about the patients, with safety being the number one priority, but our leadership team make it clear that the staff's needs matter too."



## MEMORIAL REHABILITATION INSTITUTE

### Luz Austin, RN, BSN, CRRN

It's said that some people wear their hearts on their sleeve; Luz Austin wears her superpower on her badge. "It says 'I care' and it's special to me. It tells patients that nursing isn't just a job I do, that there's a greater purpose in all this to me," said Austin, a member of the Memorial family since 2014. Austin originally worked with traumatic brain injury patients at Memorial's Rehabilitation Institute before transitioning to the telemetry medically complex rehab unit. She says the satisfaction that comes from helping patients reach their highest functioning level is her personal reward. "Luz has a unique heartthrob that drives her enthusiasm, teamwork, and ongoing commitment to patient safety," said Shelly Delfin, chief nursing officer at Memorial Rehabilitation Institute. "She delivers exceptional care to the medically complex patients in the unit."



## MEMORIAL MANOR

### Annette Cadenhead, BSN, MSN, FNP

Annette Cadenhead has spent most of her 25-year nursing career working with geriatric patients, and she loves being someone they can talk to. Sometimes the conversations focus on the individual's personal history or what frightens them about the future, but it's always a critical part of the care she provides. "I'm a calming influence and take a seat at their level. Sometimes I just listen, because all of us need to know we're being heard, and that may be enough to make a difference," said Cadenhead. A nurse within Memorial's healthcare system for the past three years, Cadenhead focuses on being happy and strives to 'make it a good day' (a frequently-used expression) each time she comes to work. "It takes the right personality to be effective in this environment, since there are times when people get sad. But we've got a family at the manor and take care of each other."





## MEMORIAL HOSPITAL WEST

### Lavanda Jackson, RN

Lavanda Jackson is a preceptor to recently hired nurses, a charge nurse, and an active member of the shared governance committee at Memorial Hospital West. Also, the unofficial cheerleader of the 5 Central Medical Surgical/Telemetry unit. "Lavanda always maintains a positive attitude no matter the situation," said Michelle House, the unit's clinical manager. "She provides excellent care to all her patients and has a gift for making others feel comfortable, as evidenced by the feedback we receive from patients and families." House says Jackson has many other qualities that make her a 'superstar' within the unit, among them dependability, leadership, and being a team player. On the personal side, House cites Jackson's ambition, self-discipline, and focus on goals as things that make her someone that is admired by peers.



### Nancy Ade, BSN, RNC, CHTP

Nearly three decades ago, Nancy Ade, a longtime labor and delivery nurse, began hosting an annual "Day of Caring" at Memorial Hospital West. Including healing touch, reiki, and massage therapy, acupuncture, aromatherapy, a blessing of the hands, and chiropractic, the event coincides with National Nurses Week and is open to all hospital employees. "Our teams give their all and will do anything to care for patients and families," said Ade, a nurse for 44 years. "But we also have to take care of ourselves, and this is an opportunity to relax, enjoy some pampering, and network with colleagues in a Zen-like atmosphere." "Nancy is the nurse that cares for the caregivers," said Denise Reynolds, chief nursing officer at Memorial Hospital West. "Her vision has always been about the spirit of healing and showing appreciation not just to nurses but all those whose efforts make it possible for nurses to do their jobs."



## MEMORIAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

### Marlene Russell, RN, BSN, CCM

Collaboration is critical to managing patients beyond the four walls of the hospital. In order to facilitate this, Memorial Healthcare System has enlisted Marlene Russell, a nurse navigator who follows patients as they transition to post-acute care. "It's my role to collaborate and assist when our patients need placement in group homes, skilled nursing, assisted living, or long-term care facilities to improve their outcomes and prevent readmission back to the hospital," said Russell. "Sometimes, I work with patients that have been debilitated by poor health, but the root cause is often based on multiple social determinants of health, and within a few weeks of addressing the socio-economic issues and being safely admitted to the next level of care, patients are transformed and feel good again because they have the hand-up they needed from Memorial." Russell monitors patients routinely while at the facility to ensure their needs are met. A nurse for nearly 40 years, she says this is the most satisfying time in her career. "Memorial is dedicated to its community and I'm proud to be part of a program that has such life-saving impact."



## MEMORIAL REGIONAL HOSPITAL

### Samantha Aleman, RN, BSN, RN III

Being a nurse for more than seven years, the last four in labor and delivery, Samantha Aleman experiences the highs and lows with her patients. Most often that's the excitement of a new life but occasionally it's the grief that comes with loss. "I'm part of their story and in the moment with them. Whatever the emotion, we experience it together," she said.

Aleman is an advocate for her patients, who sometimes don't know what to expect or understand all that is going on around them. She says compassion, understanding and patience are what has enabled her to become what Memorial Regional Hospital Nursing Director Jane McCarthy describes as "the essence of a nurse, caring for patients and families as if they were her own."

It was Aleman's own experience of having a child that helped her become the nurse she is today. Being the patient instead of the caregiver reinforced how important empathy and compassion were, especially in situations where babies are born prematurely or there are emergency circumstances surrounding the birth.



## MEMORIAL PRIMARY CARE

### Shemiah Sanders, CMCN

Shemiah Sanders had been a nurse for more than 15 years in Cosmetic Dermatology and Plastic Surgery, but was looking for more career satisfaction when she joined Memorial Healthcare System in 2021. It turned out that being a primary care case manager provided what she was looking for.

"My father and brother are both longtime firefighters and it's our family's way to provide help," said Sanders. "I had worked in emergency departments but wanted a place where you could form meaningful relationships with people." As a patient advocate, Sanders educates patients on how to manage their chronic disease, connects them to community resources, coordinates with social workers after a hospital discharge, and makes future care appointments. "Many of those we work with have diabetes and hypertension and have come to believe it's normal to feel the way they do. It's important I gain their trust, let them know there are resources available that can help, and love on them a little bit."



### Stephanie Dorcius, RN, MHA, MSN

As a clinical manager at Memorial Healthcare System's Sickle Cell Day Center, Stephanie Dorcius has a front-row seat to the struggles patients have with the genetic blood disorder. "Their tolerance for pain, and our ability to help manage it, determines whether a person can carry on with normal life activities. For acute sickle cell patients, constant pain in their joints requires regular visits to our facility." The center, which opened late last year, provides the resources of a day hospital while also offering primary care, hematology, and social services. It's a medical home for patients whose disease is very often misunderstood. "Many different factors can trigger sickle cell pain and there's also the mental aspect of coping with these situations," said Dorcius. "It's important our patients are supported and not judged, because there's far more to the stigma of the disease and providing genuine, compassionate care requires all of us to be educated."



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## MEMORIAL REGIONAL HOSPITAL SOUTH

### C. Renee Rhoulhac, RN III, BSN

Renee Rhoulhac decided at nine-years-old to follow in her mother and grandmother's footsteps and become a nurse. With the family's long history in Hollywood and her father already working for Memorial Healthcare System, there was little question where that would be.

Rhoulhac started in the emergency department at Memorial Regional Hospital in 1988 and remembers being amazed by the life-saving teamwork on display there. 35 years later, she has transitioned to a clinical manager's position at 'Memorial South.' "I enjoy the management role and get to show a different side of me. I strive to bring good light to bad days," she said. "Renee truly embodies the Memorial culture," said Shelly Delfin, chief nursing officer at Memorial Regional Hospital South. "She constantly embraces change and advocates for patients, families, and staff. Her positive attitude permeates everyone she encounters."



### Tori Owens, RN, BSN

Tori Owens professional future came into clear focus when her grandmother became ill. The elderly woman had a variety of comorbidities and the pre-teen was one of her primary caregivers. "I felt I had a knack for care and knew I wanted to work with people in that way. My grandmother was grateful for what I did to help her."

Owens has been living her childhood dream for the past 18 months as an acute care nurse and has already shown leadership abilities. "It's important we recognize Tori for her rapid professional growth, in just over a year she went from nurse residency program to informal leader to charge nurse," said Shelly Delfin, chief nursing officer at Memorial Regional Hospital South. "She models engagement for the unit, as well as leads unit base initiatives." While Owens loves working bedside, she also sees nursing education and management as part of her next vision for the future.



## LEHIGH REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

### Dayna Flores, MBA, MSN, RN, LSSBB

Dayna Flores has been a nurse for almost 20 years and currently is Director, Performance Improvement and Risk Management at Lehigh Regional Medical Center. Dayna is an accomplished healthcare leader with a strong clinical background. She is instrumental in analyzing and applying data to improve patient outcomes and reduce organizational risks. Dayna is innovative in developing initiatives to promote quality care, reduce errors and improve patient safety. This year for Patient Safety Awareness Week, she created a hands-on scenario for clinical staff to test and improve their skills in a fun competitive environment. Dayna leads the hospital's efforts to support organ donation awareness.

Her passion for the health and wellbeing of the community led to her recognition as Hometown Hero for 2021 by the Kiwanis Club of Lehigh Acres. On receiving the award, Dayna commented, "I'm proud to live and work in Lehigh Acres. I am blessed to be part of the leadership team at Lehigh Regional Medical Center and honored to work with so many exceptional and dedicated staff committed to providing quality care to the community."

Dayna is an asset to Lehigh Regional Medical Center. In addition to her position in hospital leadership, she is Adjunct Faculty teaching Nursing at Rasmussen University.



### Kim Campbell-McIntyre, RN

Kim McIntyre is Employee Health RN and is an expert in infection control at Lehigh Regional Medical Center.

Kim is Board Certified in Infection Prevention and Control. She spent her career working in all areas of the hospital, gaining valuable experience which has led to her position today. Kim was recruited to Employee Health and Infection Control due to her extensive knowledge and professionalism.

In her role, Kim serves as a resource for all staff and providers. She is passionate about patient safety and works behind the scenes to ensure the team has the tools and resources they need to succeed.

Kim is known best for her caring and compassion for all. She is a trusted leader and asset to Lehigh Regional Medical Center.



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## Creating Nursing Partnerships That Thrive

The relationship between healthcare systems and colleges, particularly when they are in close proximity, is a win for hospitals, students, and the community. A perfect example is the partnership between Broward Health and Broward College. These are two longtime institutions that are committed to and continue to serve and uplift the community.

There are several factors that make a partnership like the one between Broward Health and Broward College thrive:

**Collaboration:** Broward Health nursing leaders and Broward College nursing faculty continuously collaborate, working closely to elevate students by having access to clinical placement for practical experiences. That's what will ensure success for future nurses. Even then, it takes clinical coaches in the clinical setting to teach newly graduated nurses how to fully assimilate. Hands-on experiences mean they can integrate what they have learned in real-time; develop critical thinking skills; and learn how to react, anticipate patient needs, understand medications, and communicate, particularly with patients and their loved ones. This collaborative relationship was evident particularly during COVID-19. When Broward Health opened large-scale community vaccine sites, Broward College faculty and students volunteered to serve the overwhelming number of residents visiting the sites for the vaccines. This was a unique, invaluable learning experience where students had the opportunity to work side-by-side with healthcare professionals during an unprecedented health crisis.

**Close to home:** Many Broward College nursing students live, work, and have families locally. Through the Broward Health partnership, those students can apply for nurse "extern" positions, keeping them close to home and paid on a per diem basis. During their externship, they are immersed in a professional atmosphere under the



BY JEAN B. SEAYER, MSN, RN, AND SARA TURPEL

direction of healthcare and clinical coaches who guide them through practical, hands-on immersive experiences as they put into practice what they've learned in the classroom. This also gives Broward Health the opportunity to build a stronger workforce, recruiting talent to fill positions following graduation.

**Opportunities:** In addition to nursing, Broward Health offers other opportunities in areas of healthcare that may be of interest to Broward College students. This includes related majors such as allied health sciences, information technology, biomedical engineering, finance, and more because everyone in the healthcare system touches the patient in some way. Broward College also provides the opportunity for Broward Health employees to return to school, close to home, to take classes that advance their careers.

**Fulfillment:** Most companies and organizations post-COVID have faced challenges, many relating to staffing. The good news locally is that at least 25% of Broward College nursing students find employment in a Broward Health facility. What makes a career in nursing compelling is that they are driven by a sense of purpose. They are connected to something bigger, giving back, making a difference, and contributing to the profession and to the well-being of the community.

Together we can encourage nursing students and others to find their place in the healthcare sector and also be creative in keeping nurses at our hospitals. There is stability, growth, and value in establishing a career in healthcare where you live, go to school and where you have established roots in the community. Broward Health and Broward College will continue to encourage that mindset.

*Jean B. Seaver, MSN, RN, is Broward Health Associate Vice President, Department of Learning & Development. Sara Turpel is Dean, Nursing Administrator, Broward College.*



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The philosophy of nursing that dictates my practice is grounded in the principle of lifelong learning. I began my nursing journey in New York city but after more than 15 years of acute care and home health practice, I answered the innate call of service to the profession that focused on preparation of future nurses. It was important for me to not only have the clinical experience to support evidenced based practice, but to be equipped with additional strategies to support successful nursing education, hence the completion of the Master ‘s Degree in Nursing Education and subsequent Doctorate in Nursing Practice.

Practice in academia has demanded strategic adaptation from traditional brick and mortar classroom settings to include remote learning and the ever changing technological advances that support nursing education. As a result, it is imperative that educators bring a diverse approach in teaching and learning styles that create an engaging environment to accommodate the different learning styles as well as the diverse population of students that are faced every day.

As an Assistant Professor at South University, I have the opportunity to be practicing with nurse educators who support a spirit of compassion, cultural sensitivity and mentorship. There is a focus on the importance of ongoing professional growth in an environment that fosters research and scholarship. It is an accommodating team approach and implementation of innovative teaching strategies that will continue to facilitate and enhance the success of the BSN students as we move into the era of the Next Generation NCLEX.



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## VITAS® Healthcare Invests in Future Nurses With Inaugural Miami Dade College Scholarship

The nation's leading provider of end-of-life care is making access to nursing education more affordable through a scholarship commitment to Miami Dade College Benjamín León School of Nursing. The annual \$40,000 grant from VITAS Healthcare provides tuition assistance to four students pursuing a licensed practical nursing (LPN) degree each year.

"VITAS is committed to the future of nursing, and we are honored to provide opportunities to those in the Miami-Dade community who have a passion for hospice care," said Betty Bel, vice president of operations for VITAS in South Florida and a Miami Dade College alumna. "It is a privilege to support talented, aspiring nurses with tuition assistance for their education and equip them with tools to advance in an industry that ultimately strengthens our entire community."

The scholarships will be awarded to two recipients each spring and fall semester, totaling four per calendar year. Eligible nursing students who apply for the financial aid will submit a hospice-related short essay and commit to two years of employment with VITAS.

VITAS leaders presented the \$40,000 check to the Miami Dade College Foundation, accepted by Foundation CEO



**VITAS presented the inaugural foundation grant to MDC nursing students and Foundation leaders at the medical campus. Pictured (l-r) VITAS General Manager Etian Vizoso and Vice President of Operations Natalia Hernandez, nursing students, MDC Medical Campus President Dr. Bryan Stewart, Foundation CEO Nelson Hincapie, and VITAS Vice President of Operations Betty Bel.**

Nelson Hincapie and COO Julie Vives, along with Tommie Norris, DNS, RN, dean of nursing; Dr. Bryan Stewart, president of the medical campus; and Kayla Mathis Campbell, chair of the LPN program.

"We at Miami Dade College are delighted to continue our longstanding partnership with VITAS Healthcare," said Dean Norris. "The investment in our students is

vital to fulfilling the growing demand for nurses and to providing the education needed to care for patients near the end of life with compassion, dignity and respect."

In addition to the scholarship opportunities, VITAS is connecting its medical directors with nursing students through a speaker series to provide end-of-life education each semester. Aspiring LPNs will

learn hospice fundamentals and the role of nurses as part of the interdisciplinary hospice team.

VITAS was founded by two faculty members of Miami Dade College in 1978 as one of the nation's first hospice programs. After over 40 years of providing hospice and palliative care throughout Florida, VITAS continues to be a leader in closing the gaps in end-of-life care. VITAS is committed to affording career opportunities to compassionate nurses seeking rewarding employment and to caring for those underrepresented and underserved in the healthcare industry.

The Benjamín León School of Nursing at Miami Dade College is led by a team of distinguished faculty members with a unique focus on hands-on training in state-of-the-art facilities. The school offers full-time, part-time and online associate and baccalaureate degree programs and is recognized as one of the top ten most affordable nursing schools.

*VITAS is hiring for a variety of clinical and non-clinical roles throughout South Florida. Compassionate and dedicated applicants can find a meaningful career in hospice and apply online at [careers.vitas.com](https://careers.vitas.com).*



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## Cover Story: FAU College of Nursing Adds New Programs

*Continued from page 1*

our undergraduate program, we offer different tracks to make it easier for those students who come from different avenues, whether they are freshmen straight from high school or students with degrees in other fields who want to earn a second degree."

FAU's undergraduate program is unique in that it admits students to the nursing program directly from high school. Unlike other university courses that admit students as freshmen and then require them to take the prerequisite courses before applying to the nursing program in their junior year, FAU's Freshmen Direct Admittance Track enables students to begin taking nursing courses in their first year.

"We have a very high 91.3 progression rate for these students with a four-year graduation rate of 87 percent," said Dr. Longo. "Once they are in the program, they can concentrate on their studies and not have to worry about applying to the nursing program their junior year; they are already nursing students."

In addition to an RN-BSN track, the FAU College of Nursing also offers a Bachelor of Science in Nursing Accelerated track (BSN), which is specif-

ically designed for students with baccalaureate degrees in other fields who want to become registered nurses.

### Extending Reach through Telehealth

As a result of the pandemic, FAU now offers a certificate in telehealth; a fully online, asynchronous program that students can apply to at any time.

"We're also looking at all of our degree programs - BSN, MSN, DNP - to see how we can enhance telehealth there as well," said Dr. Longo. "The community health centers in West Palm Beach associated with the college also turned to telehealth during COVID, and it is now becoming a permanent offering. It gives us a way to reach people who may not have had access to healthcare prior to this option."

She adds that a number of faculty members are involved in a federal grant program to help reach rural populations, and that telehealth is a part of that grant. The program will also enrich the BSN curriculum and student clinical experiences in the areas of primary care, unique population health needs of veterans, mental health and substance use disorders, value-added care, telehealth and

health information technology.

The Louis and Anne Green Memory and Wellness Center, a unique and integral component of the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing, is a nurse-led, innovative and transformative, state designated memory disorder clinic and Alzheimer's services specialized adult day care. There, students engage in person and family-centered, caring-based, inter-professional practice and education clinical practica and academic service learning. Undergraduate and graduate rotations include nursing, social work, health care administration, speech pathology, clinical psychology/neuro-concentration and medicine.

No matter what path students take, Dr. Longo says that what really sets FAU's College of Nursing and its nurses apart is the philosophy of caring which is embedded throughout all of its programs. "Our curriculum is based on it, and it's not just for students - it's for faculty as well," she said. "Our philosophy of caring helps us generate compassionate nurses."

*For more information on the FAU Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing, please call (561) 297-6261 or visit [nursing.fau.edu](http://nursing.fau.edu).*

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## Miami School Leads Way in Helping Nurses Identify Human Trafficking's 'Invisible' Victims

BY ROBIN SHEAR, SR. EDITOR, UM  
SCHOOL OF NURSING  
AND HEALTH STUDIES

National Nurses Month is a time to recognize and thank the nearly 4.2 million U.S. nurses who devote themselves day after day to their profession and their patients. It is also an opportunity to address the ways in which nurses can make an even bigger impact and stronger statement in determining the future of their profession.

One place nurses can make a tremendous impact is in the public health crisis of human trafficking. Every year millions of men, women, and children are enslaved, exploited, and abused worldwide, including in the United States and our own South Florida.

However, these victims are not easy to recognize because they are being controlled, hidden, coached, and terrorized into remaining invisible.

The University of Miami School of Nursing and Health Studies is committed to providing evidence-based education that will help health professionals prevent and mitigate human trafficking.

During National Human Trafficking Prevention Month in January, Drs. Deborah Salani and Beatriz Valdes, both associate professors of clinical at the School of Nursing and Health Studies (SONHS), presented the first installment of the SONHS Spring Lecture Series, "Do You See What I See? Recognizing Human Trafficking" in the school's S.H.A.R.E.™ Auditorium.

During a video shown during the lecture, one trafficking survivor said she had been sexually exploited since age 14. "I told [God], that's it. I can't survive this anymore," she said. "I was going to commit suicide...Most of the girls in there don't think they could get out."

Dr. Salani explained that while there are risk factors making certain people more vulnerable to being trafficked, human trafficking victims may be any age, race, gender, and nationality. "Any person forced to work or perform service under threat of penalty or harm is a victim of trafficking," she said.

"Do You See What I See? Recognizing Human Trafficking," is also the name of the powerful hybrid of simulation and



classroom instruction from Drs. Salani and Valdes that over 600 nursing students at SONHS have completed since Spring 2021.

Teaching health care providers to identify and responsibly assist human trafficking victims in culturally appropriate ways that don't retraumatize or endanger them is part of a concerted mission under way at SONHS to make evidence-based tools and resources available to as many area health care professionals as possible.

Human trafficking awareness is a pillar of the school's goals for Ever Brighter: The Campaign for Our Next Century. Standardized patients enact emergency department patient scenarios addressing the sex, labor, and domestic servitude aspects of human trafficking.

"It's not something you can read about. You have to practice it," said SONHS Dean Cindy L. Munro. "Recognizing human trafficking should be a skill set just like the one we have when we see someone collapse. When that happens, we know how to perform CPR. We roll right into action."

"Our vision includes establishing the Academic Center for Human Trafficking Education and Prevention at SONHS," Dean Munro continued. "The center will provide a permanent incubator from which faculty and students can continue developing, disseminating, and scaling up evidence-based curricula and research to national and international levels."

Critical support to date has come from The Harcourt M. and Virginia W. Sylvester Foundation, Maria G. Lamas, Heidi Schaeffer, M.D. '98, and the UM Citizens Board, among others. Generous funding from the Sylvester Foundation will enable SONHS to significantly expand its efforts

over the next two years to educate front-line health care professionals, collaborate with major hospital systems such as UHealth and Jackson Health System, engage a consultant, form an advisory board, and establish reproducible resources for the local, national, and international community.

Lamas's gift helped create The Maria G. Lamas Featured Speaker Series for Human Trafficking Education and Prevention Endowment with nurse practitioner Jessica Peck, a nationally recognized anti-human trafficking advocate and clinical professor from Baylor University, as its inaugural presenter. "Human trafficking is one of the most egregious human rights violations there is," said Dr. Peck during her address. "This is happening in your back yard, in my back yard, all the time, all around us."

Teaching health providers to better recognize human trafficking's victims is an important step toward combating it in our communities.

*If you need help or suspect a case of human trafficking, call or share the Stop Human Trafficking hotline at 1-888-373-7888.*

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## Surgeons Join Palm Beach Health Network Physician Group in Port St. Lucie

Palm Beach Health Network Physician Group (PBHNPG) is pleased to announce Gustavo Lopes, D.O., FACOS, a general and bariatric surgeon, has joined the multispecialty physician group and opens his bariatric and general surgery practice in Palm Beach Gardens with plans to expand to Port St. Lucie in 2023. Dr. Lopes is board-certified by the American Osteopathic Board of Surgery and on-staff at Good Samaritan Medical Center in West Palm Beach. Prior to joining PBHNPG, Dr. Lopes worked as Department Chair, General Surgery, Digestive Disease Institute, General Surgery Director and Robotic Surgery Medical Director at Cleveland Clinic Martin Health. Additionally, Dr. Lopes served as Chairman, Department of Surgery at Martin Health Systems and Cleveland Clinic Martin Health from 2018-2022. Dr. Lopes served on active duty as a general and laparoscopic surgeon in the U.S. Air Force from 2009 to 2013. He was stationed at Eglin AFB, FL and deployed overseas. During his service in the military, Dr. Lopes received the U.S. Air Force: Meritorious Service Medal. He joined Martin Medical Group in July 2013 and had an office with Martin Health Physician Group.

Philip W. Moyer, M.D., FACS, a general surgeon, also joins the Palm Beach Health Network Physician Group and opens his practice in Palm Beach Gardens with plans to expand to Port St. Lucie in 2023. Dr. Moyer is board-certified by the American Board of Surgery. In addition, Dr. Moyer is on-staff at Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center and Good Samaritan Medical Center. Prior to joining the Palm Beach Health Network Physician Group, Dr. Moyer worked at Raulerson Surgical Specialists and on-staff at HCA Florida Raulerson Hospital in Okeechobee, FL, and Martin Memorial Hospital/Cleveland Clinic. Dr. Moyer also served as medical director of the Tradition Surgery Center at Martin Health System in Port St. Lucie. In addition, Dr. Moyer is an associate professor at Florida State University as well as a da Vinci Robotic Instructor for the da Vinci® Xi™ surgical system.



**Dr. Gustavo Lopes**



**Dr. Philip W. Moyer**

## Dipen J. Parekh, MD, Elected Member of the American Association of Genitourinary Surgeons

Dipen J. Parekh, M.D., founding director of the Desai Sethi Urology Institute at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, was recently elected to the American Association of Genitourinary Surgeons (AAGUS), an organization of leading academic urologists dedicated to the study of diseases of the genitourinary system. Many exceptional achievements throughout his career contributed to Dr. Parekh's election to the AAGUS. He is the founding director of the Desai Sethi Urology Institute, one of a handful of free-standing urology institutes in the country adopting a multidisciplinary approach to advance clinical care, research and education for genitourinary diseases. He was also the 2013 recipient of the Gold Cystoscope Award from the American Urology Association.

As director of robotic surgery, Dr. Parekh has performed more than 5,000 robotic urologic procedures to treat prostate, kidney and bladder cancer. Through an NCI-funded RO1 grant, he was the principal investigator of the RAZOR clinical trial, the first randomized clinical trial evaluating the effectiveness of the robotic approach in bladder cancer. The RAZOR trial's results were published in high-impact medical journals including the Lancet and JAMA.



**Dr. Dipen J. Parekh**

## Interventional Neurologist Joins the Palm Beach Neuroscience Institute

Palm Beach Health Network Physician Group (PBHNPG) is pleased to announce Daniel Vela-Duarte, M.D., MSCR, a neurointerventionalist, has joined the Palm Beach Neuroscience Institute (PBNI) neurology practice in West Palm Beach, FL. Dr. Vela-Duarte is board-certified in general neurology and vascular neurology with the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. Dr. Vela-Duarte is on-staff at St. Mary's Medical Center and Delray Medical Center.

Prior to joining PBNI, Dr. Vela-Duarte completed a fellowship in Neuroendovascular Surgery and Interventional Neuroradiology from Miami Cardiac and Vascular Institute. Dr. Vela-Duarte earned a Master's of Science in clinical research (MSCR) from the Medical University of South Carolina, American Academy of Neurology via the Training in Research for Academic Neurologists to Sustain Careers and Enhance the Numbers of Diverse Scholars (TRANSCENDS) program full scholarship. Dr. Vela-Duarte also completed a fellowship in Vascular Neurology from the Cerebrovascular Center at The Cleveland Clinic Foundation, Cleveland, Ohio. Dr. Vela-Duarte completed his neurology residency at the Loyola University Medical Center, Department of Neurology and an internship in internal medicine from the Loyola University Medical Center, located in Maywood, IL. Additionally, Dr. Vela-Duarte completed a postdoctoral research fellowship in electrophysiology at SUNY Downstate Medical Center, Department of Physiology and Pharmacology and New York University (NYU), Department of Physiology and Neuroscience, Brooklyn, NY.

Dr. Vela-Duarte also trained in the Functional MRI program at New York-Presbyterian/Columbia University, Irving Medical Center, New York, NY. Dr. Vela-Duarte graduated medical school from Universidad Nacional de Colombia, School of Medicine, located in Bogot , Colombia.



**Dr. Daniel Vela-Duarte**

## Holy Cross Medical Group Adds Primary Care and Internal Medicine Physician

Holy Cross Medical Group announced that Board-certified internal medicine physician Luke Suvunrunsi, M.D., has joined the multi-specialty physician-employed group.

Certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine, Dr. Suvunrunsi's focus areas include adult medicine, annual wellness visits, primary intervention, care management, pre-operative evaluation, school and work physicals and hospital discharge. Most recently, he practiced as a Primary Care Physician and Hospitalist in Hyannis and Wareham, Massachusetts.

Dr. Suvunrunsi earned his Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and Master of Business Administration from the University of Texas at Dallas, then graduated with honors from the University College of Dublin, Ireland, with a Doctor of Medicine degree. He then completed his internal medicine residency training at Steward Carney Hospital, affiliated with Tufts University School of Medicine, in Boston, MA.



**Dr. Luke Suvunrunsi**

## Holy Cross Health Orthopedic Institute Welcomes Sports Medicine Physician with NCAA DI Experience

Sports medicine physician Daniel R. Gonzalez, M.D., CAQSM, has joined the Holy Cross Health Orthopedic Institute.

Most recently, Dr. Gonzalez was with South Florida Walk-In Orthopedics and Sports Medicine in Davie. He has been a member of the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine and American Academy of Family Physicians since 2016.

Dr. Gonzalez completed his residency and internship at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital-Barnabas Health in Somerville, NJ, followed by a primary care sports medicine fellowship in Atlanta at Northside Hospital Gwinnett. During his fellowship, he was the associate team physician for Georgia State University's NCAA Division 1 athletics department, where he treated members of the football, basketball, soccer, cross country and baseball teams. He was also the associate player physician for the PGA Tour Championship at East Lake, Georgia and worked with athletes at the U.S. Olympic Team Track & Field Trials and various high school football teams in the state.

A South Florida native, Dr. Gonzalez earned a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Physiology at Florida State University and his medical degree from Ross University School of Medicine in Miramar.



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# Cover Story: Cyberattacks: Not If, But When

Continued from page 1

tem running again, and reach out to every patient who was affected by the breach. "There may also be fees and fines to be paid, as well as the cost of a public relations campaign to help restore the company's reputation," she added.

Cyber insurance is designed to help organizations manage the risks associated with cyberattacks, including data breaches, theft of sensitive information, and other cyber threats. Cyber insurance policies typically provide coverage for a range of expenses that may arise from a cyber-attack, including costs associated with:

- Ransom payments
- Investigating the breach and identifying the cause of the attack
- Notifying affected individuals, including providing identity theft protection services
- Business interruption costs, such as lost income or revenue
- Legal expenses, including defense costs and settlements
- Regulatory fines and penalties

The importance of cyber insurance is not limited only to large organizations like TMH. Small and mid-sized businesses are also at risk of cyberattacks, and the potential financial impact of a breach can be devastating. Cyber insurance policies are available for organizations of all sizes, providing protection against the costs associated with a cyberattack.

"There's a fallacy that only big organizations get hit, but that's not the case," said Danna. "These actors actually target small to mid-sized companies because they don't have large IT departments, meaning that their information isn't as secure. Unfortunately, healthcare is the industry that has the most financial rewards for criminals because they can access so much information by simply breaching a practice."

Fortunately, the cost of a cyber insurance policy is affordable; especially when a com-

pany considers what it could lose without one.

"A smaller practice can get a cyber insurance policy that covers \$1 million in damages for a few thousand dollars," said Danna. "The premiums are low compared to the cost of a breach, which should cover ransomware as well as give the company coverage for business disruption if they can't get access to their systems."

"Companies can be fined per day per patient for the patients who they haven't informed of the breach, and a cyber policy can set up a PR division to reach all of these patients, as well as the cost of attorneys that who need to get involved," she added. "The cost of this insurance is worth peace of mind."

Danna noted that it's important to work with an agent that specializes in cyber insurance policies as each carrier and each policy is different. She also cautions that those who have a cyber policy on their medical malpractice insurance need to understand that those policies only cover \$50,000 of damages.

"Many times, if a practice has been breached, the practice has to pay upfront and then get reimbursed; it's kind of like a Band-Aid that hurts you instead of helps you," she said. "It's definitely not enough."

With the increasing frequency and severity of cyberattacks, organizations of all sizes must take proactive steps to manage their cyber risk, including bolstering IT departments and investing in cyber insurance policies. By doing so, organizations can better protect themselves against the financial consequences of a cyberattack and provide their patients with the peace of mind that their information is protected.

For more information, contact Julie Danna at [jdanna@risk-strategies.com](mailto:jdanna@risk-strategies.com), call (850) 530-3924 or visit [www.dannagracey.com](http://www.dannagracey.com).

# Cover Story: 'No One Could Have Predicted This

Continued from page 1

and how you organize your engagement, the outcome is usually pretty good. If you don't connect those dots, you're going to continue to have problems."

Juffre went on to say that companies have an opportunity right now to reinvent themselves. During COVID, there was what he called a pause in time when companies with great cultures had to move away from that culture in the interest of safety; they had to do things a bit differently. Similarly, companies with poor cultures had to do things differently as well.

"So whether you had a great culture or a poor culture as it relates to employee engagement prior to COVID, now you can actually pivot if you need to or get back to where you were. A lot of the employee engagement activities we did prior to COVID we simply couldn't do, because we wanted to keep people safe." Then coming out of COVID, the company looked back at what it had been doing that made ImageFIRST a great place to work, and tried to determine how quickly it could start to implement them again.

On the other hand, Juffre continued, if you weren't doing those things prior to COVID, what a great opportunity to say hey, we're going to start doing employee events, coffee chats – whatever your list of activities is from an employee standpoint. If you weren't doing them pre-COVID, you can start doing them now. If you were doing them pre-COVID, why haven't you brought them back? And finally, in this new paradigm, what new things might you choose to add, no matter what your situation is.

The feedback is remarkable, because every industry is experiencing "the Great Resignation" right now, and the unique part is that a large percentage of those people are leaving without having another job lined up. And the highest percentage of those resignations occur in healthcare because they are very confident that they can find another job.

According to Juffre, companies began requesting more information from his company when they noticed how well ImageFIRST was succeeding at employee engagement through the COVID period. And when asked to participate, the executive team is happy to comply. "We'll help anybody. All of this has been very organic, it's been a result of ImageFIRST developing a great reputation in both employee and customer experience."

"When I or other executives of the team have time to do something that helps either our customers or our industry or someone outside the industry, why wouldn't we? It's not like anything we're saying is a trade secret, and we are more than happy to go and share with people what we're doing."

Juffre has called the whole experience both humbling and interesting for both him and the team. "If you asked us a couple of years ago, we never would have said we were going to be talking about how we're helping people outside the industry to improve their patient care, employee engagement or customer satisfaction. No one could have predicted this."

For more information, call (800) 932-7472 or visit [www.imagefirst.com](http://www.imagefirst.com)

# Health Care District of Palm Beach County's Outpatient Addiction Treatment Program Receives Award



Dr. Belma Andri , VP & Chief Medical Officer, Health Care District (6th from left) with 2023 Sapphire Award recipients

The Health Care District of Palm Beach County was honored to be named the first-place program recipient of the Florida Blue Foundation 2023 Sapphire Award in recognition of the public health system's innovative outpatient addiction treatment model, which is now being replicated by the state in counties across Florida. The award, along with a \$100,000 check, was presented to Belma Andri , M.D., MPH, the Health Care District's Vice President and Chief Medical Officer at a ceremony in Orlando, FL.

"It's an honor to accept this prestigious award on behalf of our dedicated team of professionals who brought so much hope to our patients when hope was hard to find," said Dr. Andri . "This recognition highlights our five years of data-driven, evidence-based care that treats substance use disorder like any other lifelong, chronic medical condition."

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

## Same Day Discharge Minimally Invasive Colorectal Surgery Arrives at Good Samaritan Medical Center

Traditionally, colorectal surgeries were major operations that required a hospital stay and a significant recovery period. Advances in surgical techniques and the implementation of Enhanced Recovery After Surgery Protocols (ERAS), have decreased the amount of time patients have to spend in the hospital. At Good Samaritan Medical Center, some patients are now even able to go home the same day. Dr. Hayder Al-Azzawi, colorectal surgeon, performs the same day discharge colon surgeries. He sees many benefits for his patients including an easier, more comfortable recovery. West Palm Beach resident, Michael Strager, was one of the first patients to go home the same day after undergoing minimally invasive colon surgery for cancer with Dr. Al-Azzawi at Good Samaritan Medical Center.

"They brought me back to the room, one hour later I was out there walking the halls. I had just had major surgery and I was up talking to the nurses," recounts Strager. "Dr. Al-Azzawi came in and said, 'Mike, you're good to go!' So I went home the same day I had the surgery."

"I am honored to be able to perform same day discharge robotic surgeries in our community, which can benefit patients like Michael Strager," said Dr. Hayder Al-Azzawi, colorectal surgeon. "Because of the efficiency and quality of robotic surgery, patients can recover faster than traditional surgical options, often with less scarring and better outcomes."



**Dr. Hayder Al-Azzawi**

## Promise Fund of Florida Hosts Annual Scientific Forum with Baptist Health Cancer Care Experts



**(l-r) Dr. Jill Waibel, Dr. Michael Zinner, Nancy Brinker, Dr. Domenech Asbun and Dr. Manmeet Ahluwalia**

On March 28, the Promise Fund of Florida hosted over 100 South Florida business and community leaders at its annual Scientific Forum luncheon in partnership with Baptist Health Cancer Care in Palm Beach. Cancer care experts from Miami Cancer Institute (MCI) and Baptist Health Cancer Care (BHCC) shared the latest insights on novel therapeutic approaches transforming cancer care, advances in surgery for pancreas cancer, as well as the role of imaging and artificial intelligence in skin cancer. Experts included Drs. Manmeet Ahluwalia, Domenech Asbun, and Jill Waibel. Dr. Michael Zinner, CEO and Executive Director of MCI and BHCC, moderated the panel discussion, which also included Ambassador Nancy Brinker of the Promise Fund of Florida.

Brinker founded the Promise Fund in 2018 to help women throughout South Florida overcome cultural, financial, and language barriers to improve health outcomes – including a reduction in deaths from breast and cervical cancers. In Palm Beach County alone, each year an estimated 1,400 women are confronted with breast cancer and another 50 women learn they have cervical cancer. Many have no health insurance and have limited income to pay for health care.

Since 2020, Promise Fund patient navigator programs have educated, screened, treated, and navigated over 22,000 women. Through local, state, and national partnerships stakeholders, the Promise Fund has created a streamlined system of care to provide access to life-saving cancer resources for underserved women.

## University of Miami Health Collaborates with CLEAR to Improve Patient and Employee Experiences, and Reduce Operational Costs

UHealth - University of Miami Health System and the Miller School of Medicine is collaborating with CLEAR, the trusted secure identity company, to develop and roll out a series of integrations to improve patient and employee experiences. In its first phase, UHealth will embed the *Powered by CLEAR* platform to allow patients to easily create and manage their mobile MyUHealthChart account, and to allow UHealth employees to easily create and manage their employee credentials. UHealth expects the *Powered by CLEAR* identity verification experience to save patients and employees time, reduce help desk calls and operational costs, improve security, lower fraud risk, and drive consumer adoption and engagement across UHealth's digital ecosystem.

UHealth patients and employees will be able to easily verify their identity for free with CLEAR using their government-issued ID and a selfie to conveniently access and manage their personal information. The *Powered by CLEAR* platform will provide a seamless and secure experience for returning users and eliminate the need for patients and employees to manually re-enter biographic data with each transaction. *Powered by CLEAR* will enable UHealth patients and employees to bypass the clunky and inefficient password reset process by instantly resetting their password with a selfie, directly within the UHealth app.

UHealth – which is the first hospital system in the state of Florida to leverage CLEAR technology – will continue to embed the *Powered by CLEAR* platform as its digital front door for patient account management and check-in.

## Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center First Hospital in South Florida to Use Impella RP Flex with SmartAssist Heart Recovery Technology



**Dr. Nishant Patel and team**

Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center (PBGMC) is the first hospital in South Florida to treat a patient with Impella RP Flex with SmartAssist, one of the world's smallest heart pumps.

This innovative technology, which provides temporary right heart mechanical circulatory support, allows PBGMC to provide more comprehensive and advanced care options to patients in South Florida and the Treasure Coast experiencing acute right heart failure. Impella technology enables patients to recover their native heart, which is ideal for a patient's quality of life and has the potential to save costs to the healthcare system.

Impella RP Flex received U.S. FDA pre-market approval in October 2022 as safe and effective to treat acute right heart failure or decompensation for up to 14 days following left ventricular assist device implantation, myocardial infarction, heart transplant or open-heart surgery. Impella RP Flex is implanted via the internal jugular (IJ) vein, which enables patient mobility, and its dual-sensor technology is designed to optimize patient management.

Dr. Nishant Patel, a cardiothoracic surgeon, was on the PBGMC team that used the Impella RP Flex recently. He said, "We are excited to add the Impella RP Flex pump to our armamentarium at PBGMC. This is a novel device that can help save some of our sickest patients suffering from right heart failure. I'm excited to provide this therapy for our community and keep our hospital at the forefront of innovation in Palm Beach County."



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

## Dade County Medical Association Celebrates the 4th Annual Residents and Medical Students Research Competition

The Dade County Medical Association (DCMA) recently held the 4th Annual Residents and Medical Students Research Competition with 19 finalists at Pullman Miami Airport Hotel in Miami, FL.

"I would like to thank and congratulate all of the Resident and Medical Student Research Competition participants. I would also like to encourage all of the medical students and residents training in Miami-Dade County to participate in the coming years. Activities like this not only advance science and disseminates information for the benefit of the patient, but it also fosters camaraderie among the physicians in the community," commented Rafael Fernandez, M.D., President of the DCMA.

The Competition Evaluating Committee was composed of Andrea Bonansea-Frances, M.D.; Eneida Roldan, M.D.; Enrique Fernandez, M.D.; Julie Kantor, M.D.; Jefry Biehler, M.D.; Antonio Mesa, D.O., and Chief Editor of Miami Medicine Journal; Rafael J. Fernandez, M.D., President of the DCMA, Jose D. Suarez, MD, Immediate Past-President of the DCMA and Research Competition Chair.

The winners of the competition were:

- First Place - Chemoresistance of Retinoblastoma - Michelle Zhang from the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine
- Second Place - Progressive Keratoconus in Older Patients with Delayed Corneal Cross-linking Treatment - Nicole Kantor from Florida International University Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine
- Third Place - Prevalence of Amyloidosis in Patients Undergoing Carpal Tunnel Release - Caitlyn Chong-Yen from the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine

The judges gave a Special Honorary Mention to Rachel Westone from Florida International University Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine for her presentation entitled Accuracy of Wound Classification: Lessons Learned After Education.



**DCMA 4th Annual Residents and Medical Students Research Competition winners and the Competition Evaluation Committee**

## Jewish Family Home Care Receives 2023 Best of Home Care® – Provider and Employer of Choice Awards

Jewish Family Home Care (JFHC), a not-for-profit agency, is pleased to announce it has received both the 2023 Best of Home Care® – Provider of Choice and Employer of Choice Awards from HCP. These awards are granted only to the top-ranking home care providers, based on client and employee satisfaction scores gathered by HCP. JFHC is now ranked among a small handful of home care providers across the country who have proven their ability to provide an exceptional working experience to employees and the highest quality care to clients.

"It's an honor to be selected for the 2023 Best of Home Care Provider and Employer of Choice Awards from HCP," said Teresa Duvall, president and CEO of JFHC. "We pride ourselves on providing extraordinary care to our clients. This wouldn't be possible without my dedicated team who shares my passion for excellence and delivering unmatched in-home care to our clients."



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

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Lubell & Rosen is a full-service Law firm focused on representing doctors. The firm originated Pre-Paid Legal Defense ("PPLD") for Bare doctors, as an affordable alternative to professional liability insurance. The firm also represents doctors for PIP collections and Out-of-network claims collection. Offices are located in Fort Lauderdale, Coral Gables and New York. To schedule a free consultation, call (954) 880-9500 or visit [www.lubellrosen.com](http://www.lubellrosen.com).

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Founded in 1942, Nossaman LLP is an innovative, midsize national law firm. We counsel hospitals and other delivery systems, managed care organizations, research companies, ambulatory surgery centers, medical staffs, discount plans and senior living providers as well as practice entities and individual professionals. They turn to us to ensure regulatory compliance and handle litigation, peer review proceedings, organizational growth and restructuring, IP licensing, and on matters that require FDA oversight. Visit the website [www.nossaman.com](http://www.nossaman.com) for more information, or contact Paul DeMuro, in Fort Lauderdale, or email [pdemuro@nossaman.com](mailto:pdemuro@nossaman.com).

## **CONSTRUCTION, DESIGN, PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

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S.R. Construction is a turnkey, division 1, FL statewide General Contractor invested in the Medical Industry holding 4 licenses including PCC. SRCS specializes in traditional outpatient and specialty offices (Urgent Care, Dialysis, Dental, Pharmacy, MRI, etc.), hospital up-grade renovations and large-scale, multi-level medical park facilities. S.R. Construction offers our clients the best design build and pre-construction project services to assure a faster speed-to-market, single-sourced process. Our time-tested construction pricing models offer our clients multiple platforms ranging from traditional competitive bid, cost-plus or hybrid programs, which are tailored to your specific needs. Checkout [www.S-R-Construction.com](http://www.S-R-Construction.com) and contact us at (561) 290-0402 or please email [Eric@S-R-Construction.com](mailto:Eric@S-R-Construction.com).

## **EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

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

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## **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)

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A Family of Health Centers 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).

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

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**THURSDAY, MAY 25, 2023**

*Please join us as we honor our 2023 Heroes in Medicine.  
This year's celebration will be at Benvenuto's, Boynton Beach.*

RECEPTION: 11:00 AM / AWARDS CEREMONY: 12:00 PM  
PLEASE RSVP BY MAY 12

For more information, contact Katherine Zuber at  
KatherineZ@pbcms.org or call 561-433-3940 ext. 106

## 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Heroes



Faustino Gonzalez, MD



Adam Wyatt, PhD



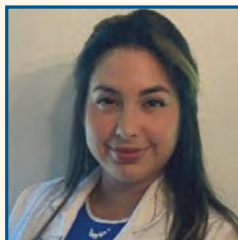
Palm Beach County Fire Rescue



Sheryl Jackson, RN



Elisha Myers



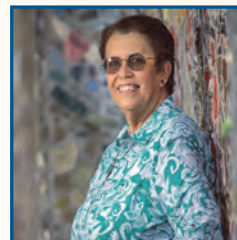
Dalina Laffita



Jonathan Hus



Miguel Benavente



Alina Alonso, MD



Stephen Babic, MD

**PHYSICIAN HERO**  
**Faustino Gonzalez, MD**  
Associate Medical Director  
Trustbridge

**BRUCE RENDINA HERO**  
**Adam Wyatt, PhD**  
Director, Office of Program  
Evaluation and Assessment  
FAU

**COMMUNITY HERO**  
**Palm Beach County  
Fire Rescue**  
Charles Coyle, EMS Chief

**HEALTH CARE PROVIDER  
(NON-PHYSICIAN) HERO**  
**Sheryl Jackson, RN**  
HCA – JFK North  
Medical Center

**COLLEGE/MEDICAL  
STUDENT HERO**  
**Elisha Myers and  
Dalina Laffita**  
Charles E. Schmidt College  
of Medicine – FAU

**HIGH SCHOOL  
STUDENT HERO**  
**Jonathan Hus**  
Donna Klein Jewish Academy

**STUDENT  
TRAILBLAZER AWARD**  
**Miguel Benavente**  
Palm Beach Central High School

**LIFETIME  
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**  
**Alina Alonso, MD**  
Retired, Health Officer Florida  
Department of Health, Palm Beach

**ADVOCACY AWARD**  
**Stephen Babic, MD**  
Cardiologist – Private Practice

## HEROES IN MEDICINE FINALISTS

Meredith Hirsh, CEO – The Hirsh Center  
Torrell Dixon – Walden University  
West Palm Beach Police Department  
Jim Bowen – Pharmacy Supervisor, Publix



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**THURSDAY, MAY 11 AT 6:30 PM DOWNTOWN FT. LAUDERDALE**

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 24 AT 6:30 PM BOCA RATON CAMPUS**



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