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OUR 20TH YEAR SERVING THE HEALTHCARE COMMUNITY!

ACHE Spotlight



Haroula Norden

ACHE of South Florida Member Spotlight: Haroula Norden

BY LOIS THOMSON

Haroula Norden is just wrapping up her year as president of the South Florida Chapter of ACHE – the American College of Healthcare Executives – and she was able to sum it up in a few words: "There was a lot of great success for the chapter!"

Norden took a moment to reflect more specifically on the happenings and achievements of the past year, starting with sponsorships: "It was a record year for sponsorships, and I really want to thank our sponsors for their generosity. It takes their donations to help us further our mission of educating and networking, and without their support year after year, it would be impossible for us to schedule all of our great events."

Such events included hosting an education seminar every month, and Norden said she was proud that the chapter was able to have prestigious people on the panels who gave members an opportunity to learn, to meet with other professionals, and to hear about the latest undertakings in healthcare.

Among other accomplishments, Norden said the chapter wanted to expand its digital presence, and the goal was to reach more than 5,000 members on LinkedIn. She proudly stated, "We exceeded that goal, and we had an

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Marketing

Healthcare Marketing and Public Relations: What Works?

BY VANESSA ORR

Consumers are bombarded by hundreds of messages a day, which makes it imperative for healthcare marketers to reach them with the right messages in the right way. While print ads and brochures might once have worked to reach a target market, today's changing demographics mean that advertisers must not only understand who their customers are but use the proper tools to reach them.

"Millennials and Baby Boomers access healthcare very differently," explained 40-year healthcare veteran Rudy Molinet, who teaches marketing and strategic planning at Florida Atlantic University and also serves as the chair of the board at Holy Cross Health in Fort Lauderdale, FL, where he is involved in developing strategy and advising on marketing initiatives.

"Gen Z has no problem doing a telehealth visit with their doctor while they're drinking coffee at Starbucks, while the older generation wants real physician contact," he continued. "How you create and craft marketing messages to different generations is important because no one size fits all."

Marketing

According to Adjunct Professor Molinet, marketing is an adjunct to sales which is the process of uncovering customers' needs and then meeting those needs. This requires a multi-pronged approach that may include an educational component with campaigns relating to prevention or health initiatives, such as HIV prevention, cancer

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Rudy Molinet

Cardiology



Dr. Jose Baez-Escudero

Dr. Baez- Escudero to Bring Big Changes to Broward Health's Cardiology Program

BY VANESSA ORR

In November, Jose Baez-Escudero, M.D., became the first systemwide chief of cardiology and electrophysiology for Broward Health Physician Group. In this newly created position, he plans to not only expand the cardiology service line across the health system, but to position Broward Health as a key player in advanced cardiovascular care within the county. "With the onboarding of Dr. Baez, Broward Health continues to enhance the subspecialty cardiovascular programs we provide, ensuring Broward Health patients have access to a unified multidisciplinary team and innovative treatment solutions," said Jenna Merlucci, FACHE, vice president of heart and vascular services at Broward Health.

"Dr. Baez will help strengthen our current capabilities and also contribute to our long-term goals of improving heart health and advancing our vision to be the champion for a healthier community," said Bernardo B. Fernandez Jr., M.D., corporate physician executive.

Before taking the position at Broward Health, Dr. Baez worked for the past 14

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Healthcare Real Estate

The Kenneth C. Griffin Surgical Tower: A New Era of Pediatric Care at Nicklaus Children's Hospital

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

Nicklaus Children's Hospital has long been at the forefront of pediatric healthcare, committed to providing world-class medical care for children and their families. With the opening of the new Kenneth C. Griffin Surgical Tower, the hospital is taking that commitment to the next level, furthering its mission to be "the place where children matter most."

This state-of-the-art facility, designed with input from patients, families, and staff, is a reflection of Nicklaus Children's dedication to cutting-edge technology and patient-centered care.

A Vision Rooted in Patient and Family Feedback

The design of the Kenneth C. Griffin Surgical Tower stems from the hospital's mission to ensure every child and family receives the best possible care in the most comfortable and compassionate environment.



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Publisher's Note

The 2025 Holiday Mashup: When Christmas and Hanukkah Share the Spotlight

In 2025, Christmas and Hanukkah are about to have a “crossover episode” that no one saw coming. These two beloved holidays, often seen as cousins who wave to each other from across the calendar, will overlap in a glorious, glittery mess of lights, latkes, and last-minute gift-wrapping. Brace yourselves: the first night of Hanukkah lands on Christmas Day, and the whole season is about to get a lot more interesting.

This cosmic collision is quite a conundrum. On the surface, Christmas is all about excess lights, food, presents and sparkle. But Hanukkah? It's more subdued, traditionally. The eight days of the festival might not match the same extravagance, but it's no slouch when it comes to quality over quantity—latkes are proof of that. So what happens when the menorah is shoved right next to the Christmas tree? It's like a celebrity cameo in a blockbuster movie, especially in the mixed bag we call the Felix family.

Then there are all the family dynamics to consider. Picture this: you're at your aunt's house, preparing for Christmas dinner, but your Jewish cousin is lighting the menorah at the same time as everyone else is circling around the Christmas ham. Do we all sing “Silent Night” and “The Dreidel Song” in unison? How does one harmonize a Christmas carol with a dreidel song? (Spoiler: It's not going to sound like the Vienna Boys' Choir, but again there aren't many Felixes who can carry a tune.)

But, uppermost, there's the gift-giving. (Frugal Carol's worst nightmare - when any sign of conspicuous consumption gives her hives.) This year, everyone's going to be getting a little more confused than usual. Do you buy a Christmas sweater with a dreidel on it? A Star of David ornament for the tree? Some brilliant marketer will probably release a “Hanukkah Christmas Special” gift set, with a menorah that doubles as a tree topper and a Santa hat that fits over the top of a kippah. The possibilities are endless—and overwhelming. And considering Hanukkah celebrates with 8 nights of gift-giving ...

And let's not forget the food options. Christmas has its gingerbread cookies, hot cocoa, and endless varieties of pie, but Hanukkah is ready to bring its A-game to the table. Latkes vs. gingerbread men in a taste test? Who's making the brisket (hopefully not Carol)? And let's not forget the gelt (chocolate coins), which might just find a perfect home in the bottom of a Christmas stocking. It's a delicious fusion of flavors, though the post-dinner food coma might take a little longer to recover from. And at the end of the meal, believe it or not, we're still hankering for a slice of Christmas HoneyBaked® Ham.

So in 2025, as Christmas and Hanukkah join forces in an unprecedented holiday power move, we can all take a moment to marvel at the beauty of cultural crossover. Who says a tree can't share space with a menorah? Or that a Christmas ham can't sit alongside a platter of latkes? What's a little spitting fried oil between families and friends? In the end, it's all about light, love, and a lot of food—what more do you need to make it the best (and most confusing) holiday season ever.



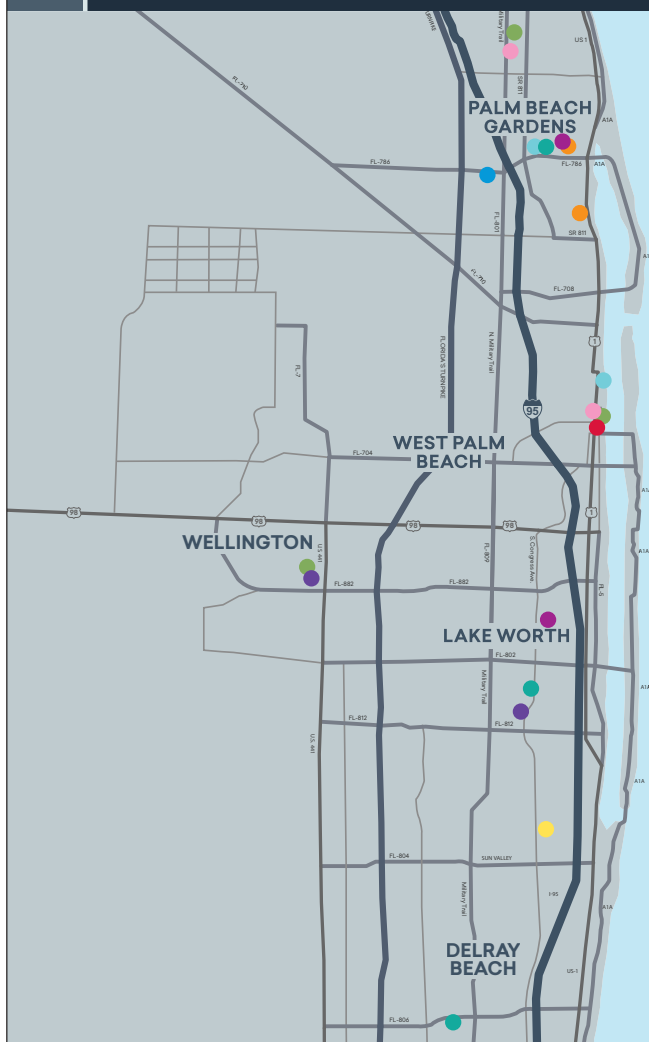
Happy Holidays, Charles



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Miami Cancer Institute to Host Sixth Annual Global Summit on Immunotherapies for Hematologic Malignancies

Miami Cancer Institute, part of Baptist Health South Florida, announced it will host the Sixth Annual Global Summit on Immunotherapies for Hematologic Malignancies on March 7-8, 2025, at the JW Marriott Hotel in Brickell, Miami, FL. The focus of the symposium will be on advances in the fields of multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, and acute myeloid leukemia, as well as CAR-T cell therapies and allogeneic stem cell transplants, among others.



Dr. Guenther Koehne

“The 2025 symposium features an impressive roster of world-leading experts in hematologic cancers and other malignancies,” said Guenther Koehne M.D., Ph.D., summit founder, deputy director of Miami Cancer Institute and chief of blood and marrow transplant and hematologic oncology. “Over the past years, we have seen a significant increase in promising research and advances that have a positive impact on patients who suffer from these and related diseases and conditions. Attendees of the symposium will hear about novel treatment approaches as well as other updates in the field.”

Speakers and panelists from the leading cancer centers in the U.S., UK and Latin America will discuss a wide array of topics, such as combination and T-cell redirecting therapies for multiple myeloma, the multiple myeloma treatment landscape in Latin America, new treatment approaches for diffuse large B-cell lymphoma, next steps in CAR-T cell therapies, targeted and emerging therapies for acute myeloid leukemia, and next steps in immunotherapies.

“I always look forward to the Annual Global Summit on Immunotherapies for Hematologic Malignancies in Miami,” said Dr. Richard Stone, chief of staff and director of translational research, leukemia division, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. “Not only is it a great opportunity to come together with esteemed colleagues from across the world, it is also one of the premier events to review the latest advances in our field.”

This educational summit is intended for hematologists, oncologists, pathologists, radiation oncologists, palliative care staff, oncology and hematology nurses, laboratory personnel, pharmacists, and other allied health care team members interested in the treatment of patients with hematologic malignancies. Baptist Health South Florida is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians. Baptist Health has been re-surveyed by the ACCME and awarded Commendation for 6 years as a provider of CME for physicians. Participants of the Precision Medicine Symposium will be able to claim CME credits when attending the symposium.

Those interested in attending the symposium can register at <https://cmeonline.baptisthealth.net/immunotherapy-symposium>.

For updates about Miami Cancer Institute’s Sixth Annual Global Summit on Immunotherapies for Hematologic Malignancies, look for #MCIImmunotherapySummit on social media and follow Miami Cancer Institute on X (Twitter) at @MiamiCancerInst.

Miami Cancer Institute

Global Summit on Immunotherapies for Hematologic Malignancies



Live Symposium

Friday-Saturday
March 7-8, 2025

JW Marriott
1109 Brickell Avenue
Miami, FL 33131

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



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

Speakers

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

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

Adam Cohen, M.D.
University of Pennsylvania

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

Patricio Duarte, M.D.
University of Buenos Aires

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

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

Leo Luznik, M.D.
Baylor College of Medicine

Matthew Matasar, M.D.
Rutgers Cancer Institute

Marcelo Pasquini, M.D.
Medical College of Wisconsin

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

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

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

Craig Sauter, M.D.
Cleveland Clinic

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

Eytan Stein, M.D.
Memorial Sloan Kettering
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Richard Stone, M.D.
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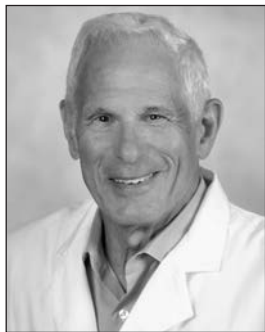
Miami Cancer Institute



#MCIImmunotherapySummit

MiamiCancerInstitute.com/HematologicMalignancies

Optimizing Multidisciplinary Care for Patients with Head and Neck Cancer in a Community Setting



BY MARSHALL
POSNER, MD

Primary treatment of head and neck cancer requires multidisciplinary coordination to provide the optimal therapy.

In this current day and age, it is clear that surgery, radiation and chemotherapy, as well as chemoimmunotherapy, can have substantial impacts and competing toxicities on cancer patients. The treatment of patients with head and neck cancer is challenging, both because of the location of the tumor and the important structures necessary for maintaining life (breathing, swallowing and eating) in the head and neck, which can be easily damaged by the cancer and the treatment, and which need to be preserved both in the short term and the long term. That is why it is imperative that physicians take a multidisciplinary approach to optimally manage a combination of these treatments for the well-being of their patients.

In order to realize this goal, there is a substantial need for multidisciplinary discussions among surgeons, radiation oncologists and medical oncologists before embarking on any one of the potential treatment options for most patients with head and neck cancer - specifically, to reduce the morbidity and long-term consequences of treatment for these patients while improving survival and quality of life. We, as a team of treating physicians with different perspectives, need to coordinate and address factors and nuances that change the relative impacts of our treatments on toxicity and survival.

First, in terms of treatment, surgery is truly the mainstay of therapy for early-stage head and neck cancer, excluding nasopharyngeal cancer. The patient who is eligible for surgery should be seen and evaluated by the surgeon, radiation oncologist and medical oncologist because all three specialists may play a role in the initial curative treatment.

Surgical resection must support functional preservation and reduce the application of subsequent radiation therapy to be viable. Patients become inoperable or the value of operations ceases when they must receive a complete, aggressive course of chemoradiotherapy because of the extent of disease. Platinum is the preferred radiation sensitizer in the postoperative, definitive setting. Carboplatin, or carboplatin

doublet with taxane, are alternatives to platinum in platinum ineligible patients. There is no role for cetuximab - a monoclonal antibody to EGFR - as a substitute for platinum in chemoradiotherapy.

Induction chemotherapy plus chemoradiotherapy is a reasonable treatment for organ preservation and the standard of care for nasopharyngeal cancer. Organ preservation is clearly indicated for patients with laryngeal and hypopharyngeal cancer. This approach is supported by data from randomized clinical trials. For patients with inoperable and aggressive cancers, the combination of induction chemotherapy and chemoradiotherapy is a reasonable treatment and, in some cases, induction chemotherapy can prepare the patient for surgical resection followed by chemoradiotherapy.

Immunotherapy is clearly indicated and is the first line of treatment for recurrent metastatic disease, preferably with a platinum doublet, including nasopharyngeal cancer. In cases where the recurrence is easily and surgically resectable, it could be entertained as a reasonable treatment option. But, once again, a multidisciplinary discussion should take place, and if the patient would require re-irradiation after treatment, immunotherapy is an option.

Finally, and of great importance, new data suggests that induction immunotherapy followed by surgery and subsequent pathologically determined treatment with adjuvant radiotherapy and immunotherapy will become the standard of care for treatment of patients with resectable head and neck cancer. Induction chemoimmunotherapy is likely to prove better. Trials in nasopharyngeal cancer are demonstrating this outcome. This approach may well become a standard of therapy in unresectable head and neck cancer.

It is notable that today we are finding a greater number of patients cured and living longer, such that the long-term consequences of radiation therapy are now becoming a substantial cause of morbidity and mortality in the late survivors. Efforts should be made to de-escalate radiation therapy as much as possible. This approach is particularly critical in patients with HPV-related or oropharyngeal cancer who have excellent cure rates.

Dr. Marshall Posner is a world-renowned physician scientist, clinical researcher, and head and neck oncologist with Tampa General Hospital (TGH) Cancer Institute | Cancer Center of South Florida. He is based in Palm Beach County.

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Increasing Survivorship with Next-Generation Cancer Care

BY JENNIFER WILLIAMSON

According to the 2024 Cancer Progress Report issued in September by the American Association of Cancer Research, more than 18 million cancer survivors are living across the country. Improvements in cancer prevention, detection, diagnosis, and treatment are contributing to increased survivorship, and in many areas next-generation sequencing (NGS) is a key factor. Commercially available since 2005, NGS involves the parallel sequencing of millions of small DNA fragments. It allows for the comprehensive analysis of entire genomes or large portions of them.

Today, NGS is widely used to detect mutations in cancer-related genes, helping to identify specific types of cancer and their genetic drivers.

“In the past two decades, next-generation sequencing has revolutionized cancer care and become an integral part of precision oncology,” says Kelley Kozma, D.O., Cancer Center Director of the Robert and Carol Weissman Cancer Center at Cleveland Clinic Martin Health. “It’s enabling more accurate diagnoses, personalized treatments, and better outcomes for patients.”

Detection and diagnosis

Of all its potential applications, Dr. Kozma is most excited about the use of NGS to develop liquid biopsies that can analyze circulating tumor DNA (ctDNA) in blood for cancer detection. Already there are single-cancer and multi-cancer early detection blood tests on the market and many others in development, though they are currently most effective at identifying later stage disease.

For example, the Shield™ blood test, which was approved by the FDA this past summer for colon cancer screening, was found to have an 83% sensitivity for colorectal cancer but only a 13% sensitivity for advanced precancerous lesions, according to the findings of the ECLIPSE trial.

“In the next five to 10 years, I expect we’ll see even more progress made in developing blood tests that can screen for early-stage disease before symptoms appear,” says Dr. Kozma. “I look forward to a future without screening mammography and when primary care providers can order a simple blood test to screen their patients for ovarian and pancreatic cancers.”



Dr. Kelley Kozma

Personalized treatments

Perhaps the biggest impact NGS is currently having on cancer survivorship is through its role in treatment planning. The identification of genetic mutations specific to a patient’s cancer allows for the selection of targeted therapies that can be more effective and potentially do less harm.

At the Robert and Carol Weissman Cancer Center in Stuart, NGS is used for almost all patients who have advanced cancer, as well as patients who are elderly or who have other complications that would make it difficult for them to tolerate chemotherapy.

“We can test for over 800 different gene mutations, which potentially gives us 800 targets to go after,” says Dr. Kozma. “This opens the way for us to use targeted therapy instead of chemotherapy for certain patients.”

Monitoring response and prognosis

But the application of NGS goes beyond treatment selection. It can be used to assess how well a treatment is working by identifying changes in the genetic profile of tumors over time.

“This allows us to identify when the cancer develops resistance mutations,” says Dr. Kozma. “We can then switch tactics and use alternate therapies.”

NGS is also used to detect very low levels of cancer cells remaining after treatment. Signatera™ is one such test that uses ctDNA to detect minimal residual disease, which helps in the early intervention of relapsing disease.

“This test is personalized for each patient and requires both tissue and blood samples to create,” describes Dr. Kozma. “We use it for some patients with breast cancer and other solid tumors to see if the cancer has come back.”

She also points to the use of genetic information obtained from NGS to help predict the likely course of the disease and the patient’s response to treatment, which can help guide decision-making.

“Knowing a tumor’s characteristics has helped in so many ways,” adds Dr. Kozma. “It’s very gratifying to have access to so much actionable information that ultimately improves patient outcomes.”



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MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Cover Story: Healthcare Marketing and Public Relations: What Works?

Continued from page 1

prevention, ways to access healthcare, and more.

A marketing team develops messaging designed to attract and engage customers with the goal of generating awareness and interest in a company's products or services and to build customer relationships by using multiple strategies to reach potential customers.

"What services does your healthcare system offer that meet the needs of different communities?" Molinet asks. "You need to provide information not just about your system but about different disease states. For example, Holy Cross Health provides an electronic newsletter that is sent to different constituencies based on demographics. Older men get information on prostate cancer, women are educated about breast cancer awareness, while the LGBTQ community is provided information to meet their own specific needs."

He notes that a marketing campaign around breast cancer, for example, must also be promoted via different methods, ranging from print to radio to social media.

"If your message is geared toward the older generation, you may want to use print or radio," he said. "For the younger generation, investing in social media, even TikTok and YouTube, may be better. People laugh, but TikTok is one of the places that the younger generation gets its news and healthcare information."

He notes that the Cleveland Clinic and Mayo Clinic are both masters at targeted marketing, reaching out to those of a certain age with information on Medicare and health conditions like Alzheimer's disease, dementia, and prostate cancer that affect people over 65 or targeting women with information about breast cancer.

"In my opinion, the more targeted the message is, the more successful it is," said Molinet. "If I'm 23 and get an email from a healthcare system about aging in place, it won't resonate with me. A 70-year-old woman doesn't need information on pregnancy. When you don't micro-target, you're just throwing stuff out there."

Marketing these days is also data-driven, which provides organizations with a

way to target customers better. "Marketing should not be what an organization thinks it needs, but what the consumer needs, based on data," said Molinet. "Oftentimes, when a person swipes a credit card at the store, that data gets sold. Hospitals' infection rates are reported to Medicare and graded based on that data. Medicare estimates how many days in the hospital an appendectomy requires. All of this data is aggregated and drives decision-making in healthcare marketing and more."

Public Relations

While marketing is targeted to a specific group, public relations reaches an audience in a broader sense and is more about being present physically in the community. This can be done through speakers' bureaus, press releases, health fairs and more.

"In public relations, we're trying to create an image or brand, support an image, or change a negative image, so we're casting a wider net," said Molinet.

Holy Cross, for example, has created a very deliberate marketing and public relations campaign to reach the LGBTQ

community to assure them that as a faith-based hospital, it is a safe space for LGBTQ patients and families.

"It's important to note that what's even more vital than the message is what's behind the campaign," said Molinet. "There has to be substance behind it. Holy Cross has worked really hard internally to make sure that their brand promise of being a safe space for all is happening by investing money in community outreach, opening more offices to provide access to care, and training staff."

While there are many different ways to reach potential customers, it's important to add that organizations should test what they use to ensure their messages are being heard.

"Every time a new 'shiny object' hits the market, approach it with a degree of skepticism," said Molinet of new programs that claim to make marketing easier. "Dig deep into the data, read the reviews, check for references, and talk to other organizations that have used it. These programs are not cheap, so find out how it's working in the real world before you make that leap."



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MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Elevate Your Business with Strategic Marketing and Communications

As hospital and medical practice groups expand in South Florida and others arrive from the central part of the state, healthcare entities must do more to maintain top-of-mind awareness. Strategic marketing in traditional and digital media will help them make the first choice for surgery, treatment and other forms of care.

There are four well-established, powerful ways doctors and hospitals communicate that will resonate with people seeking medical advice and care. The three common options are to build a department yourself, bring in an independent PR-marketing agency or a combination of the two.

Today, the lines have blurred between traditional advertising, PR, digital and social media consultants. The goal is to reach and engage your target audience(s) based on how they consume information and news; not an easy task. The following are some ideas:

Advertising

Medical advertising has been around for centuries in newspaper and magazine ads. Healthcare marketing took off in the 1970s, shortly after Medicare and Medicaid were created. Doctors and hospitals started marketing directly to consumers through TV, radio and billboards.

Today, they can—and still do—reach people through traditional media. The internet has opened the door to a more precise way to reach patients with specific needs. A doctor can pay for a sponsored result when an individual searches for information on an illness, disease or treatment. Social media ads can be directed at people of a certain age, income or neighborhood.

Publicity

People often scroll past ads on their phones, and sustained ad campaigns can be expensive. Obtaining publicity is often cheaper and more credible. Doctors in private practice or at a hospital can establish themselves as experts on a new or common disease or a novel treatment. They can be quoted in articles or interviewed on TV, providing insights and recommendations.

Doctors can also gain a reputation within their profession by writing articles and research papers for well-regarded medical publications. Their insights and findings can establish them as experts, leading to patient referrals, speaking engagements and other ways of becoming better known and respected.

Each approach has advantages and disadvantages. Being treated as a news source rather than a self-promoter comes off as more genuine and trustworthy. On the other hand, a medical practice or hospital has more control over where and when an ad appears. It has a full command of its wording and appearance. When used intelligently, the two can complement each other and raise awareness of patient care.

Digital Media

It should come as no surprise to anyone in healthcare that medical marketing now exceeds \$30 billion, says JAMA. Much of the increase can be attributed to the rising popularity of digital media, which takes many forms.

Videos

The most popular ones today are visual. A 30-to-60-second video can answer a medical question, describe a new form of treatment or highlight a patient's journey



BY DON SILVER

from illness to wellness. Videos humanize not just the treatment but also the doctors and hospital staff members providing it. Most practices have YouTube channels using embedded videos on their blogs, social posts and to satisfy the public's need to learn more about their health and well-being. It is interesting to note that YouTube is now the second most popular search engine.

Social Media

A growing number of people are turning to social media for answers. A HubSpot study found that nearly 1 in 3 people look there first when they have a question. Doctors and hospitals need to have a presence there, especially if they are trying to attract the attention of GenZ and millennials.

With more people cutting the cord, social media platforms are a good way to share news coverage. However, ads should be handled with care. They're not popular, and a sales approach to medicine could be negatively viewed.

Newsletters

All the news, videos, and other content generated in traditional media can be repurposed in a newsletter or eNewsletter. Sharing information with patients and people who interact with a medical practice or hospital can build and preserve top-of-mind awareness. It can also generate referrals, as newsletters are easy to share via email.

Owned Media

What is owned media? Websites like WebMD, Mayo Clinic, Healthline, and Cleveland Clinic. Unlike social media where owners such as Meta or Google control how information is shared, these websites publish their information the way they want on a platform they control.

Doctors and hospitals can provide more detailed information related to their specialties. The website should also publish basic information such as location, hours, services, job openings, and contact forms.

Blogs

It's not enough to be a resource, though. A blog or news page is an effective way to share news about new services. Facilities and practitioners. Media coverage can be reshared, as can highlights from social media. Hospital directors can share official news, and the public can be notified of health emergencies.

B2B

As we in the healthcare marketing profession know, sometimes, it might be more efficient and cost effective to target a physician audience versus the millions of current and prospective patients. Hospitals want doctors seeking privileges at their hospital or surgery center, while specialists are looking for new patient referrals from other physicians and paraprofessionals. Trade publications like South Florida Hospital News can work while LinkedIn, YouTube and eNewsletters might also be a good fit.

Don Silver is COO of BoardroomPR, a top statewide Digital PR Agency, active in the hospital and healthcare space. He can be reached at donsil@boardroompr.com or visit www.boardroompr.com.



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Dr. Cameron Duncan: Transforming Nursing Education at Florida Atlantic University

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

Florida Atlantic University has named Dr. Cameron G. Duncan, Ph.D., DNP, APRN, FNP-C, PMHNP-BC, CNE, FAANP, as the new Holli Rockwell Trubinsky Eminent Dean of the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing. Dr. Duncan, who will assume his role on January 27, 2025, is the fourth dean in the college's 45-year history.

With a distinguished academic achievement, clinical practice, and scholarship background, including his recent role as interim dean of the Orvis School of Nursing at the University of Nevada, Reno, Dr. Duncan is poised to elevate Florida Atlantic's nursing program to new heights.

His dual board certifications as a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner and Family Nurse Practitioner, combined with his leadership in establishing the first Advanced Practice Registered Nurse clinic in northern Nevada, underscore his commitment to innovation and community impact.

Dr. Duncan shares his journey into nursing education, his vision for the college, and how he plans to address the challenges and opportunities facing the nursing profession.

Inspired Beginnings

A mentor sparked Dr. Duncan's journey into nursing and education during his undergraduate years. "Dr. Kate Sheppard embodied what it meant to be a nurse—caring, compassionate, and an excellent educator," he recalls. Dr. Shepherd's unique approach inspired him to pursue nursing education, emphasizing each nurse's individuality and the profession's transformative power.



Dr. Cameron G. Duncan

"Nursing combines compassion with science," he explains. "Teaching allows me to shape the next generation of nurses who will impact many lives. At Florida Atlantic, I'm excited by the college's commitment to embracing individuality and caring while advancing community health."

Setting Priorities

As Dean, Dr. Duncan's goals are to strengthen the college's existing education, research, and clinical practice excellence. "My top priority is to enhance what we're already doing well—supporting research, expanding clinical practice opportunities, and fostering our faculty and students' growth," he says.

One critical focus is building partnerships with regional healthcare facilities. These collaborations are essential for increasing clinical placement opportunities, a limiting factor for many nursing schools.

Dr. Duncan seeks innovative solutions to meet the needs of healthcare providers while expanding opportunities for the college's students. "By working with our community partners, we can advance shared goals and produce more high-quality nurses."

Additionally, he is committed to expanding Florida Atlantic's wellness clinics, which provide essential healthcare to underserved communities. "I want to bring these services to additional areas, ensuring that patients who might not otherwise have access to healthcare can benefit from quality nursing care."

Addressing the Nursing Shortage

Dr. Duncan is acutely aware of the ongoing nursing shortage and its impact on healthcare. "There's no single solu-

tion to this issue—it requires collaboration among schools, employers, nursing organizations, legislators, and donors," he emphasizes. His strategies include advocating for additional funding, expanding enrollment capacity, and retaining faculty and staff.

"Retention is just as important as recruitment," he notes. "Our faculty and staff give their all to support students, and we must ensure we're caring for them as well."

Integrating Technology

Technology is vital in nursing education in today's rapidly evolving healthcare landscape. Dr. Duncan aims to integrate cutting-edge tools into the curriculum, from simulation activities to AI-driven solutions.

"It's essential to expose students to these technologies early and teach them to use them effectively while understanding their limitations," he explains. "Technology is a resource, not a replacement for the human connection that defines nursing care."

Fostering Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are cornerstones of Dr. Duncan's vision for the college. Florida Atlantic employs a holistic admissions process and provides targeted scholarships to support under-represented students.

"DEI is foundational to nursing," he says. "It's about treating everyone as the individual they are and respecting their unique experiences."

He believes instilling these values in nursing students will create a ripple effect throughout the profession. "If we teach students to embrace DEI, the impact on nursing practice will be profound."

Strengthening Community Engagement

Community engagement is central to the college's mission, and Dr. Duncan plans to deepen partnerships with local providers. "Our community partners are critical to providing students with the hands-on experience they need," he says. By offering Florida Atlantic's expertise to help partners achieve their goals, he aims to strengthen these relationships and open more student training opportunities.

Advice for Future Nurses

To nursing students and new graduates, Dr. Duncan offers words of encouragement: "Remain resilient and embrace lifelong learning. What you learn in school is just the beginning. Always remember why you chose this profession and who you are."

He acknowledges the challenges of transitioning from student to practitioner but emphasizes the importance of support systems.

"You're not alone—use the resources available to you. With perseverance and a commitment to growth, you'll have a long and fulfilling career."

A Vision for the Future

Dr. Duncan's leadership at Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing reflects his dedication to advancing the profession through education, innovation, and compassion. By building on the college's strong foundation and addressing the challenges of today's healthcare landscape, he is paving the way for a brighter future in nursing.

With his transformative vision and unwavering commitment, Dr. Cameron Duncan is poised to leave a lasting impact on Florida Atlantic and the nursing profession.

For more information, visit nursing.fau.edu.

Cover Story: ACHE of South Florida Member Spotlight: Haroula Norden

Continued from page 1

opportunity to present the success we had on digital space at the national chapter leaders conference."

She also talked about the successful student case competition, where the chapter picks a case study or white paper, and students read through it and respond. The previous competitions were just open to local universities, but Norden said, "This is the first year we included universities across the state of Florida." Each year, the students put together teams and the chapter holds an event where all groups come together and present their case to judges, who are usually professionals, C-suite

executives, etc. and the winners are judged on how well they present, different categories, and professionalism. "It's a way to engage students into what we do, and get them in front of people who they could potentially be working for when they enter the workforce."

Norden has accomplished all of this while handling the responsibilities of her full-time job as chief operating officer of Boca Raton Regional Hospital. In that position, she is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the hospital, including the centers of excellence, and overseeing the team that oversees the ancillary operations of the hospital. She said

when she began her career, she always hoped to be in a situation like that. "I wanted a position that could affect large groups of people – the patients we serve, the community, our employees – and give me the opportunity to make big decisions on a large scale. I always thought being in a role like this would be something I would enjoy doing, something I would be passionate about."

This past year was Norden's second as the ACHE president, the first being in 2020 during Covid, which she said gave the members an opportunity to rebrand the chapter. Her intent for serving again was to emphasize the importance of

stepping up and encouraging people to get involved, and that endeavor was successful. She pointed out that the chapter, which is the ninth-largest in the United States, continues to be very successful and continues to grow its membership. "We had more people engaged, wanting to volunteer, we had a lot of new members – and non-members – attend events. So I think people did get engaged, and we had a really successful time making sure people stayed connected."

Norden added, "I want to say I'm very fortunate that I had a chance to serve a second term as president for an organization that I'm passionate about."

Don't forget to include **South Florida Hospital News & Healthcare Report** in your 2025 Marketing Plans

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SPIRITUALITY IN HEALTHCARE

Spiritual Support for Hospice Patients: Enhancing the Patient Care Experience

Sitting bedside with patients allows me, as a chaplain, to care for them holistically as they near the end of life. While physicians and nurses tend to the clinical aspects of their illness, I respond to their spiritual needs. I become a caregiver at a soul level, a source of acceptance and compassion as patients question the meaning of their life or experience distress as their functioning declines.

While many believe that chaplains promote a particular religious system of belief, we instead support the patient in their own beliefs, whether these are rooted in a religion or not. Chaplains respect the patient and their diversity of beliefs and values when providing spiritual care.

Increasing Patient Satisfaction

Hospice services include spiritual care because it addresses the more comprehensive needs of the patient and is a core value in patient-centered care. Spiritual care contributes to patients' overall quality of life by cultivating a sense of meaning and comfort during this vulnerable stage of life.

As the patient increasingly comprehends their terminal diagnoses and the implications for them and their family, they often have spiritual questions or want to talk through what they are feeling at a soul level. Guiding patients through this process and helping them transition to a potential sense of peace is



BY JASON COOPER

a privilege for those of us in the spiritual community.

It is also a benefit for hospitals. Studies show that greater use of hospice care overall for hospitalized patients results in improved patient satisfaction ratings along with lower mortality rates, both in the hospital as well as for those patients with an ICU admission during hospitalization.¹

Having chaplains present with a hospice patient at home often translates to fewer emergency readmissions to hospitals, as patients receiving psychosocial and spiritual support tend to feel less distress that triggers clinical complications.

The holistic care hospice provides contributes to improved post-discharge metrics for hospitals, which is especially significant for facilities intent on reducing readmissions as part of quality and cost-control initiatives. While the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) surveys focus primarily on the inpatient experience, the quality of spiritual care after discharge can indirectly influence patients' and families' perceptions and thus impact the hospital's reputation.

Support for Family Members as Loved Ones Decline

While the patient processes the trajectory of their life, their family lingers with grief needs of their own. Family members may ask questions of hospital clinicians and seek comfort. Chaplains assist

families in navigating issues that loss brings up—questions about faith, life, and death.

Grief may evoke many emotions. Family members often feel profound sadness but sometimes also anger, guilt, and relief, especially if their loved one has been suffering for a long time. Others say they feel numb and have a sense of disbelief that this could happen.

Chaplains provide spiritual guidance tailored to the beliefs and traditions of the family. We may also assist in creating meaningful rituals or ceremonies to honor the person once they have passed, such as a religious service, a moment of reflection, or something personal that helps the family find closure and begin to heal.

Entering Hospice Earlier May Provide More Relief for Patients and Families

The sooner an eligible patient enters hospice, the sooner they can access the soul care that is part of their hospice services. This gives patients time to enter spiritual contemplation. It also provides chaplains time to encourage open discussion between the patient and their loved ones to facilitate a healthy grief process.

When a patient dies quickly after

entering hospice, loved ones may feel unprepared emotionally. The sudden loss can make it challenging to process grief, and the intensity of their grief may increase. They may struggle to comprehend the sudden change in circumstances.

A longer length of stay in hospice allows the patient's loved ones time to gradually come to terms with the impending loss. This gift of time can be invaluable for both the patient and their family members.

Understanding the value of spiritual care in the end-of-life process enables hospitalists to make more informed referrals, confident their patients will receive the compassionate care and holistic support hospice offers. This is a cornerstone of palliative and patient-centered care.

To refer your hospice-eligible patient to VITAS, contact us anytime at 800-938-4827. Jason Cooper is Chaplain and National Spiritual Services Lead, VITAS® Healthcare

¹ BMJ Support Palliative Care. "Exploring the Association of Hospice Care on Patient Experience and Outcomes of Care." 2016 Aug 16;9(1):e13. doi: 10.1136/bmjspcare-2015-001001



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The Role of Black Box Analysis in Healthcare Decision-Making

In pursuit of improved financial performance and stability, many healthcare organizations are exploring clinical alignment or integration deals to strengthen their financial foundations.

For these strategies to succeed, however, organizations need access to the right data and information to make informed business decisions. Otherwise, their efforts to strengthen or grow their businesses could fall short, resulting in disruptions to care in their communities and financial losses.

Black box data analysis is a key component of successful healthcare deals and partnerships that can help healthcare leaders ensure physician-organization alignment.

What is black box analysis?

Black box analysis refers to an independent and confidential third-party comparison of two or more healthcare organization's reimbursement, productivity, and compensation models.

This analysis is commonly used when health systems, academic medical centers, faculty practice plans, and medical groups are evaluating strategic physician-organization alignment models. It's a crucial part of due diligence, practice valuation, funds flow modeling, and strategic planning that supports growth and expansion strategies and tactics. Some of the activities black box analysis supports include:

- Acquisitions and divestitures
- Design of network development strategies
- Development of community practice and private practice network models

How does black box analysis work?

A black box analysis is based on information that is usually confidential from each entity evaluating a transaction. Examples of confidential information commonly used in these analyses include:



BY ALFREDO CEPERO

- Reimbursement rates
- Provider compensation models
- Productivity targets

It's important that the analysis provides detailed information to support decision-making without violating the confidentiality of the information from each entity. Different firms take different approaches to providing this information while protecting confidentiality.

At BDO, we take the following approach when conducting black box analyses:

1. Productivity Analysis: We begin by analyzing specialty-specific productivity against industry benchmarks and comparing current provider productivity with performance standards for the acquiring entity.

2. Reimbursement Analysis: The second step is to carry out a comparative analysis of reimbursement differences using contracted rates from each entity.

3. Compensation Analysis: At this stage, we analyze provider compensation models from each entity.

4. Data Modeling: The final step is to model data to evaluate the differences in reimbursement and compensation based on potential changes in productivity levels. By sharing the aggregate differences in reimbursement, compensation, and productivity, we can provide an in-depth analysis while maintaining the confidentiality of key financial information for each entity.

Do you need black box analysis?

If your organization is planning a deal, transaction, or partnership, you may benefit from black box analysis. Reach out to your service provider to learn how black box analysis can help you make the right decisions for your organization.

Alfredo Cepero, Principal, Assurance Market Leader, BDO, can be reached at (305) 420-8006 or acepero@bdo.com.

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Dr. McDermott Named 'Most-Published Author' on Meningioma Research

BY LOIS THOMSON

Michael McDermott, M.D., was recently named the most published author of papers on meningioma research in a study titled, "Bibliometric Analysis of Meningiomas from 2001 to 2023: Focus on the Top 100 Most Cited Papers." However, in speaking about the honor – and other portions of his career – Dr. McDermott simply said, "I don't like to self-promote." When being introduced at a speaking engagement, he often just says, "I'm a neurosurgeon at Baptist Health in South Florida."

While that is true, there is so much more to the story. Dr. McDermott is the chief medical executive of Baptist Health Miami Neuroscience Institute, having come to South Florida in 2020 after spending 30 years at the University of California San Francisco – 28 on faculty and two years as a fellow. He said that in 1997 he decided to focus on meningioma (the most common primary brain tumor in adults), in both a clinical and a research effort. While at UCSF, he also held two different endowed chairs, both of which were focused on meningioma research, and allowed him to invite other experts to San Francisco to lecture.

Dr. McDermott mentioned others with whom he was closely associated who were a significant part of his work, so as he pointed out, "(Authoring articles) wasn't a solo effort of one individual; it took a team, and the team was surgeon, surgical nurse, residents, radiation oncologists, neuro-oncologists, neuro-radiologists, neuro-pathologists – putting everything together and trying to look at different questions and answer them with either clinical reviews or basic science research." He explained that he was often the one to come up with the questions that needed to be asked, and he had the clinical experience to be able to write a series "on every cranial location for meningioma in the course of my career there."

Dr. McDermott said he tried to be very honest about the results in his reportings because some surgeons have a tendency to advocate for surgery as the only form of treatment, inferring that "it's always a piece of cake," but he noted "that wasn't true at all. So I published papers specifically on complications in surgery for different types of meningioma locations."

Dr. McDermott emphasized that being



Dr. Michael McDermott

the author of hundreds of papers was not one of the goals of his career. "No, I was just having fun – exploratory fun, trying to answer questions I didn't know the answers to. When I couldn't find the answers, I'd say, hey why don't we do this. So we did, and we discovered something new."

He attributed ideas for other articles to "accumulating experience from more

than 2,000 cases, and also with the experience of coming up with little tricks of the trade – techniques I would use that I'd think would help get the surgery done quicker, safer." Additionally, he said very often the residents' critical thinking drove him to seek answers to questions about particular issues.

In describing why he came to Baptist Health after 30 years in San Francisco, Dr. McDermott said, "I had gone as far as I was going to go at UCSF in my career, and I saw an opportunity to develop something in South Florida that would give me a challenge, so I decided to take it on."

One of the opportunities he realized was the cancer institute, about which he said "they had almost every radio surgical device that was available." When he arrived, he discovered that many Caribbean and Central and South America countries, even wealthy ones, didn't have radiosurgery programs. His idea was to set up such programs there to care for patients, rather than obliging people to come to the United States.

Dr. McDermott came to Baptist Health when he was 62, saying he "didn't want to retire." He's in charge of neurosurgery and neurology, physical medicine, and rehabilitation and neuropsychiatry, and it's an exciting time for him. "I come to work thinking I know what my day is going to be like, but most of the time it doesn't turn out that way – which is one of the reasons why it remains interesting and exciting." And while the articles on meningioma are an important part of Dr. McDermott's work, the clinical effort is equally vital. "We do good things for people, and in the vast majority of cases, when we operate, the patient has a good outcome – so we improve their situation from what they were pre-op, and that is the goal."

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A Safe Haven for Newborns Helping Mothers and Safely Placing Newborns in Caring Arms

A Safe Haven for Newborns has been advocating for the most vulnerable among us — newborns — for over 23 years. The Gloria M. Silverio Foundation 501C3 d/b/a A Safe Haven for Newborns, is the lifeline for many of the teens or women who face an unplanned pregnancy and are searching for help. To date, 421 newborns have been given a chance at life; 411 in Florida, nine in other states, one in Honduras.

A Safe Haven for Newborns provides confidential referral services in the state of Florida through a network of agencies amassed by founder, Nick Silverio. The services, across all 67 Florida counties, include help for counseling, postpartum depression, health-related issues, baby necessities, transportation, cell phone access, women's shelters, maternity homes, abuse and suicide issues, adoption and confidentially placing the infant at a safe haven location are the services provided. All services are confidential and offered at no cost to the expectant mother. Mothers seeking help can call in to the 24/7 multi-lingual helpline and receive the help they need.

The Foundation takes a hands-on approach to marketing by taking part in local community fairs and events and doing presentations statewide in both the public and private sectors. It creates specific education programs, videos and activities to reach the vulnerable population between the ages of 14 and 22 years of age and the information is shared with schools and other institutions. The public awareness programs and activities are targeted throughout the state of Florida and include the use of billboards, bus benches, buses and other mass transportation promotions. All designed to reach the targeted communities.

The success of the Safe Haven for Newborns program lies with its strong bond with the hospitals and fire/EMS stations. In order to help facilitate a safe surrender of the infant, the Foundation provides complimentary training and education to all 24/7 "Safe Haven" facilities. The online programs can be taken at the medical personnel's convenience.

For more information, visit asafehavenfornewborns.com.



Nick Silverio

Major Gift to Enhance Miami Lighthouse for the Blind Fight Against Cortical Visual Impairment

Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MLB) has received a \$2 million gift to study and treat a serious condition affecting the sight of more than 180,000 children in the United States.

The grant will help researchers focus on cerebral visual impairment, often called cortical visual impairment (CVI), a disorder caused by damage to the parts of the brain that process vision. It's most common in babies and young children who have suffered an injury — or lack of oxygen or infection — before, during, or shortly after birth.

"Due to the complexity of the condition, early detection is key to providing a proper diagnosis," said Virginia Jacko, CEO of MLB. "CVI typically goes undetected or misdiagnosed, so this new funding will help lead to a better understanding of the condition's genetic and neural basis." Despite being the leading cause of childhood blindness and low vision, CVI isn't widely understood, and many who suffer from it aren't being diagnosed. MLB officials hope to change that, as the two-year grant will help expand research at the facility's CVI Collaborative Center.

Founded in 2020, the interdisciplinary center includes the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, Nicklaus Children's Hospital, Nova Southeastern University's Colleges of Business and Medicine, and Miami-Dade Public Schools Office of Exceptional Learners.

The center has completed over 160 children's assessments to date and provides comprehensive reports on educational interventions for families to share with a child's teachers. These assessments are crucial as functional vision in children can be expected to improve with the appropriate intervention.

The grant — which came from an anonymous donor — also will help enhance extensive literature reviews and development of an evidence-based, age-appropriate test battery and CVI classification system, including data collection. When the project ends in 2026, all results will be shared with research and educational communities.

To learn about scheduling a CVI assessment, call MLB Senior Vice President Cameron Sisser at (786) 362-7515. For more information about Miami Lighthouse and the CVI Collaborative Center, visit <https://www.miamilighthouse.org/CVICenter.asp>.



Virginia Jacko

CVI

CORTICAL VISUAL IMPAIRMENT COLLABORATIVE CENTER at MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE

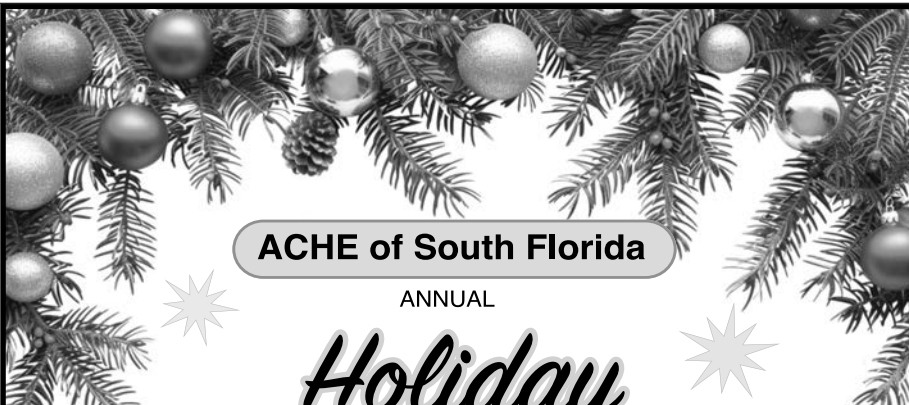
Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired is addressing a serious condition that is the leading cause of childhood blindness and low vision,
CORTICAL VISUAL IMPAIRMENT.

CVI isn't widely understood and requires early diagnosis; many who suffer from it aren't being diagnosed. A major \$2 million two-year grant will help expand research at the facility's CVI Collaborative Center.

To learn about scheduling a CVI assessment, call Cameron Sisser at 786-362-7515.

For more information, visit www.miamilighthouse.org/CVICenter.asp





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Holiday Networking Party

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We Need Your Help to Save Lives in Florida, One Breath at a Time

This year, the American Lung Association celebrated 120 years of impact. Our history is filled with public health achievements, like being among the first to connect air pollution with lung health and discovering the gene that causes cystic fibrosis.

But we're not resting on our laurels—not when there is so much work to do. Especially here in South Florida, where lung health has never been more important. That's why we need you.

As a nonprofit organization, we rely on our community—volunteers, donors, trusted community partners, peer-to-peer fundraisers and event participants—to help us fund research, programs and services that save lives. It's a constant need because the challenges are great, and the stakes are high.

The Challenges

Nearly 1 million South Floridians live with a lung disease, including lung cancer, asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). This number includes more than 70,000 children who have asthma, which is one of the main illness-related reasons that students miss school.

Lung cancer is the leading cause of can-



BY CHRISSEY COHEN

cer deaths here in Florida and across the country.

According to our 2024 "State of Lung Cancer" report, the rate of early diagnosis in our state is far too low, at only 25.3%, and only 15.7% of high-risk Floridians were screened with a low-dose CT scan.

We need to raise these rates to save lives. When lung cancer is caught early, the five-year survival rate improves to 63%.

Youth vaping has become a public health crisis. Nationally, about one in four high school students vape. 4,000 kids start vaping every day. Vaping is dangerous and can cause irreversible lung damage and impacts to brain development. It's also highly addictive. One vape pod can contain the same amount of nicotine as a pack of cigarettes. Youth who vape are four times more likely to try a cigarette and three times more likely to become addicted to nicotine.

The Solutions

The American Lung Association is more focused than ever on our strategic priorities: defeating lung cancer, championing clean air for all, improving the quality of life for those living with lung disease and creating a tobacco-free future.

We've made strides in recent years.

We're breathing new life into lung disease research. We're increasing investments, empowering promising scientists and expanding industry collaboration to accelerate discovery and innovation. This year alone we funded 139 research grants, totaling \$22 million, to help us identify, treat and cure lung diseases that affect millions of people across the country. For example, our research funding has contributed to new lung cancer therapies. In fact, fifty-five new therapies have been approved by the FDA, giving life and hope to those living with the disease.

Our Saved by the Scan campaign is helping increase the rate of lifesaving lung cancer screening. Since the 2017 launch, more than one million people have taken the two-minute eligibility quiz and lung cancer screening rates among high-risk individuals have increased by 170%.

Finally, we are committed to addressing the youth vaping crisis and creating a tobacco-free future for generations ahead. We're implementing a comprehensive public health approach for parents, teens and schools that includes education, policy change, prevention, intervention and cessation to help youth become and stay vape-free.

Join Our Lung Health Movement

We need your help to keep up the

momentum and deepen our impact here in South Florida.

We're seeking passionate individuals who want to move lung health forward in our state and lend their professional expertise and personal experiences to our South Florida Leadership Board and event committees. These volunteer groups consist of physicians, healthcare professionals and cross-industry leaders, who help drive our work locally by serving as mission ambassadors, leveraging their networks and fundraising.

Additionally, the steadfast support of socially conscious partners enables us to create meaningful community programs and events that fuel and expand our vital mission work. Signature events like our Fight For Air Climb Miami, Las Olas Wine and Food Festival and LUNG FORCE Sunset Soiree bring thousands of community members together, boost awareness and raise critical funds.

So, even though we just celebrated a milestone anniversary, we're just getting started. Come join us to supercharge lung health in South Florida. Because when you can't breathe, nothing else matters.

Interested in getting involved? Contact Chrissy Cohen, Executive Director of the American Lung Association in Florida, at Chrissy.Cohen@Lung.org or (954) 727-0907.

We Need You: Help Create a World Free of Lung Disease

The American Lung Association is proud to serve our South Florida community and the 3.3 million Floridians living with a chronic lung disease. Our mission has never been more critical. We are researching new treatments and cures, tackling the youth vaping epidemic, protecting the air we all breathe, and helping people live healthier lives.

We need your help. Support from everyday heroes, dedicated leaders and community partners fuels our mission and deepens our local impact. Because when you can't breathe, nothing else matters. Learn more at Lung.org.

Get involved locally:

Fight For Air Climb Miami
March 9, 2025
ClimbMiami.org

Las Olas Wine & Food Festival
April 25, 2025
LasOlasWFF.org

LUNG FORCE Turquoise Takeover
May 5-11, 2025
TurquoiseTakeoverChallenge.org

LUNG FORCE Sunset Soiree
May 30, 2025
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Advancing Health Equity and Fostering Collaboration Through Black Maternal and Child Health Initiatives

When basic social needs go unmet, they become the principal drivers of health disparities. Recognizing this, the Health Foundation of South Florida has been advancing a collaborative approach that brings together health systems and community-based organizations and paves the way for implementing promising social interventions. Through this approach, the Health Foundation seeks to drive improved health outcomes and greater coordination to address unmet health-related social needs within clinical care settings.

Acknowledging philanthropy's role in fostering collaborations and driving innovation, in 2022, the Health Foundation invited proposals to establish health equity collaboratives to build an infrastructure that supports improving health outcomes for South Floridians with low incomes and who are racial and ethnic minorities. Ultimately, the Health Foundation provided technical assistance and funding support for four newly established health equity collaboratives, which today include 26 organizations working together to effectively address the social drivers of health and treat health-related social needs as part of effective clinical care.

In 2023, three out of four of the Foundation's health equity collaboratives launched pilot projects to improve maternal and infant health outcomes in South Florida.

Advancing Maternal Health Care and Community Well-Being

The Health Foundation's focus on maternal and infant health outcomes acknowledges that the state of Black maternal health in South Florida is alarming, with significant disparities in birth outcomes.

For instance, in Miami-Dade County, Black women are three times more likely to die from childbirth and related complications compared to white women (FLHealthCHARTS). In Broward County, Black and Haitian women are less likely to receive first-trimester prenatal care compared to their white and Hispanic counterparts. According to Broward Healthy Start Coalition, white (non-Hispanic, non-Haitian) women were more likely to enter prenatal care in the first trimester (75.6 percent), followed by Hispanic women (70.0 percent); Black (non-Hispanic, non-Haitian) women (63.1 percent); and Haitian women (57.3 percent).

In Monroe County, the Florida Keys are facing a shortage of health care professionals, resulting in inadequate maternity care services. The CDC estimates that four out of five pregnancy-related deaths are preventable, highlighting the urgent need to address these

disparities.

Health Foundation of South Florida Establishes Two Black Maternal Health Equity Collaboratives

Informed by the region's first Black Health Summit, the Health Foundation invested \$1.8 million in its Black maternal health initiatives. Nearly \$1 million of this commitment is allocated to a Miami-Dade Black Maternal Health and Infant Health Equity Collaborative led by Jackson Health System, including Southern Birth Justice Network, Metro Mommy Agency, Magnolia Birth House, and YWCA South Florida to incorporate community-based doulas into prenatal and postpartum care and to support Jackson Health System's journey of becoming a doula-friendly hospital.

The funding helps to build the doula workforce, improves doula access and integration in Miami-Dade County, and builds the infrastructure to incorporate community-based doulas into the prenatal, birthing, and postpartum process.

The Health Foundation holds a strong commitment to investing in doula training, mentoring, educating pregnant women, and providing social support as vital strategies in the organization's maternal health collaboratives. Additionally, the positive impacts demonstrated by including doulas in the prenatal, birthing, and postpartum process note that they significantly improve birth outcomes.

The Foundation also invested significant funding and support to increase access in a major maternity care desert in Lauderdale Lakes and surrounding cities in Broward County. With only two practicing OB-GYN doctors in this area, these communities were experiencing the worst maternal health outcomes in the county.

In response, the Health Foundation awarded funding for the Broward Black Maternal Health Collaborative, which is comprised of Community Care Plan, Broward Health, Urban League of Broward County, and Broward Healthy Start Coalition. In collaboration with community partners, a new Maternity Care & Heart Community Resource Center opened in Lauderdale Lakes earlier this year, expanding access to services and providing much-needed resources for pregnant and postpartum people. More than \$850,000 in Health Foundation grant funds established stronger community collaboration. The collaborative brought together our public safety net hospital, a health plan, and community-based organizations so that the health care needs as well as social needs of the mothers would be addressed and met holistically.

The Health Foundation also provided funding to support a third maternal health collaborative, the Florida Keys

Maternal Child Health Equity Collaborative, to address previously existing gaps in maternal health care due to the limited number of practicing OBGYNs in the Florida Keys. This collaborative includes the Florida Keys Healthy Start Coalition, Womankind, Rural Health Network, and other local organizations working together to increase access to prenatal care in Monroe County.

Member organizations of the collaborative are supporting increased care coordination, enhancing access to essential prenatal care services, training doulas, and supporting a mobile health unit that brings these services to existing clinics, which were not previously offered.

The Health Foundation chose to fund doulas across each maternal health collaborative because studies indicate that doulas can be particularly beneficial for women of color, women with low incomes, and women living in underserved communities. In a 2022 NIH study, the presence of a doula during childbirth has been linked to a nearly 53 percent reduction in the likelihood of having a cesarean section and a 58 percent decrease in the chances of experiencing postpartum depression or anxiety (Falconi et al. 2022).

Despite these clear advantages, funding for doulas and birth workers remains challenging, which is why the Health Foundation funding is critical in supporting this effort.

The state of Black maternal health, particularly in South Florida, demands urgent action and systemic change. The Health Foundation's proactive approach, investment in collaboratives, and focus on community-driven solutions are crucial to achieving more equitable maternal health care.

As stakeholders prioritize this critical issue, meaningful change can be driven to improve maternal health outcomes for pregnant people and infants in the region. The Health Foundation believes all people in Florida should access quality care, including prenatal, delivery, and postnatal services, to reduce pregnancy complications, improve birth outcomes, and set families up for health and success.

Reference

Falconi, April M., Samantha G. Bromfield, Truc Tang, Demetria Malloy, Denae Blanco, Susan Disciglio, and Winnie Chi. "Doula care across the maternity care continuum and impact on maternal health: Evaluation of doula programs across three states using propensity score matching." *EClinicalMedicine* 50 (2022): 101531. doi:10.1016/j.eclinm.2022.101531. FLHealthCHARTS. "Maternal Deaths." Florida

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A message from our President

What Might We Expect from a Second Trump Administration?

A potential second Trump administration would likely continue prioritizing deregulation and market-driven healthcare solutions. During his first term, former President Trump emphasized reducing government involvement in healthcare, favoring policies that foster competition among providers and insurers. That first term “was characterized by efforts to chip away at key tenets of the Affordable

Care Act, curtail the Medicaid program, and deregulate the healthcare industry.” [Healthcare Dive November 7, 2024] Key areas of focus may include the Affordable Care Act (ACA), drug pricing, and healthcare transparency.

The Trump administration's repeated efforts to dismantle the ACA suggest that a second term could reignite efforts to repeal or replace key components, such as the Medicaid expansion or marketplace subsidies. These changes could have significant implications for hospitals and providers, particularly those serving low-income or underserved populations. Any substantial alterations to Medicaid would ripple through the healthcare sector, affecting revenue streams and patient coverage.

Drug pricing reform, a hallmark of Trump's first term, may resurface with policies aimed at lowering prescription costs. Initiatives like drug importation or inter-



Jaime Caldwell

national price indexing could challenge pharmaceutical companies but offer savings to consumers and insurers. These proposals, however, often face legal and industry pushback, delaying their implementation. Some indication about the impact on the pharmaceutical industry was exposed by the stock market where pharmaceutical stocks gained value after the election results were known. This doesn't speak well for the consumer/patient.

Transparency initiatives would likely remain a priority. Trump's executive orders requiring hospitals and insurers to disclose negotiated rates sought to empower consumers and reduce costs. A second administration could expand such mandates, further pushing the industry toward price transparency. Transparency efforts for both hospitals and insurers seem ineffectual.

Healthcare providers may also encounter more flexibility through continued deregulation. Measures like expanded telehealth reimbursement and reduced reporting requirements, initiated during the COVID-19 pandemic, align with the administration's market-oriented approach and could become permanent features. While the Trump administration's policies often favored cost reduction and deregulation, the industry remains cautious about potential disruptions, especially concerning insurance coverage and funding for safety-net providers. The healthcare sector should prepare for a blend of continuity and renewed regulatory challenges under a second Trump presidency.



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as a catalyst, convener, innovator,
and investor, leaving an indelible mark
on the health and well-being
of South Floridians.

Our vision is to ensure that all South
Floridians have an equal opportunity
to achieve optimal health.



To learn more about
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Elevating Local Healthcare Through Strategic Facility Design

Designing medical facilities that are uniquely representative of your healthcare brand and tailored to the local market is about more than just building functional spaces. It's about creating a physical embodiment of your mission, vision, and values while meeting the unique demands of your community.

The architectural design of healthcare facilities can significantly impact competition between hospital systems. Design not only influences operational efficiency and patient satisfaction but also reflects a company or system's brand, commitment to innovation, and ability to meet evolving healthcare demands. First impressions matter; patients often associate thoughtfully designed facilities with higher-quality care. Architectural features such as welcoming entrances, ample natural light, and comfortable waiting areas contribute to positive perceptions.

Your healthcare facility is the most visible representation of your brand. From the architectural style to interior design, every element should communicate your organization's ethos. Integrating your logo, color palette, and signature elements into the architecture and interiors ensures a seamless alignment with your brand identity. Patient-centered designed spaces that reflect your commitment to patient care, such as welcoming lobbies, healing environments, and intuitive wayfinding, further enhance this alignment. Additionally, incorporating regional aesthetics or culturally significant design cues creates a connection with the community and reinforces your role as a trusted local provider.

A facility must cater to the specific healthcare challenges and opportunities within the community it serves. Designing spaces for high-demand services—whether it's specialized oncology suites, urgent care centers, or telehealth hubs—ensures alignment with the local market's needs. We incorporate culturally appropriate design features, such as meditation rooms, family-friendly spaces, or multilingual signage, that



BY CHARLES
MICHELSON, AIA,
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resonate with your diverse patient base. By leveraging locally available materials and sustainable practices, we position your brand as an environmentally responsible healthcare leader.

The healthcare landscape is evolving rapidly. Designs ensure your facility adapts to both current and future needs to continue to maintain market leadership. Flexible layouts that accommodate future technological upgrades, such as robotics or AI diagnostics, keep you ahead of competitors. Spaces that transition between different uses (e.g., from outpatient services to specialized clinics) align with changing healthcare delivery models. Incorporating digital integration like telemedicine, AI-driven patient flow systems, and patient-friendly amenities enhances your market appeal.

When a facility reflects the community it serves, it fosters trust and loyalty. By including input from patients, families, and local stakeholders during the design phase, we ensure the facility resonates with the people it serves. Using local contractors and materials strengthens your ties to the community, reinforcing your reputation as a local advocate and positively contributing as a local economic contributor.

While creating a powerful brand statement, we also focus on functionality. Thoughtfully designed spaces for staff—whether it's centralized nursing stations or optimized supply chain access—enhance productivity and reduce costs.

Our role as architects is to create a facility that amplifies your brand, aligns with local needs, and sets a benchmark for excellence in patient care. By embedding your identity within the design, we ensure that your facility doesn't just serve the community - it becomes a defining landmark of health and trust.

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

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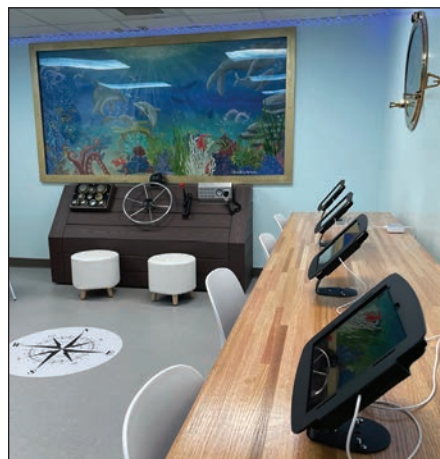
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HEALTHCARE REAL ESTATE,

Palm Beach Children's Hospital Unveils New Playrooms to Enhance Patient Experience



Palm Beach Children's Hospital at St. Mary's opens new playrooms designed to make hospital stays more comfortable and enjoyable for children of all ages. The hospital teamed up with Chasin A Dream foundation, which supports pediatric patients and their families, by easing their burden during life-saving treatment. These thoughtfully created spaces offer a welcome distraction from medical treatments and are aimed at improving the emotional and mental well-being of young patients.

One of the rooms is a special lounge created just for teenagers. Complete with video games, air hockey, and other engaging activities, this room provides teens with a space where they can relax and have fun, offering a much-needed escape from the hospital environment. This room was designed by Michele Ruppert with Bungalow Palm Beach.

For younger children, a playful submarine-themed room brings an underwater adventure to life. Filled with bright colors, interactive toys, and engaging activities, this space sparks creativity and imagination, helping to reduce the stress and anxiety that can come with being in a hospital. Meghan Crowley and Katie Shobel with Studio Riverside designed the room. Artist Niki Yetman with A Painted Peace provided the artwork.

"These new playrooms are designed with the goal of making each child's stay at Palm Beach Children's Hospital as comfortable and positive as possible," said Cynthia McCauley, Chief Executive Officer at Palm Beach Children's Hospital and St. Mary's Medical Center. "We understand that being in the hospital can be a difficult experience for children and their families. By offering spaces where kids can be kids, we hope to make a real difference in their healing journey. Together, we say, 'thank you' to the Chasin A Dream Foundation, because these rooms coming to life would not have been possible without them."

"Chasin A Dream Foundation is thrilled to partner with Palm Beach Children's Hospital to bring these special rooms to life for hospitalized children," said Lori Griffith, the founder of Chasin A Dream. "This project has been a long-time dream of mine, coming full circle from my beginnings at St. Mary's with the Neonatal Physician Practice, to founding Chasin A Dream in 2017. These playrooms will allow us to reach and support even more children in our community who are in need."

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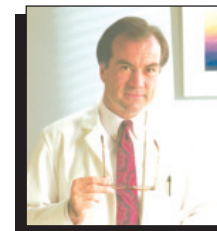


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Memorial Healthcare System Launches Innovative Care Coordination Center to Enhance Patient Safety and Care Efficiency

Memorial Healthcare System is proud to announce the launch of its new Care Coordination Center (CCC), a 24/7 clinical command center in Pembroke Pines. The CCC incorporates virtual operations, combining people and technology to improve patient safety, optimize care delivery, and enhance operational efficiency across all of Memorial's healthcare facilities.

The state-of-the-art center focuses on coordinating interfacility transfers, managing bed capacity and float pool staffing needs in real time, as well as implementing virtual care models.



Key Features of the Care Coordination Center:

- **Transfer Center Coordination:** The CCC streamlines inbound and outbound interfacility transfers, optimizing patient placement and flow. Patients from emergency departments are efficiently transferred to Memorial facilities with available beds to accelerate patient care.
- **Centralized Bed Placement & Capacity Management:** Dedicated patient flow expeditors oversee bed assignments, maximizing capacity and improving patient transitions.
- **Centralized Staffing:** By creating a centralized resource pool for all staffing needs, they are improving management, fostering collaboration across departments, and allowing nurses and other healthcare professionals to be assigned based on acuity and need.
- **Virtual Patient Observation:** A dedicated team assigned to designated adult patient rooms use advanced technology to virtually monitor patients who are at high risk for falls, ensuring immediate intervention and reducing incidents.

- **Virtual Nursing Initiative:** The Virtual Nursing program at Memorial Hospital West enhances operations by allowing nurses to virtually handle admissions, discharges, and patient education, freeing bedside nurses to focus on direct patient care.
 - **Enhanced Operations and Real-Time Monitoring:** The CCC employs a centralized methodology of capacity management across Memorial's six acute care facilities. By utilizing people, technology, and standardized processes, the CCC ensures timely access to care for the community. Dashboards in the center provide an at-a-glance view of real-time capacity and patient flow operations, assisting staff in identifying and removing barriers to patient care, such as discharge delays and bed turnover.
- The total cost of the CCC is \$1.67 million, encompassing 3,000 square feet and featuring 31 workstations. The center uses Epic EHR technology for patient flow and Artsight's AI-driven Virtual Nursing to enhance patient and staff safety and satisfaction. The goals include reducing boarding time in the Emergency Department for patients awaiting admission to a room, decreasing patient falls and improving admission and discharge efficiencies.



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Lee Health Collaborates with United Way and Lee County School District to Provide Essential Services for Dunbar Families



Lee Health's Chief Officer of Community-Based Care Kris Fay cuts the ribbon for the opening of the Golisano Pediatric Clinic at Franklin Park Elementary School supported by leaders and officials from Lee Health, the United Way, Lee County School District, and the community.

Lee Health is proud to open a first of its kind health clinic with the opening of Golisano Pediatric Clinic on the campus of Franklin Park Elementary School. The unique facility offers whole health solutions for students, families, and other members of the Dunbar community right on the school grounds.

The collaboration is part of ongoing efforts with Lee Health, the Lee County School District, and the United Way. The location also offers support to local families through the United Way of Lee, Hendry, and Glades.

The Golisano Pediatric Clinic will support the needs of the community, with sick visits, well-being checks, physicals, immunizations, and more. It will be open five days a week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. The clinic is located as part of the campus of Franklin Park Elementary School at 2330 Henderson Ave, Ste 200.

The clinic is offering medical appointments and supporting common needs for local families, with the operation occurring right in the neighborhood. Appointments can be made utilizing MyChart or calling the facility directly at (239) 343-9888. In the future, the clinic will also offer behavioral health support. Within the same facility, the United Way provides food, clothing, family engagement, education support, and more to parents and staff.

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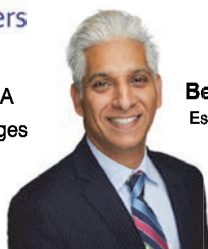
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Palm Beach Health Network Expands Access to Mammography Services with New Palm Court Women's Imaging Center



In a continued commitment to women's health and preventative care, the Palm Beach Health Network opens the new Palm Court Women's Imaging Center in Delray Beach. The center provides advanced breast imaging services with a focus on comfort and convenience, including Saturday appointment availability to fit the schedules of busy women in the community.

The Palm Court Women's Imaging Center joins a network of comprehensive imaging services at multiple Palm Beach Health Network locations, making it easier than ever for women to prioritize their breast health. With the addition of this new center, women have access to the latest diagnostic technology and screening options, including 3D digital and diagnostic mammography, breast MRI and ultrasound, on-site radiologists, and advanced stereotactic, ultrasound, and MRI-guided breast biopsies.

Holy Cross Health Begins Construction of Free-Standing Emergency Department in Deerfield Beach

Mallets shattered concrete blocks marking the "ceremonial groundbreaking" of the Holy Cross Health Free-Standing Emergency Department (FSED) in Deerfield Beach, only the second in Broward County.

The new 25,000-square-foot FSED will offer comprehensive emergency services, including advanced diagnostic imaging such as X-rays, ultrasound and CT scans and also have a fully functional on-site laboratory. There will be private treatment and exam rooms, as well as a dedicated ambulance bay for fast and efficient emergency response. The FSED seeks to reduce patient wait times and will be open 24/7, making emergency services convenient and accessible to residents of Deerfield Beach and the surrounding areas.

"This is a long time coming. I was so excited when I finally saw the Holy Cross sign on the building," said Taren O'Brien, MSN, R.N., Holy Cross Health Chief Nursing Officer. "I want to thank Deerfield Beach City Commissioner Michael Hudak for making this happen. We will make sure that this is an extension of what we do at our main campus ministry in Fort Lauderdale. Trinity Health is committed and dedicated to the Florida market."

The \$41 million project is expected to be completed in February 2026.



Photo credit: Nelson

Cover Story: The Kenneth C. Griffin Surgical Tower: A New Era of Pediatric Care at Nicklaus Children's Hospital

Continued from page 1

Matthew A. Love, president and CEO of Nicklaus Children's Health System, emphasized the importance of this new development, stating, "The opening of the Kenneth C. Griffin Surgical Tower at Nicklaus Children's Hospital, the country's most advanced pediatric surgical center, is an incredible achievement for South Florida. With our enhanced operating rooms, advanced technology, and patient-centric design, we will be able to provide more life-changing care to children and families in our community and beyond. It's another way we are making Nicklaus Children's the place where your child matters most."

From the moment patients enter the lobby of the Griffin Surgical Tower, they are greeted with thoughtful design features aimed at reducing the stress and anxiety often associated with surgeries. Twinkling lights on the ceiling guide young patients on their journey through the tower, from pre-surgical consultations to post-operative recovery, creating a calming and whimsical experience.

Additionally, the tower's use of natural light and soothing color palettes helps foster a serene and peaceful environment, contributing to the emotional well-being of both patients and their families.

Cutting-Edge Surgical Suites for Advanced Pediatric Care

One of the most notable aspects of the new tower is its innovative surgical suites,

which have been significantly expanded in both size and capability. The operating rooms are now nearly three times the size of the hospital's previous surgical suites, each measuring 800 square feet. These larger spaces not only accommodate advanced medical technologies, but also improve workflow, allowing surgeons and medical staff to move more freely and collaborate more effectively.

The operating rooms are equipped with color-changing lights, which can be adjusted to create an optimal environment for various types of procedures. Whether a surgery requires bright lighting or a more calming, dimmed atmosphere, the flexibility of these lights enhances the precision of surgical care.

Additionally, UV lighting is incorporated into the rooms to help sterilize the space quickly and efficiently after procedures, further supporting the hospital's high standards of patient safety.

A standout feature within the Kenneth C. Griffin Surgical Tower is the sterile processing department, which boasts one of the largest and most advanced systems in the country. Equipped with an instrument washer that cuts wash cycles in half, the department ensures surgical tools are always clean, sterile, and ready for use.

The Hanel system, used for organizing and storing surgical instruments, also supports Nicklaus Children's position as a Level 1 trauma center, ensuring that surgical teams can access critical tools quickly and easily in any situation.

Technology That Paves the Way for Future Surgical Advancements

The surgical suites within the Griffin Tower are a testament to the evolution of pediatric surgery over the last 40 years, incorporating technologies that set a new standard in the field. Each of the 12 operating rooms is fully integrated with monitors that allow clinicians to access critical information in real-time without leaving the sterile environment. These multifunctional monitors also serve as educational tools, enabling residents, fellows, and students to observe surgeries remotely, a key feature of Nicklaus Children's status as a leading teaching hospital in the Southeast.

Advanced robotics, such as the Medtronic O-arm® system for neurosurgery and the DaVinci® surgical system, are now part of the surgical landscape at Nicklaus Children's, providing surgeons with enhanced precision and control. The spacious design of the operating rooms ensures that these advanced technologies can be seamlessly integrated into current procedures, while also allowing for future innovations to be easily accommodated.

Enhancing the Patient and Family Experience

In line with Nicklaus Children's mission, the Griffin Surgical Tower has been designed to prioritize patient and family comfort at every stage of the surgical process. Larger in-patient rooms provide families with the space they need to stay

close to their child throughout their hospital stay, while induction rooms allow parents to be present during anesthesia, offering comfort and reassurance to both the patient and family members.

The new tower also incorporates several unique features designed to reduce patient anxiety. Virtual reality tools are available to distract and entertain young patients, while immersive technology transforms the surgical experience into something more akin to a theater, with calming videos that help ease children into the procedure. Additionally, the tower's paperless registration process and up-to-the-minute texting platform for surgical updates streamline communication and reduce the stress of waiting for information.

Nicklaus Children's continues to set the bar for pediatric care with the opening of the Kenneth C. Griffin Surgical Tower. This new facility not only enhances the hospital's ability to provide top-tier surgical care, but also reinforces its commitment to delivering a compassionate, patient-centered experience for children and their families.

As Nicklaus Children's continues to grow its national and international reputation, the Griffin Tower stands as a beacon of hope and innovation for pediatric healthcare in South Florida and beyond.

For more information, visit nicklaushealth.org.



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From now through Jan. 15, 2025, Floridians without health insurance can enroll in affordable coverage through the federal health insurance marketplace, healthcare.gov. Insured Floridians can renew their coverage on the marketplace, too. There are 15 different health plans participating in Florida's marketplace for 2025, giving individuals and families multiple options to meet their care needs.

There is no income limit to qualify for marketplace coverage, and assistance with the cost of premiums may even be available for those who earn more than 400 percent of the federal poverty level. Cost-sharing reductions to make deductibles and other point-of-service cost-sharing obligations, such as copayments, more affordable are also available for individuals with incomes up to 250 percent of the federal poverty level. Floridians can check eligibility requirements on healthcare.gov.

Historically, Florida has had the largest number of marketplace enrollees nationwide. More than 4 million Floridians were enrolled in marketplace coverage in 2024, a significant increase from 2023, driven in part by the end of continuous Medicaid eligibility that was in place during the COVID public health emergency. Almost all enrollees (98 percent) qualified for premium assistance to reduce their monthly premium costs, and 63 percent qualified for cost-sharing reductions. With the premium assistance, the average monthly premium was \$60.

Having affordable and reliable health insurance can be the difference between successfully managing an illness and having to rely on hospital emergency departments when a condition worsens or becomes potentially life-threatening. Without health insurance, people who get sick, need medicine, suffer a traumatic accident or injury, or require medical treatment of any kind either forego care or rely on hospitals to provide that care. While health insurance does not guarantee



BY MARY MAYHEW

access to care, it is an important determinant in access to timely and appropriate care. Numerous studies have shown that people without health insurance are more likely to delay health care or, tragically, forgo it altogether. The health consequences can be severe, particularly when preventable conditions, such as coronary heart disease, or chronic diseases, such as diabetes or high blood pressure, go undetected.

ed.

To be eligible for marketplace coverage, individuals must:

- Live in the U.S.
- Be a U.S. citizen or national or be lawfully present
- Not be incarcerated
- Not be enrolled in Medicare

To qualify for financial assistance, individuals additionally must not be eligible for Medicaid or Florida KidCare and not have access to affordable employer-sponsored coverage.

Marketplace navigators are available to help anyone needing assistance find the health insurance that best meets their needs and get enrolled in a marketplace plan. Individuals providing navigator assistance are regulated by the state, and they must register with the Florida Department of Financial Services. The statewide navigator organization for Florida is the University of South Florida/Florida Covering Kids & Families, and there are 10 additional contracted organizations working across the state. Help is available by calling 877-813-9115 or online at coveringflorida.org/contact.

For Florida's hospitals, your health matters. And so does having an affordable and reliable source of health insurance and access to timely health care. The health insurance marketplace is open for business until Jan. 15. Let's get Florida covered.

Mary Mayhew is President and CEO, Florida Hospital Association.

The Rising Threat of Nuclear Verdicts in Medical Malpractice: A Call for Tort Reform

Recently, I had the opportunity to explore the issue of nuclear verdicts with Bob White, President of The Doctors Company (TDC). I was perplexed to learn that, over the past decade, the United States has seen a dramatic rise in the size of medical malpractice verdicts.

According to TDC -the nation's largest physician-owned medical malpractice insurer-, from 2013 to 2023, the number of verdicts exceeding \$10 million surged by 67%, with many topping \$25 million. Last year, the average award among the top 50 malpractice verdicts rose by a staggering 50%, from \$32 million in 2022 to \$48 million in 2023. These so-called "nuclear verdicts" are reshaping the landscape of healthcare, with consequences reaching far beyond the courtroom.

Surprisingly, this surge in verdict amounts has not been accompanied by an increase in the frequency of malpractice claims. Instead, a phenomenon known as "social inflation" is driving this trend. Social inflation encompasses societal and economic factors—such as desensitization to large numbers, the erosion of tort reform, and emotional appeals in courtrooms—that inflate the costs of resolving claims. The repercussions are felt throughout the healthcare system.

Massive malpractice awards have far-reaching implications. For physicians, they lead to skyrocketing liability premiums and the proliferation of defensive medicine practices—unnecessary tests or procedures ordered solely to shield against potential litigation. Studies estimate that defensive medicine adds at least \$55 billion annually to U.S. healthcare costs. These inflated costs inevitably trickle down to patients, increasing the price of care and straining an already burdened system.

Nuclear verdicts also impose a "tort tax" on society. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Institute for Legal Reform estimates this burden at 2.1% of GDP, equiv-



BY PATRICIA ARES-ROMERO, MD, FASAM

alent to \$3,621 per American household. This hidden tax underscores how legal outcomes in a courtroom can influence household budgets, business operations, and the broader economy.

A key contributor to these astronomical verdicts is what researchers call "number numbness." In a society accustomed to billion-dollar lottery jackpots and multimillion-dollar sports contracts, large figures lose their shock

value. This detachment, coupled with emotional courtroom dynamics, can lead juries to issue outsized awards in malpractice cases.

Adding to the complexity, many jurors are unaware that significant portions of these awards—sometimes as much as 40%—are funneled to attorneys or third-party litigation funders, who invest in lawsuits for financial gain. These dynamics distort the intent of the legal system and harm the very patients it seeks to protect.

Florida has made strides in tort reform in the past, but these efforts are under constant attack. Caps on noneconomic damages, which compensate for subjective claims like pain and suffering, are essential to containing costs and ensuring that liability judgments remain fair and predictable. Without these caps, jurors can be swayed by emotional appeals in malpractice cases, leading to excessive punitive awards that destabilize the healthcare system.

The Dade County Medical Association is committed to addressing these challenges. The association's advocacy efforts are driven by the belief that physicians should focus on delivering high-quality care without the constant fear of crippling litigation. A concerted effort is needed to advocate for common-sense reforms that preserve the integrity of the legal system while safeguarding the future of physician-led healthcare.

Dr. Patricia Ares-Romero is President, Dade County Medical Association, Inc.



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The San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium® (SABCS®) is the premiere breast cancer conference in the U.S. and the world for breast disease. The Symposium aims to achieve a balance of clinical, translational, and basic research, providing a forum for interaction, communication, and education for a broad spectrum of researchers, health professionals, and those with a special interest in breast cancer. The SABCS® is celebrating its 47th anniversary in 2024.

This Official Best of SABCS®, sponsored by Cleveland Clinic Florida, reviews the highlights originally presented at SABCS® 2024 in a one-day program. This symposium will provide oncologists and other healthcare professionals with a wide range of information related to new and well-established topics in breast cancer.

Target audience includes physicians and other healthcare professionals, who are involved with the treatment of breast cancer, including those in the fields of Oncology, Internal Medicine & Subspecialties, Radiology, Endocrinology, Women's Healthcare and Pharmacology.

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When It Comes to Patient Care, Resolve to Improve in 2025

At a recent conference, a presenter shared a familiar graph illustrating a growing challenge in healthcare: the rapid expansion of healthcare administration far outpacing the growth of healthcare providers.

This gap creates both a significant problem and a major opportunity as we look ahead to 2025. The critical question is: how do we reduce the non-patient-related responsibilities on the plates of doctors, nurses, and staff, allowing them to focus more on patient care? When speaking with healthcare providers, common themes emerge stress, overwork, doing more with less, and a need for additional resources. Caring for patients is inherently stressful, and with fewer providers handling more patients, burnout is a real concern.

As we approach 2025, it's clear that smart leaders are focusing on addressing these challenges. Leading healthcare organizations are implementing peer support networks to strengthen emotional well-being and create a culture of appreciation through regular recognition programs. They're also prioritizing wellness by ensuring reasonable and flexible work schedules and actively seeking feedback to remove roadblocks and improve processes. Streamlining administrative tasks and outsourcing non-clinical functions is another key strategy to free up clinicians' time to focus on what matters most—patient care.

At the end of the day, investing in the well-being of healthcare providers is one of the most important steps hospital leaders can take in the year ahead. It's an investment that will not only improve staff retention and morale but also enhance patient care, drive positive feedback, increase referrals, and ultimately boost the bottom line. All the best in 2025!



BY JAY JUFFRE

Jay Juffre is Executive Vice President, Total Customer Experience, ImageFIRST. For more information on ImageFIRST, call 1-800-932-7472 or visit www.imagefirst.com.

RECOGNIZING THE BEST OF THE BEST IN THE HEALTH CARE COMMUNITY



The Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce is now accepting nominations for the 2025 Health Care Heroes® Awards Program; deadline is December 15. The 26th Annual Health Care Heroes® Awards Luncheon will take place May 15, 2025.

WHO IS A HEALTH CARE HERO?

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

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Major League Ballplayer Anthony Rizzo Hosts “Walk-Off For Cancer,” Raises Nearly \$1 Million

The Anthony Rizzo Family Foundation hosted its 13th Annual Walk-Off For Cancer at Pine Trails Park in Parkland, raising nearly \$1 million to benefit pediatric cancer patients, families, and fund research. More than 1,000 people participated on-site or virtually in the event, which consisted of a timed 5K run, 5K walk, entertainment, food and drinks, photo opportunities, and a special kid’s zone presented by i9 Sports.

Anthony Rizzo, a major league ballplayer and a cancer survivor, started his foundation in 2012 to assist families, and he did just that with a surprise announcement that the nonprofit would be paying the mortgage of a Coral Springs family for a year as their child battles leukemia. Jackson Walker is a patient at Joe DiMaggio Children’s Hospital and his single mom, Britt McCluskey, lost her job after missing work to care for her child.

“This is another example of us helping out a family going through a hard time,” said Rizzo, a Parkland native. “Now they won’t have to decide between going to work to pay their bills or being beside their son the whole time, so hopefully this takes some pressure off them for the year.”

Rizzo has a long-standing relationship with Joe DiMaggio Children’s Hospital. He has made numerous visits to the Hollywood facility and his foundation has been responsible for donations and sponsorship of nearly \$2 million there since 2019.

The Anthony Rizzo Family Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization founded by major league ballplayer Anthony Rizzo. Anthony realized during his own battle with cancer that no matter how difficult fighting cancer was for him, it was even more difficult for his family. Anthony believes that an individual does not battle cancer alone, but that the whole family battles it together. The mission of the Anthony Rizzo Family Foundation is to raise money for cancer research and to provide support to children and their families battling the disease.



Jupiter Medical Center Launches the “Happiness Program” for Alzheimer’s and Dementia Care

Jupiter Medical Center is proud to be the first hospital in the nation to acquire the “Happiness Program,” a new interactive light projector aimed at enhancing the quality of life for patients with Alzheimer’s and Dementia.

This innovative program, which originated in the UK and was developed in collaboration with Social-Ability, enables patients at Jupiter Medical Center to engage in interactive games to enhance connections with caregivers and family members. The portable device projects light patterns that encourage movement through activities like popping bubbles and playing the piano, creating a vibrant, safe environment for individual or group enjoyment. Its versatility allows for projections on various surfaces, ensuring patients can engage comfortably wherever they feel at ease.

Based on the UK Happiness Program customer survey responses, the Happiness Program showed significant positive impacts on participants. Notably, the program facilitates a reduction in anxiety levels, and increases in social experiences, positive sensory experiences, and reported happiness levels, all of which correlate with numerous benefits, including improved physical, social, and cognitive activities. The Happiness Program may alleviate withdrawal symptoms and reduce dependence on anti-psychotic medications. It is designed to foster better relationships with care teams, friends, and family, enhancing participants’ social environments.

The Happiness Program was made possible through generous contributions from the Mirasol Foundation to Jupiter Medical Center’s Alzheimer’s and Dementia Care Program. With their support, Jupiter Medical Center was able to acquire the Happiness Program and can now provide this groundbreaking offering to dementia care and rehabilitation patients.

“We are thrilled to bring the Happiness Program to our patients,” said Jill Shutes, DNP, APRN, GNP-BC, NPD-BC, CAEd, Gerontological Clinical Coordinator at Jupiter Medical Center. “This initiative not only enriches the lives of those living with Alzheimer’s and dementia but also exemplifies our commitment to pioneering patient-centered care. We look forward to witnessing the positive transformations this program will bring.”

In addition, Jupiter Medical Center provides The Johnny and Terry Gray Alzheimer’s and Dementia Caregiver Support Program, aimed at enhancing the experience for patients and families affected by Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias. This program offers extensive education, clinical co-management services, and emotional and social support for those navigating the challenging path of dementia.



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FAU Acquires State-of-the-Art MRI System to Advance Research Capabilities

Florida Atlantic University has added a new state-of-the-art Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) system to its research infrastructure. This cutting-edge technology marks a transformative step forward for FAU's research capabilities, enabling groundbreaking studies in neuroscience, clinical health and medical advancements.

"We are thrilled to introduce this advanced MRI system at Florida Atlantic," said Gregg Fields, Ph.D., FAU vice president for research. "This technology positions our institution at the forefront of interdisciplinary research, enabling us to explore the complexities of the human brain and body with unprecedented precision. MRI supports research into the effects of therapies and pharmacological agents, enabling the evaluation of treatment efficacy, prognosis, and therapeutic planning. This combination of structural and functional capabilities makes brain MRI an indispensable tool in modern neuroscience and clinical practice."

FAU has acquired the SIGNA™ Premier 3.0T MRI from GE Healthcare, offering advanced imaging technology and patient-focused design. With a 3 Tesla magnet, it provides high-resolution imaging for complex diagnoses. Its SuperG gradients ensure precise imaging across various clinical applications. The 70-centimeter-wide bore enhances patient comfort, reducing claustrophobia, while Quiet Technology minimizes scan noise. The SIGNA Premier supports a wide range of imaging needs, from neurological to musculoskeletal scans, with advanced modes like fMRI, MRA and Diffusion-Weighted Imaging.

FAU researchers also can take advantage of the NordicNeuroLab fMRI System, a sophisticated, all-in-one solution designed to simplify the integration of functional MRI (fMRI) into clinical and research environments. By incorporating advanced tools for audio-visual stimulation, eye tracking and patient response collection, the system supports precise and efficient neuroimaging analysis. The MRI system also includes an in-scanner BrainVision electroencephalography (EEG), as well as a Biopac system for electrocardiography (ECG), electromyography (EMG) and electrodermal activity (EDA).

This new research facility is designed to foster interdisciplinary collaboration among FAU's faculty and students, offering researchers the ability to integrate MRI technology with other techniques. The integration of EEG and fMRI will allow researchers to explore neural dynamics in conditions such as epilepsy, sleep disorders and cognitive impairments.

"The new MRI system will empower FAU researchers to investigate a broad range of physiological and neurological processes. With its ability to provide both high-resolution structural and functional imaging, the system will support diverse research areas, including mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, chronic pain and fatigue, as well as physiological conditions related to cardiac, gastrointestinal and musculoskeletal health," said Andrew Newberg, M.D., a neuroscientist and FAU MRI medical director.

The addition of the new MRI system also plays a crucial role in evaluating the efficacy of therapies and understanding the mechanisms underlying various diseases and treatments.



Coming next month in
South Florida Hospital News and Healthcare Report...

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West Palm Beach VA Distinguished as An Anticoagulation Center of Excellence

The West Palm Beach VA Healthcare System (WPBVAHCS) is proud to announce the most recent title received by the Pharmacy team at the distinction of the Anticoagulation Forum as an Anticoagulation Center of Excellence.

The Anticoagulation Centers of Excellence (ACE) distinguishment is dedicated to empowering healthcare professionals to deliver the highest standard of care and achieve optimal outcomes for patients on antithrombotic medications.

Becoming an ACE requires an evaluation of your anticoagulation service against best practices and standards established by leading experts in the field. The assessment consists of multiple sections and meeting essential criteria is required to qualify for recognition.



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Dionne Morgan, MD, FCCP, Joins Baptist Health Miami Cardiac & Vascular Institute as Sleep Medicine Physician

Sleep medicine physician Dionne Morgan, M.D., FCCP, has joined Baptist Health Miami Cardiac & Vascular Institute.

Prior to joining Baptist Health, Dr. Morgan was a critical care physician at HCA Florida Aventura and clinical assistant professor of medicine of the Pulmonary and Critical Care Fellowship at HCA Florida Aventura, Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Allopathic Medicine from Nova Southeastern University.

Dr. Morgan earned her medical degree and completed an internship in surgery, pediatrics, and obstetrics and gynecology as well as a residency in internal medicine at the University of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica. Her medical training includes an internal medicine residency and pulmonary and critical care medicine fellowship, both completed at SUNY Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn, NY. She also completed a sleep medicine fellowship at the University of Colorado/National Jewish Health in Denver.



Dr. Dionne Morgan

Boca Raton Regional Hospital Appoints Dr. William Holubek as Chief Medical Officer

Boca Raton Regional Hospital, part of Baptist Health, announces the appointment of William Holubek, M.D., as its new Chief Medical Officer.

Dr. Holubek has over 10 years of experience as a Chief Medical Officer. Most recently, he served as Chief Medical Officer at University Hospital in Newark, NJ. An emergency medicine physician, Dr. Holubek has extensive experience with elevating the safety and quality of care delivered at complex institutions, while improving the publicly reported quality recognitions.

Dr. Holubek received his undergraduate degree from Bucknell University in Pennsylvania, and his medical degree from Rutgers New Jersey Medical School in New Jersey. He completed the emergency medicine residency program at Morristown Memorial Medical Center and the medical toxicology fellowship at New York University/Bellevue Hospital. He also earned an executive Masters in Public Health from Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health in New York.



Dr. William Holubek

Nationally Recognized Thoracic Oncology Surgeon Brings Innovation to Tampa General Hospital's Cancer Institute

A highly experienced academic thoracic surgeon has joined Tampa General Hospital (TGH) as part of its Center for Lung Cancer within the TGH Cancer Institute. Dr. Jonathan Daniel is working with Dr. K. Eric Sommers, a cardiothoracic surgeon and medical director of the TGH Center for Lung Cancer at the TGH Cancer Institute. A world-class thoracic surgeon, Dr. Daniel will be working to connect patients with advanced treatment options and innovative research trials while providing state-of-the-art and compassionate care that addresses the needs of the whole patient.

Dr. Daniel completed his general surgery residency training at the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, in addition to conducting cancer research trials during a fellowship with M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, also in Houston. He went on to complete his thoracic surgical training at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, a teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School. There, he was mentored by thoracic surgical pioneer Dr. David Sugarbaker.

He then became chief of the Section of Thoracic Surgery at the University of Arizona in Tucson. He has served as a lecturer and proctor for Intuitive Surgical, the manufacturer of the da Vinci robotic system.



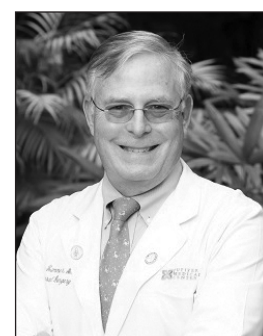
Dr. Jonathan Daniel

Jupiter Medical Center Appoints Premier Breast Surgical Oncologist, Dr. John A. P. Rimmer, to Lead Comprehensive Breast Care Program

Jupiter Medical Center is pleased to announce that John A.P. Rimmer, MD, FACS, FRCS, FRCSED, FICS, will lead the Comprehensive Breast Care Program as its Medical Director. Consistently ranked a "Top Doctor" in Breast Surgery, Dr. Rimmer comes with extensive educational and professional experience both in the United States and abroad.

Board-certified, extensively trained and internationally practiced in oncoplastic surgery, Dr. Rimmer specializes in oncoplastic breast surgery, which combines the dual benefits and advances of breast cancer treatments and plastic surgery and utilizes the leading-edge technology to treat patients with a multidisciplinary approach. Dr. Rimmer brings to Jupiter Medical Center significant experience with intraoperative radiation therapy (IORT), an innovative treatment combining surgery with one single dose of radiation. He will also join Jupiter Medical Center's Physician Group, comprised of top physicians across all disciplines based at the hospital.

Dr. Rimmer is Board Certified in General Surgery and completed his residency at Stanford University Medical Center. Dr. Rimmer completed his education at King's College Hospital Medical School in London, England, with eight years of surgical training and has been practicing medicine since 1996.



Dr. John A. P. Rimmer

Keneisha Smith, MD, Joins Baptist Health Primary Care

Internal medicine physician Keneisha Smith, M.D., has joined Baptist Health Primary Care. She provides comprehensive primary care that includes preventive care, annual physicals, screening tests and healthy lifestyle counseling as well as the treatment of acute medical conditions and chronic and complex multisystem conditions. Her professional interests include obesity medicine, musculoskeletal conditions and hypertension management.

Dr. Smith earned her medical degree at the University of the West Indies Faculty of Medical Sciences in Kingston, Jamaica. She completed an internal medicine residency at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine/JFK Medical Center Palm Beach Regional Graduate Medical Education Consortium in Atlantis, Fla. She also served as a resident physician at West Palm Beach Veterans Affairs Medical Center.



Dr. Keneisha Smith

Internal Medicine Physician Althea Watson, MD, MPA, Joins Palm Beach Health Network Physician Group

Internal medicine physician Althea Watson, MD, MPA, joins the Palm Beach Health Network Physician Group. She is on staff at West Boca Medical Center.

Dr. Watson earned her Doctor of Medicine degree in 2014 from American University of Antigua, College of Medicine, she completed her residency in internal medicine at Brookdale University hospital in Brooklyn, New York, and her fellowship in hospice and palliative medicine at Lincoln Hospital at Cornell University in the Bronx, New York.

Prior to earning her MD, she served as an administrative director for 13 years for Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn. She earned her Master of Public Administration from Long Island University in New York and is expected to earn her Doctor of Philosophy from Walden University in Minneapolis, MN in 2025.

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Patrick Azcarate, MD, Joins Baptist Health's Miami Cardiac & Vascular Institute

Cardiologist Patrick Azcarate, M.D., joins Miami Cardiac & Vascular Institute Cardiology Group, part of Baptist Health. Dr. Azcarate specializes in general cardiology, cardio-oncology and imaging.

Prior to joining Miami Cardiac & Vascular Institute Cardiology Group in 2022, Dr. Azcarate completed his cardiology fellowship at the University of California San Diego. He graduated from the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine and joined the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society. He then completed his internal medicine residency and a clinical research track at the University of California San Francisco.



Dr. Patrick Azcarate

Skilled Gynecologist Joins Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital

Tarangi Sutaria, M.D., has joined the Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital medical staff. A highly skilled gynecologist, she is dedicated to providing comprehensive care for women's health. Board-certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Dr. Sutaria specializes in minimally invasive gynecologic surgery and uses advanced techniques to improve patient outcomes and recovery times.

Dr. Sutaria earned her medical degree from Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine in Roanoke, Virginia. She completed her residency in obstetrics and gynecology at The George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences in Washington, D.C. Following her residency, she completed fellowships in minimally invasive gynecologic surgery at Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital and lower anogenital screening and treatment at Emory University School of Medicine. Dr. Sutaria's specialty interests include minimally invasive conventional laparoscopic and robotic surgery, with a focus on conditions such as fibroids, endometriosis, chronic pelvic pain, abnormal uterine bleeding, and cervical dysplasia. Her approach emphasizes personalized treatment plans that prioritize patient comfort and well-being.



Dr. Tarangi Sutaria

Tampa General Hospital Appoints Dr. Ram Velamuri as New Medical Director of Regional Burn Center

Tampa General Hospital (TGH) announces Dr. Ram Velamuri, a distinguished board-certified plastic surgeon, as the new medical director of the academic health system's Regional Burn Center.

Dr. Velamuri completed his medical education in India before serving his residency in plastic surgery at St. Louis University School of Medicine in Missouri. Following his training, he pursued a specialized fellowship in burn care at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, where he gained invaluable experience in managing complex burn cases.

He has held various leadership positions throughout his career, including service as the burn director of the Firefighters Burn Center in Memphis, TN, and as the director of the Burn Fellowship Program at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, also in Memphis. The former chair of the American Burn Association Global Health Committee, he also is a national faculty member for Advanced Burn Life Support (ABLS) training and a contributor to the education and preparedness of health care professionals in burn management.



Dr. Ram Velamuri

Benjamin Reed, MD, Joins Baptist Health as General Surgeon

Benjamin Reed, M.D. has joined Baptist Health as a general surgeon.

Prior to joining Baptist Health, Dr. Reed was a general surgeon and minimally invasive surgery fellow at Prisma Health Upstate in Greenville, SC.

Before enrolling in medical school, Dr. Reed served six years in the military as a medic and received numerous awards for his service. He earned his medical degree at Case Western University School of Medicine in Cleveland, Ohio. His clinical training includes a general surgery internship at University Hospitals Case Medical Center, a general surgery residency at West Virginia University and a minimally invasive and bariatric surgery fellowship at Prisma Health. During his fellowship, he worked with multiple national leaders in the fields of abdominal wall reconstruction and foregut disease.



Dr. Benjamin Reed

David Michael Trueba, MD, Joins Baptist Health Primary Care

Internal medicine physician David Michael Trueba, M.D., has joined Baptist Health Primary Care as a primary care physician. Dr. Trueba has more than 20 years of experience treating patients in outpatient and inpatient settings. He has held numerous leadership positions in the medical community, including president of the medical staff and chair of the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee at Baptist Health Homestead Hospital.

Dr. Trueba earned his medical degree at Universidad Central del Este Facultad de Medicina in the Dominican Republic. He completed an internal medicine residency at Good Samaritan Hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio and a nephrology fellowship at the University of Kentucky in Lexington.



Dr. David Michael Trueba

Cleveland Clinic Martin Health Welcomes Urologic Oncologist

Facundo Davaro, M.D., is a urologic oncologist at Cleveland Clinic Martin Health. Dr. Davaro completed his medical education at George Washington University School of Medicine. He completed his internship in general surgery and residency in urologic surgery at Saint Louis University School of Medicine in Saint Louis, Missouri. He further specialized in urologic oncology through a fellowship at Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa.

Dr. Davaro has made significant contributions to the field of urologic oncology. He has been involved in research and publications related to variant histology bladder cancer and the genomic landscape of plasmacytoid urothelial carcinoma. He has also presented at various grand rounds and conferences, sharing his expertise on topics such as systemic and surgical therapy for bladder cancer.

Dr. Davaro's specialty interests include hematuria, bladder cancer and bladder removal (cystectomy), elevated PSA and prostate cancer, renal mass and kidney cancer, robotic-assisted surgery, complex open urologic surgery, testicular cancer, penile cancer, nephrolithiasis (kidney stones), and minimally invasive BPH procedures.



Dr. Facundo Davaro

Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital Adds Experienced Hematologist/Oncologist

Paul Thambi, M.D., has joined Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital as a board-certified hematologist and oncologist. He received medical degree from the Ohio State University College of Medicine, where he developed a strong foundation in internal medicine.

Following his medical education, Dr. Thambi completed his residency in internal medicine at Rush Presbyterian St. Luke's Medical Center in Chicago. He further honed his expertise during a prestigious fellowship in hematology/oncology at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Maryland. Dr. Thambi's specialty interests encompass a wide range of cancers, including esophageal, gastric, colorectal (colon and rectal), liver, pancreatic, small intestine, gallbladder, bile duct (cholangiocarcinoma), anal, and neuroendocrine cancers. His commitment to patient care is underscored by his extensive training and a passion for advancing the field of oncology.



Dr. Paul Thambi



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2024: A YEAR IN REVIEW

2024 A Banner Year for KIDZ Medical Services

BY VANESSA ORR

KIDZ Medical Services, a South Florida multispecialty practice that cares for neonatal, pediatric and women's health patients across 15 office locations and 19 hospital partner sites, has been on an upward trajectory for the past few years, and 2024 was no different. In the past year, the practice took part in nearly 130,000 patient encounters and has remained financially strong while also expanding a number of services.

"It's been a fairly stable period," said CEO Wayne Brackin. "While there's no doubt that margins continue to become tighter over time and require never-ending negotiations with managed care companies to provide very high-quality services in areas where there are fewer options, we are cautiously optimistic that we will continue to have solid financial projections, in part because of the efforts of our incredible CFO, Lindsay Mendiola."

Legislative changes focused on Level 3 neonatal ICU requirements created the opportunity for KIDZ Medical to provide telemedicine coverage to facilities all across South Florida, and may also enable them to expand these services across the country.

"The new legislation requires hospitals with Level 3 NICUs to have certain pediatric specialty care available, but typically, in most of these hospitals, there is not a strong pediatric specialty presence,"



Wayne Brackin

explained Brackin. "Hospitals that primarily serve adults but also have strong ob/gyn Level 3 nurseries now need to provide cardiology, pulmonary/ hematology, oncology and other types of care."

As a result, KIDZ Medical has received inquiries from hospitals as far away as Colorado and Texas to provide telemedicine services in those areas. Brackin

notes that it would be fairly easy to expand its telemedicine program, as KIDZ Medical has already been providing telemedicine services for pediatric services for a number of years in the Caribbean. The company has already contracted with five new hospitals to provide this type of coverage, and is also partnering with Nicklaus Children's Hospital to augment the care that they provide to other hospitals.

"We've already been providing this service 'in reverse,' as one of our pediatric neurologists recently relocated out of state and has been providing neurology coverage in Florida through the telemedicine program," added Brackin.

In 2024, KIDZ Medical established new emergency preparedness and disaster recovery protocols, which is especially important as the decentralized company serves patients in 30 locations across six counties equaling a 150-mile circumference. The company challenged its management interns from George Washington University and the

University of Miami to help it implement a communications system during disasters, principally hurricanes, that would allow it to simultaneously communicate emergency information to all of its 500 employees.

"When you work within the same four walls, it's relatively easy to communicate and implement plans and emergency response," said Brackin. "But it gets a lot more difficult to keep everyone in sync when they're not in the same place. We're very happy to now have a system that allows us to stay in sync with our hospital partners and to be able to communicate with everyone over this large geographic expanse we occupy."

KIDZ Medical also launched its MOMZ ob/gyn practice at Homestead Hospital with Dr. Dawn George to respond to the area's growing population.

"Housing has become such a difficult issue in Miami, it's significantly more affordable to live in southern Miami-Dade County where a lot of new housing has been built," said Brackin. "As young families move down south, the area's population has grown younger and the demand for ob/gyn services has skyrocketed. We opened that practice with one physician and subsequently added two, and have now doubled the size of the space to accommodate the demand."

KIDZ Medical's air ambulance service has also gotten busier in the past six months and most recently moved a patient from HCA Kendall to their home in St. Croix, Virgin Islands, and brought a 35-week premature baby from Panama

to be treated at Nicklaus Children's Hospital. The company is currently in discussions with an international insurance company to provide air ambulance services and is also negotiating with two other hospitals to provide NICU air ambulance coverage.

On the employee front, KIDZ Medical was invited to participate in the Best Places to Work competition that requires a minimum threshold of employees to respond to a survey.

"Employee response has been exceptionally strong, so fingers crossed that we do well in that competition," said Brackin. He added that he is especially proud to note that a number of KIDZ Medical doctors have recently earned accolades, including Dr. Sara Tano, who received the St. Mary's Hospital Faculty of the Year Award and Dr. Jessica Morlok-Prince, who was named Pediatric Attending of the Year in the 2024 FAU Emergency Medicine Residency Program. MOMZ ob/gyn physician, Dr. Darren Salinger, was named Preceptor of the Year by the Miami Dade College Physician Assistant Program.

As 2025 approaches, Brackin says that KIDZ Medical is ready for whatever lies ahead.

"Obviously, there is a great deal of uncertainty about the direction that healthcare is going to go in, but that's not anything different; healthcare goes in five-year cycles, and there's always something new coming down the pike," he said. "We'll stand back a little bit, and then react to whatever changes come."

Holy Cross Health 2024 Year in Review

It's been another year of expansion, altruism, technological advancements and planning for the community's healthcare needs of today and tomorrow at Holy Cross Health in Fort Lauderdale. Here are some of our top accomplishments from 2024:

Holy Cross Health hosted a special dedication ceremony for the newly renovated Guerrieri Family Medical Complex, which provides patients with access to multiple Holy Cross Medical Group primary care physicians, upgraded exam rooms and more. The Guerrieri Family Foundation has gifted more than \$7 million in donations to Holy Cross Health.

In one of the single largest gifts in Holy Cross Health's 69-year history, philanthropists Wanda and Jim Moran, Jr. and the Wanda & Jim Moran Foundation donated \$6.5 million. Their transformational gift will fund the purchase of a dedicated CT scanner that enhances the diagnostic capabilities in the Emergency Department as well as conversion of an existing X-ray room into a dedicated CT room in the ED. The building where the ED is located will be renamed the Wanda



BY LAURA DENOUX

and Jim Moran, Jr. Emergency Department. The state-of-the-art Philips Spectral CT 7500 will be operational in the Holy Cross ED in late 2025/early 2026. Combined with previous contributions to Holy Cross, the couple's support totals \$8 million.

Fort Lauderdale residents Jon and Helaine Ayers gifted \$2 million to support Holy Cross

Health's Outpatient Rehabilitation Center, where patients receive specialized outpatient care for neurological, oncologic, vestibular and complex orthopedic conditions. The center will be renamed the Jon and Helaine Ayers Rehabilitation Institute and will undergo a transformational physical renovation. With the purchase of new state-of-the-art rehab equipment, it will be the only facility in Broward County to offer many unique therapies that help patients regain and improve mobility and balance.

Philanthropist and financier Donald Sussman, founder and chief investment officer of Paloma Partners, made a \$1 million donation to Holy Cross Health to

modernize the 15,000-square-foot building that will become the new Holy Cross Family Health Center, set to open in the first half of 2025. To honor his generosity, the drop-off and pick-up area at the Holy Cross Health Emergency Department has been named the S. Donald Sussman Emergency Drive Thru Entrance.

A generous \$5 million gift from the Harry T. Mangurian Jr. Foundation funded the renovation of seven operating rooms, the storage room and a portion of the area where instruments get sterilized. The new Harry T. Mangurian Jr. Foundation Surgical Suites were reopened and unveiled this year.

The 14th Annual Holy Cross Health Golf Classic at Coral Ridge Country Club, presented by The Harry T. Mangurian, Jr. Foundation and benefiting the Partners in Breast Health program at the Holy Cross Health Dorothy Mangurian Comprehensive Women's Center, raised more than \$215,000. Over the years, the tournament has cumulatively raised nearly \$1.6 million.

To honor the remarkable contributions of individuals and organizations that have generously supported the Holy Cross mission throughout the years, we unveiled and dedicated a new

Philanthropy Gallery donor wall. Eight new giving society levels were added to the donor wall. Depending on their levels, donors are recognized on the digital display or on the static and digital displays. The digital display showcases stories about major donors, highlights the impact philanthropy plays on the hospital's projects and programs, and features events and photos.

This year, Holy Cross Health also opened the MD ASAP Rapid Response Cardiac Clinic, opened a third cardiac catheterization laboratory in the Jim Moran Heart and Vascular Center and began construction of the Holy Cross Health Freestanding Emergency Department (FSED) in Deerfield Beach, which is expected to be completed in February 2026. Holy Cross Health made some of the latest technology available to patients including the newly approved FARA-PULSE™ Pulsed Field Ablation System to treat atrial fibrillation; Barostim™ Baroreflex Activation Therapy, which uses neuromodulation to improve the symptoms of systolic heart failure; and the Acesa ProVu^R system, used to shrink uterine fibroids.

Laura Denoux is Vice President and Chief Development Officer, Holy Cross Health.

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

Aurelio M. Fernandez III Returns to Memorial Regional Hospital as Interim CEO

Aurelio M. Fernandez III has agreed to helm Memorial Regional Hospital as the Interim CEO. This is a homecoming for Fernandez, who formerly was the President and CEO of Memorial Healthcare System.

Since his retirement from Memorial in 2022, Fernandez joined Broward Health at the system's flagship hospital, Broward Health Medical Center, as the Interim CEO before accepting the Executive in Residence role at Broward Health's corporate offices, where he has led numerous growth and operational initiatives. He will continue in the Executive in Residence role at Broward Health while leading Memorial Regional Hospital.

Fernandez spent almost 20 years with Memorial in various roles before ascending to the system's Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for the Memorial Healthcare System in 2012, and in 2016 he was chosen as President and CEO of Memorial by the South Broward Hospital District Board of Commissioners. He joined Broward Health in 2023.



Aurelio M. Fernandez III

Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center Names Marko Serrano as Chief Financial Officer

Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center names Marko Serrano to the position of Chief Financial Officer (CFO).

Most recently, Serrano served as Delray Medical Center's Assistant Chief Financial Officer and Group Assistant Chief Financial Officer for the Palm Beach Health Network. Serrano has over 20 years of hospital finance and accounting experience. In addition to his tenure at Delray, Serrano also served in finance leadership roles at several national healthcare companies.

He received his Healthcare Masters in Business Administration from Florida International University and his Bachelor's of Business Administration from the University of Miami.



Marko Serrano

Memorial and Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital Foundations Tap Kelley Morris as President

The Memorial and Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital Foundations have appointed Kelley Morris, MHA, as President and CEO. With more than 25 years experience in healthcare philanthropy, operations, and research administration, Morris will serve as the Foundations' chief strategist, collaborating with its board to set the vision, strategy, and structure for philanthropy, donor development, and stewardship activities across the healthcare system.

Morris joined Memorial after serving as vice president of individual giving at Phoenix Children's Hospital, where she demonstrated exceptional leadership and oversight of transformational and principal gifts, major gifts, integrated fundraising and annual giving, gift planning, and corporate and private foundations. She has also held senior fundraising positions at City of Hope, Doheny Eye Institute, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, and Baylor College of Medicine.



Kelley Morris

Selynto Anderson Appointed as Lee Health's Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer

With more than 15 years of leadership in community health, health equity, diversity and inclusion, Selynto Anderson, Ph.D., has been tapped to serve as Lee Health's chief equity and inclusion officer (CEIO). In his new role, Anderson will further Lee Health's commitment to strengthening diversity, equity and inclusion. He'll be responsible for championing, developing, executing and overseeing Lee Health's social inclusion and equity strategy and programs. Anderson comes to Lee Health from Self-Regional Healthcare in Greenwood, SC, where he served as the vice president of community health and health equity/chief diversity and inclusion officer.



Selynto Anderson

VITAS® Healthcare Honors Retired Hospice Veteran, Announces New Executive Leadership

VITAS Healthcare proudly announces four major executive leadership changes:

- Bob Miller has retired after 35 years, most recently serving as executive vice president and chief compliance officer.

- Mary Hensley has been promoted to vice president and chief compliance officer.

- Reka Foldhazi has joined the company as senior vice president of finance.

- Sandhya Bhalla, M.D., has been promoted to regional medical director in California.

After three and a half decades of service, Bob Miller officially retired from VITAS following a year-plus, carefully coordinated transition plan. Beginning his career with VITAS in 1989 as a chaplain in Broward County, Florida, Miller held various leadership roles, including national director of education and training, senior vice president of hospice operations and compliance officer. In 2016, Miller was promoted to executive vice president and chief compliance officer, where he successfully led the organization's compliance and ethics program.

As Miller steps down, VITAS is pleased to elevate Mary Hensley to vice president and chief compliance officer. Hensley joined VITAS in 2006 as a patient care administrator and has since demonstrated leadership and commitment in various roles, including general manager, national patient care administrator and senior regional director of compliance.

In addition to Hensley's promotion, VITAS welcomes Reka Foldhazi as senior vice president of finance. Foldhazi brings more than 15 years of experience in financial planning and analysis, corporate development and strategic finance, having held senior leadership positions at companies such as FIS, JPMorgan Chase & Co and Neuberger Berman. She holds multiple advanced degrees, including master's degrees in business management and financial management from Harvard University and Boston University, respectively.

Dr. Sandhya Bhalla's expertise spans more than two decades with the latter decade focused on hospice and palliative care. She joined VITAS in 2023 as a medical director in San Diego, CA. As regional medical director, Dr. Bhalla leads the medical direction for VITAS locations throughout California, from the Greater Sacramento Valley to San Diego.



Bob Miller



Mary Hensley



Reka Foldhazi



Dr. Sandhya Bhalla

Annie Stamps Appointed to Nicklaus Children's Hospital Foundation Board of Directors

Philanthropist Annie Stamps has joined the Board of Directors of Nicklaus Children's Hospital Foundation, the fundraising arm of Nicklaus Children's Health System. Stamps is a passionate community activist who has worked at nonprofits including Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden and City Year.

In addition to her Foundation board role at Nicklaus Children's, Stamps serves on the alumni board of Ransom Everglades, the board of St. Philip's Episcopal School, the Dean's Advisory Council at the University of Michigan's Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design, and as vice president and trustee for The Stamps Scholar Program, founded by her father E. Roe Stamps, IV and her late mother Penny Stamps.



Annie Stamps



E-mail your submissions to:
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WHAT'S NEW...WHAT'S NEW...WHAT'S NEW...

West Palm Beach VA Expands BioVigil Technology

After a highly successful inpatient installation, the West Palm Beach VA Healthcare System (WPBVAHCS) has expanded the implementation of BioVigil's electronic hand hygiene monitoring system to include all outpatient clinic areas.

BioVigil is an automated method to measure employee hand hygiene behavior, increase compliance, and improve overall quality and safety throughout the medical center. The system collects data that is linked to each user's badge, enabling care teams to monitor hand hygiene compliance, provide real-time reminders at the point of care, track cross contamination, and conduct thorough contact-tracing to pinpoint sources of infection should they occur, and prevent future transmission.

"Since installing BioVigil a year ago, we have remained committed to ensuring the safety of the Veterans that we have the privilege to serve and their loved ones by consistently displaying the green indicator light on the badge," said Inessa Semenov, WPBVAHCS Infection Control Officer. "It offers another point of protection to prevent infection among our Veterans and allows for a seamless healing journey for them to get back to doing what they love most."



Inessa Semenov wearing the BioVigil

Good Samaritan Medical Center Offers Advanced Wireless Testing System to Help Diagnose and Treat Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD)

Good Samaritan Medical Center now offers an advanced wireless testing system to help diagnose and assess symptoms of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) and determine the effectiveness of treatment.

The first procedure at the hospital using the new Bravo Reflux Testing System was recently performed by Abraham Betancourt, M.D., a highly skilled bariatric surgeon who specializes in bariatric metabolic surgery, anti-reflux procedures, gastric stimulator for gastroparesis, abdominal wall hernia repair, and minimally invasive acute care surgery.

The system, developed by Medtronic, measures the acidity level in the patient's esophagus using a small pH-sensing wireless capsule, about the size of a gel cap, that is temporarily attached to the esophageal tissue by the surgeon during an upper endoscopy while the patient is under sedation. Data from the capsule is transmitted for up to four days to a recording device, about the size of a pager, that the patient wears on their belt or waistband. The system's software analyzes the data to determine if, and when, stomach acid is backing up into the patient's esophagus.

Palm Beach Health Network Donates \$300k in Nursing Scholarships

The Palm Beach Health Network donated \$300,000 worth of nursing scholarships to three area nursing schools as part of the State of Florida's LINE grant program that provides matching funds to nursing schools.

PBHN provided 30 nursing students with \$10,000 scholarships at the following schools: Palm Beach Atlantic University, Florida Atlantic University, and Indian River State College this year.

"We take the training of our nurses seriously. They are the backbone of the high-quality care we provide at our PBHN hospitals which feature some of the most complex and innovative programs throughout South Florida and the Treasure Coast," said Ricky Ramirez, Group Chief Nursing Officer, Palm Beach Health Network. "The LINE program has made the dream of becoming a nurse much more attainable in Florida by helping remove barriers like cost, so the focus can remain on learning how to provide exceptional care."

Seventh Annual Africk Family Foundation Spin-A-Thon Sets Fundraising Record



PHOTO CREDIT: BROWARD HEALTH FOUNDATION

More than 300 riders clipped into stationary bikes and pedaled their way through the sold-out 7th Annual Africk Family Foundation Spin-A-Thon, raising a record \$68,000. This was nearly double last year's total and will benefit the Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Program at Broward Health Medical Center.

Presented by OmegaXL Sport, the high-energy glow ride at host sponsor Westin Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort featured teams decked in bright colorful attire competing on spin bikes with invigorating music provided by a live DJ.

"The Africk Family Foundation is proud to support the mission of Broward Health Medical Center's Cardiac Rehabilitation Program," said Pam and Steve Africk. "We consider cardiac rehabilitation an integral part of the journey for those who are affected by cardiovascular disease. It is our pleasure and commitment now, and in the future, to be supportive of this initiative at Broward Health."

Lee Health and Lee County Vote to Approve Mission Agreement, Allowing for Conversion of the Health System to a Community-Focused Nonprofit

More than a year ago, the Lee Health Board of Directors began evaluating a future for the health system to safeguard its long-term strength, ensure local control and protect its safety-net mission—offering high-quality healthcare to everyone in the community, regardless of their ability to pay. A recent vote by the Lee County Board of County Commissioners approving the Mission Agreement, following the vote by the Lee Health Board of Directors approving the same, marked the final step in the approval process. The votes allow for the conversion of the health system from a public/special district of government to a community-focused nonprofit and clearing the path for Lee Health to finalize the conversion through the complete transfer of assets and liabilities of Lee Health to the successor community-focused nonprofit entity, Lee Health System, Inc.

Changes to Lee Health's Enabling Act in 2023 allowed the Board of Directors to evaluate if conversion to a community-focused nonprofit was in the best interest of the residents of Lee County. Following the course prescribed by the legislation, the Board of Directors commissioned an independent study, engaged expert, third-party counsel, collaborated with federal, state and local governments and held multiple Board work sessions, community town halls and public workshop meetings.

"We appreciate the important work done by the Lee County Board of County Commissioners in developing and approving the Mission Agreement," Lee Health Board Chairperson Donna Clarke said. "With broad community engagement, Lee Health is now poised to complete the process of becoming a community-focused nonprofit. Providing quality healthcare to everyone in our community is our fundamental responsibility and we are committed to carrying that mission forward."

Leaders at Lee Health remain steadfast in their commitment to maintaining Lee Health's safety-net mission, and a Mission Agreement between the Lee Health Board of Directors and the Lee County Board of County Commissioners creates a legally binding document to ensure the residents of Lee County benefit from those services in perpetuity.

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

Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce Excellence in Healthcare Awards for 2024

The Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce held their annual Excellence in Healthcare Awards on November 21 at the Global Event Center in downtown Fort Lauderdale. More than 120 Healthcare Professionals and Business Leaders from the community attended the event. The presenting sponsor was UHealth. Dan Lindblade, CAE, President, and CEO was the emcee. The 2024 Excellence in Healthcare Awards Steering Committee lead by Chairperson Kathryn Salerno from Broward Health selected the recipients.

The following awards were presented:

Lifetime Achievement Award – Charles Felix, CPA – Co-Publisher/Owner of South Florida Hospital News and Healthcare Report

Outstanding Healthcare Executive – Dr. Jennifer Goldman – Memorial Healthcare System

Outstanding Healthcare Practitioner – Thomas Dalton - Vitas Health

Outstanding Healthcare Practitioner – Dr. Nancy Dobrolet – Nicklaus Children's Health System

Guts and Grit Award – Dr. Ivette Motola – The Gordan Center for Stimulation and Innovation at the University of Miami

Guts and Grit Award – Aisha Subhani, DO – Cleveland Clinic Achievement in Innovation - Community Health HUB – Memorial Healthcare System

Community Catalyst – South Florida Wellness Network

Outstanding Healthcare Collaboration – Broward Health and Community Care Plan

For Hospitals, Every Day Is Laundry Day *Goodwill's Laundry Linen Services help Jackson Health and other healthcare providers manage high volume laundry needs.*

Behind the bustling corridors of hospital systems like Jackson Health, there's a lesser known yet vital operation that keeps everything running smoothly: clean linens available 24/7. At Goodwill South Florida's state-of-the-art laundry facility in Liberty City, linens are laundered daily, ensuring that hospitals can focus on patient care without ever worrying about a shortage of fresh linens.

With such high demand, over 150 employees work seven days a week, 365 days a year, to ensure a steady supply of fresh linens for patients. A dedicated team of seven engineers and mechanics is always on hand to maintain the complex machinery, which calibrates water temperature and wash times down to the pound for maximum efficiency.

"Linens are a significant expense for hospitals. We regularly visit hospitals to remind clinical staff about the dos and don'ts of handling linens," says Bill Eckler, Director of the Linen Laundry Service at Goodwill South Florida. His team recently visited Jackson South along with the "Blue Bag Man" as part of their educational outreach. "In addition to fun contests and quizzes about which linens go where, we talk about the effective use of linen. Reducing linen usage by just one pound per adjusted patient per day could save \$250,000 annually. That's significant when you consider that even small items, like two towels or one sheet, add up to that extra pound," Eckler explains.

Goodwill's "Linen Awareness" initiative helps hospital staff understand the importance of responsible linen use. By ensuring that soiled linens are returned for proper cleaning and discouraging excess linen in patient rooms, the initiative helps reduce waste and costs. Simple actions, such as placing substandard linens in reject bags instead of trash, allow the laundry team to mend or repurpose them, including donating items to local animal shelters.

The scale of Goodwill's Linen and Laundry operation is impressive. Smaller loads are handled by traditional large commercial washers and dryers like the ones we use at home, but capable of handling up to 200 pounds per load. For larger volumes, massive commercial tunnels wash large quantities of linens more efficiently, using less energy, water, and chemicals. Additionally, an intricate system allows the facility to recycle, repurpose, and manage over 100 pounds of lint daily.

The operation is not just about handling large volumes of linen; it's also about maintaining a sustainable and efficient system. "We prioritize being good stewards of the environment," says Eckler, noting that the facility has implemented practices such as recycling heat from the boilers and reusing water, reducing water usage by 40%.

Goodwill South Florida's laundry facility is more than just a service provider—it's a model for how large-scale operations can integrate sustainability, efficiency, and community service. The Liberty City facility, which is LEED-certified, underscores Goodwill's commitment to environmental stewardship while providing essential services to the community. By recycling resources and promoting linen awareness, Goodwill and Jackson Health are not only reducing hospital costs but also making a positive environmental impact.

For more information, visit goodwillsouthflorida.org.

Bernie and Billi Marcus Commit a \$32 Million Grant to Boca Raton Regional Hospital

Baptist Health Boca Raton Regional Hospital has received an unprecedented \$32 million grant from The Marcus Foundation. This extraordinary grant, the largest in Boca Raton Regional Hospital's history, brings the Marcus' overall philanthropic support to nearly \$75 million. This latest grant – one of the final major grants personally directed by Bernie Marcus before his passing in early November at the age of 95 – will further elevate Marcus Neuroscience Institute into the premier destination for comprehensive, integrated neurological and neurosurgical care throughout the region.

"We are incredibly fortunate to be part of a community where individuals like Bernie and Billi Marcus are driven to make such profound impacts. Their extraordinary generosity has brought invaluable resources to Boca Raton, elevating Marcus Neuroscience Institute as a premier destination for brain and spine care. Thanks to their support, we now offer a program that not only rivals but stands alongside the best in the nation," said Warren Selman, M.D., director and chief medical executive of Marcus Neuroscience Institute at Boca Raton Regional Hospital. "Their commitment to advancing healthcare has transformed our capabilities for the community and our patients."

This commitment comes on the heels of the successful Keeping the Promise campaign, nearing completion of its goal to raise \$290 million supporting the current \$1.1 billion transformation of Boca Raton Regional Hospital's campus. This latest grant will accelerate the next phase of expansion within Marcus Neuroscience Institute – a \$124 million initiative – which will focus on the development of sub-specialty programs focusing on brain health, with programs for Alzheimer's and other dementias, Parkinson's and other neurodegenerative disorders and brain tumors. Also included is a major investment in personnel with planned recruitment of new clinician-scientist physicians to drive innovation in brain and spine care. Additionally, the Marcus' commitment will fund ten new Distinguished Physician Scholars, providing medical staff leaders with the resources to innovate and discover by enhancing research capabilities with clinician-driven translational research.

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Cover Story: Dr. Baez-Escudero to Bring Big Changes to Broward Health’s Cardiology Program

Continued from page 1

years at the Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital as the leader of its electrophysiology program. He also served as the interim chairman of cardiology for a number of years and led the cardiac fellowship program.

“Broward Health already has a very strong foundation in cardiac services, but I saw an opportunity for me to improve our structure and how we work together to advance our multi-specialty programs,” he said.

Dr. Baez’s vision includes building a group of electrophysiologists who will enable Broward Health to offer modern electrophysiology services at all of its hospitals. He also plans to expand some of the health system’s other cardiac service lines working in conjunction with the service line vice president and other cardiac surgeons.

“I want to position Broward Health as a key player in cardiology within the county, and that will include strategically growing specialty service lines in cardiology, hiring more talented cardiologists to the team, and creating specific teams for each hospital,” he said. “In the long term, this will help to improve heart health within our community.”

This is especially important now as more people move into South Florida and the demand for cardiac services grows.

“We hope that with some of these strategic changes, more patients will turn to Broward Health to get better quality cardiovascular care,” said Dr. Baez. “Certainly, the demand is already here, so we’re hopeful with the upcoming changes we can attract more local patients.”

In the coming months, Dr. Baez plans on making improvements in office space, as well as introducing more structured service lines – having groups of cardiologists all located in one office building, for example. He also plans on improving the software used for patient care, including utilizing Broward Health’s recent Epic launch to help care coordination among services. There are also plans to update procedure rooms, such as the cardiac cath lab and electrophysiology rooms with newer equipment and to start a structural heart service line in order to provide patients needing additional intervention more options in addition to open heart surgery, such as replacing heart valves percutaneously.

Dr. Baez also envisions expanding the fellowship positions within the graduate medical education program at Broward Health to benefit the next generation of cardiologists.

“This will entail expanding the current cardiology fellowship as well as creating new subspecialty fellowships to train cardiologists in interventional cardiology, electrophysiology and heart failure,” he explained. “By adding these multi-subspecialty fellowships, we can create a more cohesive team and provide better educational opportunities for doctors who want to train here.”

Dr. Baez, who is originally from Ecuador, received his medical degree from the Universidad San Francisco de Quito and trained in internal medicine at Temple University in Philadelphia. He completed his cardiology fellowship at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston and a second fellowship in cardiac electrophysiology at the University of Chicago.

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