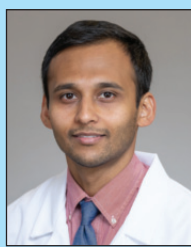


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Financial



Esther Surujon

Financial Sustainability in Healthcare: Strategies for Overcoming Today's Challenges

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

Healthcare organizations face mounting financial challenges in an increasingly complex landscape, threatening their stability and growth. Esther Surujon, Chief Financial Officer of Memorial Physician Group and a faculty member at Florida Atlantic University, sheds light on these pressing issues and shares actionable solutions to maintain financial sustainability while delivering high-quality patient care.

The Four Biggest Financial Challenges

According to Surujon, healthcare organizations are grappling with four major financial hurdles:

- Pressure on Reimbursement Rates
- Rising Operating Expenses
- Revenue Cycle Challenges
- Economic Downturns

"Reimbursement rates remain stagnant while costs continue to rise, particularly as the aging population increasingly relies on Medicare and Medicaid," Surujon explains. "Additionally, the

Continued on page 22

Oncology

Precision Oncology Summit to Feature Novel Therapies, Latest Cancer Treatment Advances

BY VANESSA ORR

On Friday-Saturday, Feb. 7-8, 2025, the third annual Miami Cancer Institute Precision Oncology Summit will be held at the Loews Coral Gables Hotel, where attendees will have the opportunity to learn about the latest advances in lung cancer, breast cancer, prostate cancer, brain tumors, gastrointestinal cancers, biomarker testing and novel therapies to treat patients.

"This year's symposium has been designed to provide experts with the opportunity to learn about the most recent advances in the treatment of solid tumors—including lung cancer, breast cancer, gastrointestinal tumors, genitourinary tumors, head and neck tumors, melanoma, sarcomas and brain tumors—by novel targeted agents and treatment combinations," explained Manmeet Ahluwalia, M.D., MBA, FASCO, chief of medical oncology, chief scientific officer and deputy director, Fernandez Family Endowed Chair in Cancer Research at Baptist Health Miami Cancer Institute.

The summit will also include updates on evolving molecular-based system therapies.

"In the last decade, we have seen a transformative change in designer drugs that treat each patient based on the genetic changes that drive their cancer," said Dr.

Continued on page 4



Dr. Manmeet Ahluwalia

Oncology

Rotationplasty: A Lifeline for Oncology Patients

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

For many oncology patients, facing a diagnosis that involves a tumor in the lower extremities can feel like an uphill battle. But for some, a groundbreaking surgical option called rotationplasty is offering hope, mobility, and a pathway to reclaiming an active life.

What is Rotationplasty?

"Rotationplasty is one of several options available for oncology patients, particularly those with tumors in the proximal tibia or distal femur," explains Stephen D. Miller, CPO, Regional Vice President – SE Region for Hanger Clinic, a leader in orthotic and prosthetic solutions with over 44 clinics in Florida and 925 nationwide. The procedure involves removing the affected section of the leg, rotating the lower leg 180 degrees, and attaching it just below the hip. The ankle joint is then repurposed to function as a knee.

This unique approach offers several advantages. "It's a one-and-done surgery," says Miller. "Once the procedure is completed, patients can typically move forward with a prosthesis and resume an active lifestyle. There's no need for secondary surgeries or concerns about long-term complications with internal components."



Stephen D. Miller

Continued on page 18

ACHE Spotlight



Brian Altschuler

ACHE of South Florida Member Spotlight: Brian Altschuler

BY LOIS THOMSON

"An environment conducive to learning and growing together." As president of ACHE – American College of Healthcare Executives – that is how Brian Altschuler described his goals when taking over the presidency at the beginning of this year. And it's an evolution of the same goals he had as president-elect in 2024. "As we move into '25, my alignment of goals remains the same. I believe we keep evolving as an association and are providing key opportunities for healthcare leaders."

Altschuler said he believes ACHE is the association that brings everyone together for the common good of healthcare in South Florida. "It creates a partnership of healthcare providers who come together to grow professionally, grow personally, and collaborate with each other; even though we're competitors, it levels the environment to be able to network and share for the betterment of the community."

In his everyday position as Vice President of Ancillary Operations at Boca Regional Hospital, Altschuler and his team have been working on a master facility plan that is scheduled to open in

Continued on page 26

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Publisher's Note

Just When I Thought I Was Out, They Pull Me Back In ...

There we were, living the sweet life of freedom—sleeping in, eating meals while they were still hot, and binge-watching shows without interruptions. The house was quiet, the schedule blissfully open, and I thought, “This is it. We’ve done our time. We’ve raised our kids; all the grandchildren are way past the spit up stage and Carol and I are enjoying kids who can be returned to their parents each day. Our nest is still full, but without the 24-hour responsibilities.”

Then came the phone call.
“Dad, you’re going to be a grandpa again!”

Wait, *again*? Don’t get me wrong, I love being a grandparent. And when Andrew and Jaclyn called with the news, we were thrilled but I must admit a bit dazed. But with each new bundle of joy comes the sweet chaos I thought I had left behind for good. And here she is the latest addition to our family, our brand-new granddaughter Kendall Drew Felix, armed with an arsenal of quiet charm and the uncanny ability to turn my carefully curated quiet life into a whirlwind of baby gurgles, diaper explosions, and leaky bottles.

The first time I held her, she looked up at me with those big, soulful eyes, and I felt the walls of my resistance crumble. She smelled of baby lotion and pure potential, a tiny dictator wrapped in pink who instantly commanded my heart. “Just when I thought I was out,” I whispered to her, “you pull me back in.”

Suddenly, my calendar is filled with long-distance phone calls about baby toys, the availability of baby formula, and a.m. checks on her feeding schedule. Suddenly weeklong visits will mean middle-of-the-night wakeups for feedings and impromptu cuddle sessions when teething strikes. I’m back in the trenches, only now I’m older, wiser, and much less agile.

But let’s face it—this isn’t really *pulling me back in*. It’s more like inviting me to the best kind of chaos. Watching her discover the world will be a front-row seat to magic. Her laughter will be a reminder of joy in its purest form. She’s a fresh start for all the love we have to give.

So, while I might joke about trading visits to Best Buy in favor of baby stores, I know the truth: I wouldn’t have it any other way. After all, being “pulled back in” is a privilege I wouldn’t trade for all the quiet nights in the world.

And by the way, I’m relearning the words to *The Wheels on the Bus*.

Happy New Year to all.

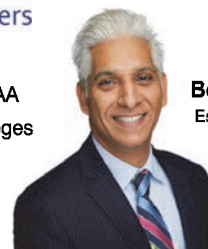


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Miami Cancer Institute Precision Oncology Symposium



Live Symposium

Friday-Saturday
February 7-8, 2025

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Coral Gables, FL 33134



Symposium Director:
Manmeet Ahluwalia,
M.D., MBA, FASCO

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Scan QR code to register.



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Speakers

**Manmeet Ahluwalia, M.D.,
MBA, FASCO**
Miami Cancer Institute

Luis Diaz, M.D.
Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

**John P. Diaz, M.D.,
FACOG, FACS**
Miami Cancer Institute

Rohan Garje, M.D.
Miami Cancer Institute

**Julie R. Gralow, M.D.,
FACP, FASCO**
American Society of
Clinical Oncology

Petros Grivas, M.D., Ph.D.
University of Washington

Shilpa Gupta, M.D.
Cleveland Clinic

Kelly McCann, M.D., Ph.D.
UCLA Health

**Bradley Monk, M.D.,
FACS, FACOG**
Florida Cancer Specialists
& Research Institute

Jameel Muzaffar, M.D.
Duke Cancer Institute

David O'Malley, M.D.
The Ohio State University
Comprehensive Cancer
Center — James

Shubham Pant, M.D., MBBS
MD Anderson Cancer Center

Priyanka Sharma, M.D.
KU Medical Center

Neeta Somaiah, M.D.
MD Anderson Cancer Center

**Ishwaria Subbiah, M.D.,
MS, FASCO**
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**Vamsi Velcheti, M.D.,
MBA, FASCO, FACP, FCCP**
NYU Langone Health

Seth Wander, M.D., Ph.D.
Massachusetts General
Hospital

Patrick Wen, M.D.
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute



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Cover Story: Precision Oncology Summit to Feature Novel Therapies, Latest Cancer Treatment Advances

Continued from page 1

Ahluwalia, who has led practice-changing research for developing new therapies for patients with primary brain tumors and brain metastases for more than a decade. “Every year, multiple new drugs are being approved at a faster pace than ever before.”

He notes that the summit is geared toward oncologists, pathologists, radiation oncologists, palliative care staff, oncology and hematology nurses, pharmacists, medical students, residents and fellows in training, research staff and other healthcare professionals who are interested in the treatment of patients with solid tumor malignancies.

Several keynote speakers are scheduled for the event, including Julie Gralow, M.D., FACP, FASCO, who will speak on ASCO’s Journey of Precision Medicine; Luis Diaz, M.D., who will discuss Immunoablative Therapy, and Vivek Subbiah, M.D., who will present

Re-imagining the (R)evolution in the Precision Oncology Paradigm. Other sessions will cover topics ranging from Evolving Paradigm in Head and Neck Cancer and Addressing Disparities in Precision Oncology to Updates in Triple Negative Breast Cancer and more. Details on the speakers and program can be found at Miami Cancer Institute Precision Oncology Symposium, Third Annual | Baptist Health CME.

An exhibition area will also include the latest breakthroughs in oncology and the studies supporting new advances.

Attendees can register online at <https://cmeonline.baptisthealth.net/precision-oncology-symposium>.

Group discounts are available for three or more providers who register together as a group by Friday, Jan. 3, 2025.

Note that registration must be accompanied by a letter from the fellowship/residency director.

West Palm Beach VA Honors American Hero, Thomas H. Corey

The West Palm Beach VA Healthcare System (WPBVAHCS) is excited to announce the signing into law of a bill (H.R.7333) on behalf of U.S. Senator Marco Rubio and U.S. Congressman Brian Mast to rename the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center as the Thomas H. Corey VA Medical Center. This bill officially renames the main campus, one of eight clinical care sites of care within the West Palm Beach VA Healthcare System.



Thomas H. Corey

Thomas H. Corey was not just a patient of the local VA health care system, he was a national treasure and steadfast supporter who was integral in the medical center’s inception and ongoing operations.

Shortly following his draft into the U.S. Army, Corey was sent to Vietnam in May of 1967, where he served as a Squad Leader with the 1st Air Cavalry Division. On January 31, 1968, while engaged in battle against enemy positions he received an enemy round in the region of his cervical spinal column. This injury consequently resulted in him being paralyzed and a quadriplegic for life. Following the incident, in 1968, at the age of 24, he medically retired.

Following his military service, Corey’s involvement throughout local, regional, and national Veteran organizations knew no limits. He was the founding President of West Palm Beach Chapter 25, Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) in 1981 and a founding member of the local Friends of Fisher House, Inc., whose mission is to support the Fisher House located at the West Palm Beach VA.

“Corey gave everything to help Veterans and this nation as he dedicated his life for the lives of other Veterans,” says WPBVAHCS Executive Director Cory Price. “It is only fitting for all that he has done for this nation and for Veterans that he be recognized with this special distinction.”



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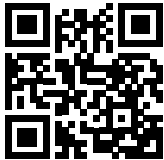
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Source: Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)

The Role of Cloud-Based Isolated Recovery Environments in Healthcare Cybersecurity

Healthcare organizations are a prime target for cyberattacks due to the high quantity of sensitive data they manage. The healthcare industry faces the most expensive data breach recoveries worldwide, with average recovery costs of \$9.77 million. The extensive downtime caused by some cyberattacks can also severely disrupt patient care, making it imperative for healthcare providers to adopt robust strategies to mitigate these risks.



BY ALFREDO CEPERO

One avenue for healthcare organizations to combat cyber risk is through an isolated recovery environment (IRE) for electronic health record (EHR) systems. This approach not only provides insurance against potential cyber threats but also reduces disruption to patient care.

The Power of Cloud-Based Isolated Recovery Environments

A cloud-based IRE is a separate network located on the cloud that allows businesses to back up and restore critical data and systems in the event of a cyberattack or other system disruption. Basing

your IRE in the cloud offers a simple yet powerful way to isolate your on-premises data center while saving on costs by using on-demand resources only when the system is in use or undergoing maintenance. This flexibility allows for efficient resource management and reduces unnecessary expenditures.

Leveraging Infrastructure-as-a-Service

Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS), a type of cloud computing service that offers IT resources on demand, plays a crucial role in enhancing healthcare system resilience. By leveraging IaaS, organizations can make the most of their existing staff and security operations centers (SOC) monitoring teams, which can shorten delays in enacting security measures should the main environment become compromised. IaaS also allows healthcare providers to maintain autonomy over their systems and data, enabling organizations to conduct planned maintenance downtimes and testing according to their own timelines,

while also allowing them to use their existing OpenID Connect (OIDC) supportive two-factor authentication.

Developing an EHR Strategy

Building EHR resilience is about more than just creating a cloud-based IRE. BDO recommends the following process for developing a robust EHR resilience strategy:

1. **Discovery and Roadmap Development:** Start by understanding your needs and creating a clear plan to address them through the creation of the cloud-based IRE and IaaS.

2. **Environment Development:** Next, build the necessary systems and infrastructure to support the separate environment.

3. **Policy and Procedure Setup:** Once you've developed your environment, you'll need to establish guidelines and controls for using the environment. You'll also need to develop a change management strategy to encourage compliance from all relevant staff.

4. **Cloud Implementation:** Next, deploy the environment on the cloud and test your controls.

5. **Sustainability Plan:** Once the

cloud-based IRE is active, begin planning for long-term success. Some considerations will include allocating resources to maintaining the environment, updating your incident response plan, and potentially hiring additional security professionals to support the cloud-based IRE.

Looking Ahead

In an era where cyber threats are becoming increasingly sophisticated, healthcare organizations must prioritize the resilience of their EHR systems. A cloud-based IRE offers a viable option to safeguard against ransomware attacks and maintain continuity of patient care. By leveraging IaaS to support the IRE, healthcare providers can strengthen their cybersecurity while improving the efficacy of resource allocation.

At BDO, we're committed to helping healthcare organizations strengthen their EHR resilience, improving their security, and safeguarding the safety of their patients.

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

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*3 x \$30,000 per revision surgery. **100 cases x \$300 per AmpuShield® with 50% of cases billed to Medicare

Transformative Learning: Florida Atlantic University Nursing Students Bring Care and Compassion to Guatemala

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

For over a decade, Florida Atlantic University Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing has been sending student teams to Guatemala to collaborate with Nursing Heart, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the health of underserved communities. This program, led by Nancy Harris, DNP, APRN-BC, offers nursing students a life-changing opportunity to practice their skills while providing much-needed healthcare in remote areas.

Dr. Harris shared the program's origins and its ongoing mission: "Nursing Heart was founded on the belief that everyone deserves access to dignified healthcare. We are committed to ensuring that every family in Guatemala has the right to receive preventive care from compassionate professionals."

Overcoming Barriers to Healthcare

Operating in Guatemala's Sacatepequez, Chimaltenango, and Solota regions, the nursing teams encounter significant challenges. These areas face a lack of healthcare access, educational barriers, and limited infrastructure, all compounded by a history of marginalization.

"Our teams often meet families who haven't seen a healthcare provider in years," says Dr. Harris. Without access to labs or radiology, students rely on fundamental diagnostic skills to treat chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension, as well as illnesses less common in the U.S., such as chickenpox and dengue fever.

One particularly memorable moment from a recent trip involved a group of expectant mothers who had never seen a doctor. "Using a fetal Doppler, our students measured fetal size and allowed the mothers to hear their babies' heartbeats for the first time. The joy on their faces was unforgettable," Harris shares.

Guatemala's diverse cultural and linguistic makeup also presents unique challenges. While Spanish is the official



Dr. Nancy Harris



language, many patients speak Kaqchikel, a Mayan language. Nursing Heart provides interpreters, but the students often find that human connections transcend words. "Our students always come home with a few new Kaqchikel words and an even greater appreciation for cultural differences," Harris adds.

Hands-On Learning and Lasting Impact

The program immerses nursing students in real-world challenges that strengthen their clinical skills and broaden their perspectives. "This is a back-to-basics approach," Harris says. "Without advanced technology, students must rely on their foundational knowledge of pathophysiology and diagnostics, which solidifies their medical application skills."

Beyond technical expertise, the program fosters cultural sensitivity and a deep commitment to patient-centered care. These lessons resonate with students long after they return to the U.S., influencing their professional practice and advocacy for global health equity.

For Dr. Harris, the most rewarding part of leading these trips is witnessing the profound transformation in her students. "Our students are changed," she says. "They work incredibly hard, embracing every challenge we throw at them, and it's inspiring to see how much

they grow—not just as medical providers, but as individuals."

These experiences create lifelong bonds between students and faculty, while also fostering a heightened sense of responsibility. Dr. Harris hopes the lessons learned in Guatemala will inspire her students to advocate for underserved communities in the United States, shaping their practice as nurse practitioners and motivating them to influence policies that promote equitable healthcare for all.

Addressing Serious Health Issues

In November 2024, the nursing team screened nearly 300 patients, identifying several cases of cervical cancer. This underscores the importance of the women's clinics, which operate alongside acute care clinics. Led by Dr. Paty de Baiza of Faith in Practice, the teams use the VIA method (visualization in acetic acid), a cost-effective diagnostic tool used in low-resource settings.

Patients with precancerous lesions receive immediate treatment with thermal ablation, eliminating the risk of invasive cervical cancer. "This approach removes the need for follow-ups, which can be challenging in remote areas," Harris explains. Patients with chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension are supported by Nursing Heart's

community healthcare program, which trains local individuals to provide ongoing care.

Compassion and Cultural Considerations

The program is grounded in the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing's philosophy of caring. "We recognize culture as a gift brought into every nursing situation," says Harris. "It's inspiring to see our students embrace this opportunity with compassion and dedication, reflecting the core values of our profession."

Looking ahead, Dr. Harris envisions continued growth for the program. "Our students describe this experience as transformative. It's truly life-changing, both professionally and personally," she said. With strong support from the College of Nursing, the program plans to expand its reach, bringing more students to Guatemala and providing broader care to underserved communities.

The next trip is scheduled for mid-February, with 12 eager students ready to make a difference. As the program evolves, it remains a shining example of how education and service can intersect to create meaningful change for both students and the communities they serve.

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Workers' Comp Rates Decrease for Another Year

BY VANESSA ORR

Over the past eight years, there has been a steady decrease in workers' compensation rates and 2025 will be no different. However, the level that rates will be decreased is far lower than in previous years, in part because of changes in how workers' compensation physicians will be paid.

In November of 2024, the Florida Office of Insurance Regulation announced a 1 percent decrease in workers' compensation rates as a result of recommendations from the National Council of Compensation Insurance (NCCI). The rate decrease applies to both new and renewal workers' compensation insurance policies effective in Florida as of Jan. 1, 2025.

"This is the smallest decrease that we've seen in years," said Kyla Murphy, AVP National Healthcare Practice, Risk Strategies. "There was a 15.1 percent decrease in 2024 and an 8.4 percent decrease in 2023; there's a pretty big difference from 15 to 8 to 1 percent."

Part of the reason for this minimal decrease is the passing of Florida Senate Bill 362, which determines how worker-treating physicians are reimbursed. The bill increases reimbursement for physicians treating injured workers to 175 percent of Medicare rates from the cur-



Kyla Murphy



Tom Murphy

rent rate of 110 percent and increases reimbursement for surgical procedures to 210 percent of Medicare rates from the current rate of 140 percent. These rates will take effect Jan. 1, 2025.

According to the NCCI, the 1 percent decrease in workers' compensation rates should offset the anticipated impact resulting from the senate bill, which is expected to result in a 5.6 percent increase on overall workers' compensation system costs. Excluding the impact of this bill from the filing would result in a revised overall rate decrease of 6.4 percent as opposed to the filed 1 percent change.

"This new bill, which aids doctors, is long overdue," said Tom Murphy, SVP National Healthcare Practice, Risk

Strategies, noting that increasing complaints from injured employees and their employers about proper care and lack of access to care helped to propel the bill into law. "In our world, we know when doctors stop treating workers' compensation patients and there was definitely a lot of frustration out there – especially in the orthopedic community – from doctors who did not feel that they were getting paid enough."

As a result of doctors' dissatisfaction, patients were having to deal with not only a shortage of physicians in general, but a limited number of physicians who would take workers' compensation cases.

"The rate decrease as a result of the bill shows how much the legislature can have an effect on these things, which is why we encourage our physician partners to get involved when it comes to issues that can affect their practices," said Kyla Murphy.

According to Tom Murphy, workers' compensation rates have dropped more than 75 percent since 2003, despite the fact that the vast majority of other lines of insurance have increased dramatically over that time, including property and

casualty insurance.

"This is one of those things that we're happy to take to our medical groups and doctors—at least there's good news when it comes to workers' compensation," he said. "However, I do believe that these rates will begin to tick up in the not too distant future since they've been going down for so many years."

Murphy noted that when he first started working as a workers' compensation agent 20 years ago, the rate for medical practices was \$1.05 for every \$100 of payroll; it is now 24 cents.

With the increase in workers' compensation payments, Murphy expects to see more doctors taking these types of cases, including those who had dropped out as a result of lower payments.

"It's a nice jump from 110 percent of Medicare rates up to 175 percent, and that's just for primary care physicians; surgeons are making even more," he said. "With these increases in payment/reimbursement, it's definitely going to bring in more doctors to treat injured workers."

For more information, contact Kyla Murphy at kyla.murphy@risk-strategies.com or Tom Murphy at tmurphy@risk-strategies.com or call 800-966-2120.

The Business of Health Care

Post Election | January 24, 2025

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Restoring a Lost Specialty: How I Empower PT Students to Excel in Upper Extremity Care

It is within a physical therapist's (PTs) scope of practice to treat the entire body. Yet, for decades, they have shied away from hand and wrist injuries, leaving occupational therapists (OTs) to take on a significant portion of upper extremity treatment. This trend began, I think, partly in response to workforce shortages in physical therapy, creating a gap that persists to this day. OTs now make up the majority of hand-therapy certifications and often fabricate custom orthoses for hands and wrists.

While the upper extremity expertise that OTs provide is invaluable for patients, treatment of the upper extremities, including the fabrication of orthoses, is well within the scope of PT practice as defined by the APTA's Guide to Physical Therapist Practice. For that reason, it is still important that we provide PT students education on fabricating and recommending upper extremity orthotics.

At the Miami, Florida campus of the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USAHS), we're restoring a lost specialty by incorporating orthotic fabrication training in our Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) curriculum, equipping PT students with a broader skill set, strengthening their self-belief, and increasing their opportunities to contribute to our healthcare system.

Bottlenecks of Care

In Florida, where the number of physical therapists per capita remains low, hindering PTs from treating certain parts of the body can lead to bottlenecks of care, affecting access and quality for patients. This problem has now spread its roots into education — as the convention that hands and wrists belong to OTs solidified in the clinic, it began to show up to a lesser extent in graduate programs as well. For example, fabricating custom orthotics is now part of the normal curriculum for OT, but not in most PT programs. This disparity was already evident when I attended USAHS in the early 2000s, which meant that I had to strike out on my own to fulfill every requirement of the Certified Hand Therapist (CHT) credential I went on to earn.

The Change

After graduating from USAHS and becoming a CHT, I worked alongside a number of hand surgeons in Florida. My time in those clinics made me realize how much PT education would be improved if it included aspects of the training I had received to deliver effective care to patients with upper extremity injuries. I wanted to pass on that knowledge to the next generation, and when I got the chance to return to USAHS, this time as a professor, I even-



BY LOREN SZMIGA

tually broached the subject of including orthotics training in the DPT program.

The orthotics module I created began as a modest workshop where students could experiment with thermoplastics and velcro straps to craft custom wrist and finger orthoses. The glowing feedback from students—who found the work fascinating and empowering—spurred me

to integrate the workshop into the DPT curriculum. Over the past five years, every cohort of students at USAHS' Miami campus has had the opportunity to develop these skills, boosting their confidence in treating upper extremity injuries.

Now, we've expanded our orthotics training to include cutting-edge techniques that students may need after they leave USAHS, such as 3-D printing. Hand and wrist clinics nationwide are turning to these technologies to design and fabricate custom orthoses with greater speed and precision, and it's critical for our students to gain hands-on experience with the technologies they will encounter in the field. Even if something else has replaced 3-D printing by the time they graduate, just exposing them to advanced technologies helps them build the adaptability they will need to navigate future change.

At the same time, the enhanced training we are offering PT students fosters collaboration at a time when interprofessional fluency is at a premium. My students learn how to talk to and work alongside OTs, orthotists, and surgeons, ensuring that their patients receive holistic, integrated care and helping to relieve bottlenecks.

Closing Gaps, Streamlining Care

My work doesn't stop in the classroom. I continue to treat patients in the clinic, many of whom express gratitude when they can receive care for different body parts without being referred to multiple specialists. This reinforces my conviction that by reintroducing upper extremity treatment to the PT skill set, we can streamline healthcare delivery, reducing the burden on patients and improving outcomes.

Florida's shortage of physical therapists, not to mention healthcare worker shortages around the country, underscores the need for practitioners with versatile expertise. My hope is that USAHS's initiative inspires other programs to adopt similar training, and that together we can reignite a lost legacy for physical therapy.

Loren Szmiga is Assistant Professor, University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences.

Tampa General Physicians Reduce Paperwork, Enhance Patient Care with AI Technology

For every hour spent with patients, doctors spend two hours on paperwork, according to a study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. This added administrative work reduces productivity, limits collaboration and contributes to burnout.

This experience is why Tampa General Hospital partnered with technology company Nuance to provide more than 400 of its affiliated physicians with access to the Dragon Ambient eXperience (DAX) Copilot. The artificial intelligence (AI) tool uses ambient listening to eliminate hours of clinical documentation during patient exams.

"With the power of emerging technologies like AI and ambient listening, we can relieve our physicians and providers from this administrative burden and allow them to focus on what they do best at Tampa General: deliver world-class, patient-centered care," said Dr. Nishit Patel, vice president and chief medical informatics officer at Tampa General.

Far surpassing traditional voice-to-text transcription, DAX Copilot uses AI to convert multiparty conversations into specialty-specific clinical summaries in seconds. It identifies voices, captures patient history and symptom details, detects key observations and experiences, summarizes takeaways, and works seamlessly with the system's electronic medical record platform to reduce documentation time by half.

Dr. Laurie Rothman, concierge physician with Palm Beach County-based TGH Concierge Health, a service of TGH Primary Care, said she's impressed with



Dr. Nishit Patel

the program's accuracy and its ease of use.

"DAX Copilot has enhanced my ability to provide efficient, high-quality patient care," Dr. Rothman said. "It allows me to focus more on my patients, ensuring I can listen attentively, while I'm confident it's recording and documenting everything accurately."

According to Nuance, 70% of physicians who use

DAX Copilot reported less burnout and fatigue, and 85% of patients said their physicians are more personable and conversational.

Dr. Patel notes that Tampa General physicians currently care for more than 2,100 patients per week utilizing DAX Copilot. In the coming months, the technology will expand to Tampa General's emergency department and inpatient units. "Over the next few years, patients will benefit immensely from doctors and nurses using this technology throughout our health system," he added. "It's an exciting time."

Since 2020, Tampa General has been creating a framework of state-of-the-art services for patients in Palm Beach and Martin counties, with the expertise and innovation of a preeminent academic health system. Tampa General is also the primary teaching affiliate of the USF Health Morsani College of Medicine at the University of South Florida, and is one of the largest hospitals in the nation.

For more information about Tampa General's network of services in the Palm Beaches, visit TGH.org/ThePalmBeaches or call (561) 739-4TGH (4844).

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KIDZ Hematology/Oncology Experts Help Propel BMT Program at Nicklaus Children's Hospital to New Heights

BY VANESSA ORR

The pediatric Blood and Marrow Transplantation (BMT) program at the Helen & Jacob Shiham Cancer & Blood Disorders Institute at Nicklaus Children's Hospital was recently recognized as achieving an outstanding survival rate among all U.S. transplant centers, according to the latest report by the Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research (CIBMTR). The report, which reviewed first allogeneic transplants performed between Jan. 1, 2020, and Dec. 31, 2022, revealed an exceptional 97.8 percent adjusted survival rate for the hospital's program.

"This recent CIBMTR recognition underscores the dedication and expertise of our multidisciplinary BMT team, as well as the unwavering support from our KIDZ Medical and Nicklaus Children's Hospital leadership," said Dr. Ossama Maher, a KIDZ Medical Services board-certified pediatric hematologist oncologist and director of the BMT program. Dr. Maher also serves as the associate clinical director of the neuro-oncology program.

Founded in 1991, Nicklaus Children's Hospital's BMT program is one of only two pediatric centers of its kind in South Florida and has performed an average of 570 transplant and cellular therapy procedures to date. The program has been accredited by the Foundation for the Accreditation of Cellular Therapies (FACT) since 2003 and certified by the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) since 2000.

Dr. Maher notes that the program's ongoing success is made possible through collaboration, innovation, and a relentless dedication to patient care. By



Dr. Ossama Maher

embracing emerging therapies, he adds, the BMT program aims to introduce gene therapy as a transformative option for patients suffering from conditions such as sickle cell anemia and thalassemia.

The program offers a wide range of treatments, including autologous and allogeneic transplants utilizing peripheral blood, bone marrow, and cord

blood from HLA-matched, haplo-identical, and unrelated donors. In addition, it is one of the few pediatric centers in the state to provide FDA-approved Chimeric Antigen Receptor T-cell (CAR T) therapy, a groundbreaking treatment for pediatric cancers like acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL). The first CAR T-cell therapy at the hospital was performed in 2019.

The BMT program also operates out of a state-of-the-art unit, opened in 2015, featuring seven private HEPA-filtered, positive-pressure rooms designed to ensure the highest safety standards. Complementing its clinical excellence, the program offers robust support services including child life specialists, music and art therapy, genetic counseling, fertility preservation, pain management, and lodging for families traveling long distances. While the majority of patients who the program treats are from Florida, many children are referred from outside hospitals and the program treats patients from Latin America as well.

While the BMT program has consistently set benchmarks in patient outcomes and advanced therapies, its end goal is even more important, according to Dr. Maher.

"We are honored to offer cutting-edge care and transformative therapies that change the lives of children and families," he said.

Focal Therapy for Prostate Cancer an Alternative to All-or-None Approach

BY JENNIFER WILLIAMSON



Dr. Jamil Syed

The last decade has seen a marked shift in the treatment of prostate cancer. Fewer people are undergoing routine screening and more are choosing active surveillance over surgery or radiation. When radical prostatectomies are performed, the vast majority are robotic assisted. And now there is a growing category of focal therapies emerging as alternatives to whole-gland therapy.

One of those focal therapies, irreversible electroporation (IRE), is performed at Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital by board-certified urologic surgeon Jamil Syed, MD. IRE is a technique that uses pulses of electric current to target cancerous tissue in the prostate while preserving the rest of the gland.

Fewer than 200 surgeons across the country perform IRE using the NanoKnife® System, and Dr. Syed is the only Cleveland Clinic surgeon in Florida currently offering this treatment option. He trained in the procedure during his urology residency at Yale New Haven Hospital prior to joining Cleveland Clinic in 2022.

"Focal therapy is a good option for a highly select group of patients with localized low- and intermediate-risk prostate cancer," says Dr. Syed. "These are often individuals who are not comfortable with monitoring alone, but do not want to face the potential side effects of more aggressive treatments."

Irreversible electroporation

IRE is a surgical approach that involves placing 2 to 6 probes within a target area of tissue. Dr. Syed then delivers a series of high-voltage direct current pulses between the electrodes. This damages the membranes of the cancer cells leading to permanent cell death.

"IRE allows me to ablate the cancer while preserving nearby connective tissue and minimizing nerve damage," explains Dr. Syed. "This form of focal therapy lessens the risk of complications, such as urinary incontinence and erectile dysfunction, seen with traditional treatments and also allows for a quicker recovery."

He describes patients experiencing just a couple nights of soreness after the outpatient procedure, which is performed under general anesthesia.

Patient selection

According to Dr. Syed, the use of IRE in the management of localized prostate cancer should be based on risk factors and patient characteristics. Candidates should have unilateral cancer or cancer in just one quadrant of the prostate with biopsy-confirmed lesions visible on MRI scans.

"I offer this approach for certain patients with localized intermediate-risk prostate cancer, and only in very rare cases would I offer it to a patient with low-risk disease," says Dr. Syed.

He points to improved diagnostic tools and risk stratification methods, such as advanced genomic testing and better biopsy techniques, that allow identification of patients who may benefit most from focal therapy versus standard treatments.

Shared decision-making

"Some of the most in-depth conversations I have are with individuals with intermediate-risk disease because their road forward is less clear," says Dr. Syed. "I appreciate being able to offer some of them a middle ground with focal therapy."

During these discussions, Dr. Syed makes it clear that IRE is considered investigational and not yet part of standard therapy. The NanoKnife System is FDA-approved for the surgical ablation of soft tissue, but has not yet received clearance for the treatment of any specific disease or condition.

"Focal therapies, like IRE, are considered less effective than whole-gland therapies, so it's important for patients to weigh the potential benefits and risks," says Dr. Syed.

He also emphasizes to patients that they must be closely monitored after focal therapy to evaluate the oncological effectiveness of treatment, look for signs of cancer recurrence, and to identify any new cancer that may develop in untreated areas of the prostate.

"If the cancer does return, patients are still eligible for salvage therapy with radical prostatectomy or radiotherapy," adds Dr. Syed.

He also points out that about a third of patients who choose active surveillance will have definitive treatment within 10 years. "So many of these conversations happen across multiple visits over multiple years," he says.

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Multidisciplinary Care for Cancer is Now the “Standard of Care”

BY SUE MACDONALD

While medical treatments for specific cancers continue to evolve and improve, one medical tenet remains, says Dr. Michael Worley Jr., a women’s cancer specialist at Jupiter Medical Center’s Anderson Family Cancer Institute:

“All cancer care should always be multidisciplinary care.”

By its definition, multidisciplinary care involves a team of medical specialists and health professionals that surround patients and their families/caregivers with a variety of resources to help them cope with everything that cancer demands.

“Multidisciplinary care involves more than one cancer physician, and it means far more than the addition of another specialist or medical oncologist to the team,” explains Dr. Worley, who specializes in gynecological cancers.



Dr. Michael Worley Jr.

“Other team members are involved in multidisciplinary care, and they typically include dietitians, geneticists, counselors and palliative care specialists who focus on relieving symptoms linked to the cancer, treatments or other physical challenges,” he says.

Wrap-around care for patients, families

Because a cancer diagnosis affects more than just the patient, social workers also help spouses, family members, partners, children and others deal with the emotional and physical challenges of caring for someone with cancer.

“The stress of a cancer diagnosis is felt by every single person connected to the patient, and families often require support and access to professionals who can provide it,” he points out. “Stress that goes unaddressed can compromise the patient’s care and impact patient outcomes.”

Social support can range from connec-

tions to home health care providers, services that deliver meals to the home meals or special communications outreach so that patients arrive regularly to their scheduled appointments, he notes.

Patients also might benefit from psychotherapy to understand and face the emotional challenges that accompany cancer, while families might benefit from counseling to talk through their own feelings or identify other available sources of support.

For some specific cancers, such as endometrial/uterine or breast cancer, involvement of a genetics counselor can help identify and address specific cancer risks — information that informs treatment protocols and helps family members understand their own risks.

A cohesive team of experts

In most cases, members of the multidisciplinary care team involve:

- A physician who is a cancer specialist or medical oncologist, with additional support from chemotherapy, radiation, surgery and other physician specialists
- An oncology nurse who specializes

in cancer care

- A genetics specialist for screenings, risk assessments and counseling
- A social worker to support the patient, family members and other individuals involved in a patient’s care
- A nutritionist to ensure that the patient has support for eating challenges associated with some cancer treatments, including lack of appetite, the need for nutritional supplements, and dietary advice to reduce existing risks or additional nutritional needs (e.g., obesity, foods that support a healthy gut, vitamin/mineral deficiencies, etc.)
- A palliative care specialist to address cancer-related symptoms, including pain, nausea, constipation, vomiting, stress and more
- A nurse navigator to help patients and their families coordinate the various appointments, treatments and schedules involved with cancer care

For information about cancer care at Jupiter Medical Center, contact The Anderson Family Cancer Institute at (561) 263-4400.



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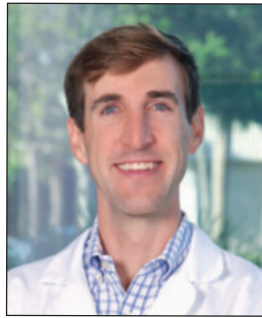


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Patrick O. Tenbrink, MD, MSC

Medical Director, Barb & Joe
Charles Center for Urology



Board-certified in urology, Dr. Tenbrink joins the multidisciplinary team of experts at Jupiter Medical Center's Anderson Family Cancer Institute. Dr. Tenbrink specializes in adult general urology and urologic cancers, offering comprehensive care that includes prevention, diagnosis, management and surgical options, focusing on minimally invasive and robotic techniques. His expertise encompasses robotic-assisted surgery for prostate cancer, the Aquablation procedure for benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), BPH, and NanoKnife® IRE for prostate CANCER FOCAL ablation. He earned his medical degree from the University of Toledo College of Medicine, Toledo, OH, and served his residency and internship at the University of Maryland Medical Center in Baltimore. Dr. Tenbrink is committed to a collaborative decision-making approach, prioritizing the needs of each patient and their families. He ensures that patients receive personalized, continuous care throughout their treatment journey.

Ryan Devine, DO

Program Leader Genitourinary
and Hematologic Cancers



Dr. Devine is a board-certified, fellowship trained medical oncologist and hematologist subspecializing in malignant hematology and genitourinary malignancies. He plays a vital role on the multidisciplinary care team at the Anderson Family Cancer Institute, collaborating closely with other specialists to develop personalized treatment plans for each patient. Dr. Devine also provides second-opinion consultations. He graduated Cum Laude from Villanova University in Pennsylvania and earned his medical degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. Dr. Devine completed his residency, and fellowship at the San Antonio Uniformed Services Health Education Consortium in Texas. With 11 years of active duty in the United States Air Force, Dr. Devine received numerous awards, including the Air Force Commendation Medal for Meritorious Service. Prior to joining Jupiter Medical Center, he served as the Chief of Hematology/Oncology at the San Antonio Military Medical Center.

Educating Patients Is Part of Successful Urologic Oncology Treatment

Urologic oncology is a rapidly evolving field at the forefront of surgical innovation and cancer care. I chose urologic oncology as a field because of these qualities, the surgical challenges, and the ability to establish long-standing relationships with my patients.

I am motivated by my patients, the trust they put in me, and by their unmatched gratitude. Sitting down with patients in clinic and talking

about their fears and concerns really helps me better understand their goals of care and allows me to address them pointedly.

I chose to work at Cleveland Clinic because of its academic rigor and research-heavy environment, which allows me to access multiple tumor boards and collaborate with colleagues across the globe to establish comprehensive treatment plans. I knew that joining Cleveland Clinic would afford me the opportunity to participate in complex cancer care and challenging surgical patients.

In my specialty, urologic oncology, I see patients of all ages and treat various cancers, including prostate, bladder, kidney, testicular, and penile cancer. I believe an essential part of my job is to educate patients about their condition and spend as much time as needed to ensure we are on the same page regarding their treatment plan as every decision comes with benefits but also inherent risks.

Many questions about urologic oncology revolve around preserving functionality. Patients understandably fear loss of continence and sexual function. I try to inform patients about these risks while sharing the many ways in which we try to avoid this, such as through techniques like nerve-sparing. My goal is to balance the treatment of their cancer and also preserve their function and quality of life. I strongly believe in individualized care and aim to incorporate research into my practice. For instance, I use circulating tumor DNA (ctDNA) to personalize treatment based on each patient's genetics and tumor characteristics.

Circulating tumor DNA or ctDNA is a minimally invasive tool that can be used to detect and monitor urologic cancers. Using



BY FACUNDO
DAVARO, MD

a collection of short DNA fragments that come from tumor cells that are released into the bloodstream, we can plan treatment with a greater degree of insight.

Prostate cancer, the most common solid organ malignancy in the U.S., accounted for 300,000 new cases in 2023 and more than 30,000 deaths. We are more aware of racial disparities in incidence and

mortality. Today's standard of care focuses on the individual and an accurate diagnosis, discussing treatment options based on life expectancy, tumor characteristics, and offering support for the patient's lifestyle. Prostate cancer requires a multidisciplinary approach, emphasizing symptom support, and using community resources to help patients and improve their quality of life.

Advancements in medicine, such as artificial intelligence and genetic testing, are exciting. We are working to incorporate artificial intelligence in the pathologic interpretation of a patient's disease and leveraging this information to better treat our patients. This could have far-reaching implications in how we manage patients with new diagnosis or recent biopsies. Also, in performing robotic surgeries, we're able to use innovative techniques to ensure effective disease elimination while maintaining an excellent quality of life for the patient. In the future, I'm looking forward to using focal therapy for prostate cancer, which minimizes side effects while still treating the disease.

Many people are hesitant to pursue cancer treatment because of fear of losing their independence. However, today's treatments offer a better chance for cure and fewer side effects than what was available just a few years ago.

I believe in maintaining hope for patients and reassuring them that we can cure or control their disease while minimizing its impact on their lives.

Facundo Davaro, MD, is a urologic oncologist at Cleveland Clinic Martin Health in Stuart, FL.

FREE MED MAL EXPERT REVIEW



HOW HARD WILL YOUR MED MAL CARRIER FIGHT FOR YOU?

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

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- The financial strength of your insurer
- How experienced is the claims-defense team in Florida courtrooms?
- Do you have the right to consent to any settlement or will they settle against your will?

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

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Next Level Care for Patients With Advanced Cancer: The Benefits of Hospice

When a patient's advanced cancer no longer responds to curative treatments, they may be eligible for end-of-life care. Yet, oncologists often overestimate the patient's survival trajectory. In most cases, patients with cancer are not referred to hospice until they have only a few days left to live.¹

This means the patient misses receiving the full Medicare Hospice Benefit (MHB)—with costs relating to the terminal diagnosis covered at 100 percent for those eligible—along with the care services that enhance their quality of life and assist family caregivers. If the prognosis for the patient is a life expectancy of six months or less if the illness runs its normal course, many are eligible to receive the MHB.

Realistic Prognosis Leads to Quality-of-Life Decisions and Reduced Rehospitalizations

Evidence shows the benefits of hospice for patients with advanced illness. Hospice is associated with reduced pain intensity, symptom burden, and psychological distress; improved quality of life;



BY ILEANA LEYVA, MD

decreased usage of non-beneficial aggressive care; and increased likelihood of death in a preferred location (most often at home). Hospice also decreases the frequency of non-beneficial hospitalization and invasive procedures.¹⁻⁴

Despite these advantages, oncology patients may be reluctant to accept their disease severity or may perceive hospice as 'giving up.' By presenting options to patients and families, clinicians enable them to choose end-of-life care that reflects their values and preferences:

- Set aside time to conduct a goals-of-care conversation. This discussion is associated with improved end-of-life outcomes, goal-concordant care for the patient, and reduced anxiety and depression for family members.
- Communicate the prognosis and disease trajectory, giving the patient realistic expectations to allow for planning.
- Educate the patient and their loved ones so they understand the full scope of options to make informed decisions. No loved one should be left saying, "I wish I had known."

- Listen and speak on their terms. Faith background, cultural traditions, and socioeconomic status can shape a person's views of end-of-life care. Make the conversation productive by staying mindful of the cultural, generational, and personal beliefs involved. Discern who makes or influences the decisions in the family. Pause before providing unsolicited advice.

Delayed Hospice Care Leads to Deferred Benefits: Refer Sooner

Early hospice referral guides patients to symptom-based care plans, interdisciplinary team care, and specialized services. Delaying such care reduces patient satisfaction. Hospitals may see these patients more often in emergency readmissions as their disease state progresses.

In addition, the reduced costs related to stopping ineffective treatments can be significant. Medicare beneficiaries with cancer who used hospice for 31-60 days had a difference of 6% compared with beneficiaries who did not use hospice. For cancer patients with longer hospice stays, the difference increased further: 61-90 days 9% less, and 90-180 days 13% less.⁵

Do you have patients with advanced cancer who are not improving? They are hospice-eligible if they have:

- Progressed through first-line treatment and spend 50% of waking hours in a bed or chair
- An average life expectancy of 3 months
- Indicated they are no longer interested in pursuing anti-tumor therapies

To refer your hospice-eligible patient to VITAS, contact us anytime at 800-938-4827. Dr. Leyva is regional medical director, VITAS® Healthcare.

¹ Waldrop DP, Meeker MA, Kutner JS. Is it the difference a day makes? Bereaved caregivers' perceptions of short hospice enrollment. J Pain Symptom Manage 52:187-195.e1, 2016.

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Lifetime Publishing Honor Goes to Minesh Mehta, MD

BY ADRIENNE SYLVER

It doesn't seem like an outrageous stretch for a kid whose father taught chemistry to decide his own interest in science might be best used in the medical field. But for a young Minesh Mehta, who grew up in a tiny village in Uganda with no electricity or running water, becoming a physician seemed beyond the realm of his imagination.

"We had a rain tank to collect water and a mud stove in the kitchen," he says. "My parents emigrated from India to East Africa to teach in the first school in Mbarara."

It was a long journey from Uganda and medical school to the forefront of research and publishing. Today, Dr. Mehta is deputy director, chief of radiation oncology and the John and Mary Lou Dasburg Endowed Chair in Radiation Oncology at Baptist Health Miami Cancer Institute. He was also recently named the most prolific and cited author over a lifetime in the field of brain metastasis by Highly Ranked Scholars™.



Dr. Minesh Mehta

The Highly Ranked Scholars accolade is a list of the "most productive (number of publications) authors whose works are of profound impact (citations) and of utmost quality (h-index)" in a lifetime.

"I look at my work as an evolution of ideas based on the work of many people and in collaboration with many," he says humbly of his publishing accomplishment. "I don't see it as a

race where you finish first, second or third in a measurable way."

Much of Dr. Mehta's current research is focused on discovering better treatments for brain metastasis patients, whose cancers are particularly challenging. He is working to improve traditional approaches to decrease the rate of side effects and to develop novel technologies and new uses for existing technologies.

"All of my research begins with a testable hypothesis," Dr. Mehta says. "I reverse engineer solutions. And while each of my publications may seem like an isolated work to someone who doesn't know the end goal, they are really like the steps of a ladder. Each paper is a rung."

Dr. Mehta graduated from the University of Zambia School of Medicine with high honors and completed a residency at the University of Wisconsin. He had originally planned to return to Zambia, but his growing interest in research and technology, particularly in the area of radiation therapy, wasn't a match for country that didn't have a single radiation machine.

He stayed at the University of Wisconsin where he eventually grew the University of Wisconsin Cancer Center and headed its brain tumor program. Prior to joining Miami Cancer Institute, Dr. Mehta helped launch and was medical director of the Maryland Proton Treatment Center in Baltimore.

Early in his career, Dr. Mehta led research that helped reduce cognitive toxicities from radiation on the hippocampus. He also began studies using reduced radiation doses for whole brain radiotherapy, as well as combining whole brain radiotherapy with medications that help preserve the function of the hippocampus.

Prior to joining Miami Cancer Institute, Dr. Mehta helped launch and was medical director of the Maryland Proton Treatment Center in Baltimore. Under Dr. Mehta, Miami Cancer

Institute became South Florida's first proton therapy program and is the most experienced in the region. The Institute was also the first center in the U.S. to pair the latest-generation proton delivery platform with pencil beam scanning, which delivers more-precise treatments that improve outcomes and reduce side effects.

Dr. Mehta was co-principal investigator for the METIS (EF-25) trial using stereotactic radiosurgery with or without tumor treating fields (TTFields) for patients with one to 10 brain metastases from non-small cell lung cancer to delay disease relapse.

Initial findings, which he presented at the American Society of Clinical Oncology meeting, showed that the median time to intracranial progression with best supportive care was 11.3 months, while the median time to intracranial progression with best supportive care plus TTFields was 21.9 months.

The work at the Institute has led to its approval as the first site in the U.S. to use the technology in metastatic lung cancer, based on results from a prior trial.

In addition to his work on brain metastasis, Dr. Mehta is also widely published on gliomas and meningiomas.

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

The Anderson Family Cancer Institute



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Richard, who had
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MICA AI and Baptist Health South Florida Collaborate to Revolutionize Mammogram Screening

MICA Artificial Intelligence and Baptist Health South Florida announced an exciting collaboration and licensing agreement to improve the way mammograms are evaluated, helping doctors detect breast cancer earlier and more accurately.

Medical Director Dr. Kathy Schilling and Director Shakira Sarquis-Kolber of The Christine E. Lynn Women's Health & Wellness Institute at Boca Raton Regional Hospital, part of Baptist Health South Florida, are the leading experts in this project. The Institute provides comprehensive care addressing women's unique medical needs throughout their lives, featuring advanced imaging technology and same-day mammography results.

This collaboration was developed with Sheba Medical Center's ARC (Accelerate, Redesign, Collaborate) start-up ecosystem, where MICA AI was created and tested in the hospital's Meirav Breast Cancer Center. MICA AI uses advanced technology to help radiologists analyze mammograms more effectively. One of its key innovations is a special method for Contrast Enhanced Mammography (CEM), which usually requires an iodine injection.

The new AI system aims to provide similar information about blood supply in the breasts without the need for injections or additional procedures. It can also enhance mammo-

gram images that are difficult to read due to dense breast tissue. As it processes more data, it becomes better at producing clearer images, allowing doctors to identify potential problems more easily.

MICA AI plans to integrate its technology into mammogram machines from various manufacturers. This collaboration with Baptist Health South Florida aims to bring this cutting-edge innovation to the U.S. market, benefiting breast cancer patients nationwide.

"This is an exciting example of how Baptist Health Innovations is accelerating innovation through our relationship with Sheba Medical Center and ARC together with MICA AI to bring advanced solutions in cancer therapy for our patients by facilitating collaboration between our subject matter experts and advanced technology companies," said Barry T. Katzen, M.D., Chief Medical Innovation Officer of Baptist Health South Florida.

"Artificial intelligence has great potential to improve cancer diagnosis and treatment," said Professor Eyal Zimlichman, Director of ARC and Chief Innovation & Transformation Officer at Sheba Medical Center. "This collaboration will help introduce this groundbreaking technology to the U.S., transforming breast cancer care."

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Juniper just defeated cancer and rang the bell celebrating her last treatment

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*Juniper,
childhood cancer survivor*

Miami Cancer Institute Launches New Bladder Cancer Center

Advances in cancer care are being driven by rapid growth in technology — including genetic testing, artificial intelligence (AI) and increasingly precise diagnostic, treatment and surgical techniques. Experts at Baptist Health Miami Cancer Institute are using these tools to provide breakthrough care that offers patients hope.

With its world-renowned medical expertise, Miami Cancer Institute's Abbhi Family Bladder Cancer Center provides individualized, comprehensive and compassionate care for patients with all stages of bladder cancer.

"Each patient has a different grade of disease, a different expression of bladder cancer, so one treatment does not fit everybody," says

Murugesan Manoharan, M.D.,

Miami Cancer Institute's chief of urologic oncologic surgery and Abbhi Family Endowed Chair in Urologic Oncology.

"The goal is to identify and classify the disease correctly and to determine the best treatment approach for each patient."

The American Cancer Society estimates that 83,190 new cases of bladder cancer will be diagnosed in 2024 in the United States, with 17,000 deaths in 2024.

"When bladder cancer is caught early, the prognosis is very good," states Dr. Manoharan. Molecular profiling of tumors allows clinicians to identify genetic alterations and tailor treatment strategies accordingly.

One of the most promising developments is immunotherapy. Immune checkpoint inhibitors work by unleashing the body's immune system to attack cancer cells. Targeted therapies also have emerged as an option for certain subtypes of bladder cancer.



Miami Cancer Institute has been involved in a number of bladder cancer clinical trials, some studying combinations of chemotherapy, immunotherapy and radiation therapy. "These studies are leading to better outcomes for patients," Dr. Manoharan says.

Surgery is used to remove some tumors and often is performed using robotic-assisted techniques. Robotic tools magnify the surgical area and provide a 3D view of the bladder and surrounding tissue, making it less likely that nearby nerves will be affected. This helps protect sexual function and bowel control, while improving recovery.

Dr. Manoharan was a pioneer in reconstructing a new bladder with tissue from the intestines to avoid the need for an external ostomy bag for those whose bladder must be removed. He also spearheaded the creation of the Global Bladder Cancer Consortium (GBCC) with experts from Japan, Australia, Canada, the U.K., Malaysia, India and New Zealand.

"We're proud to be at the forefront. By collaborating, we are able to share our information, grow research participation and streamline data collection," explains Dr. Manoharan, the consortium's leader. "New therapies and technologies are revolutionizing diagnosis and treatment."

To learn more, please visit **BaptistHealth.net/BladderCenter**



Baptist Health

Miami Cancer Institute

Cover Story: Rotationplasty: A Lifeline for Oncology Patients

Continued from page 1

Who Is a Good Candidate for Rotationplasty?

According to Miller, patient activity level is key in determining suitability. "If you're looking to remain extremely active—playing sports or engaging in high physical activity—rotationplasty is a strong option," he says. Unlike other limb-salvage procedures, rotationplasty provides unparalleled durability, allowing patients to engage in robust physical activities without fear of harming the surgical site.

Prosthetics: A Vital Component

Hanger Clinic's expertise in prosthetics plays a crucial role in helping rotationplasty patients recover and thrive. Over the years, the clinic has refined its prosthetic designs to address long-term challenges. "We've improved modification techniques and materials to ensure a better fit and enhanced comfort," Miller notes.

With advancements in prosthetic technology, including high-performance feet that mimic natural movement, patients can achieve a remarkable degree of functionality. "We can now fit patients with a prosthesis as soon as the suture lines heal, allowing them to return to normalcy much faster," Miller adds.

Education and Collaboration

One of Hanger Clinic's most important contributions to rotationplasty is its role in education and multidisciplinary collaboration. "We're working to expand awareness and train more prosthetists, physical therapists, and other clinicians on proper techniques," Miller explains. Hanger Clinic also shares resources with providers across the country, ensuring that even practitioners with limited experience in rotationplasty have access to the tools and knowledge they need.

Through events like Hanger's upcoming educational conference, the organization is equipping healthcare professionals and patients with the information necessary to improve outcomes. "It's about sharing what's worked and creating a community of support," says Miller.

Overcoming Challenges

While rotationplasty offers immense

benefits, it does come with unique challenges. "There are what I call life hacks—small, practical solutions to daily hurdles that patients encounter," Miller shares. Hanger Clinic addresses these through events like EmpowerFest, where rotationplasty patients can connect, exchange tips, and learn from one another. "Now, with social media and community events, patients don't have to figure things out on their own anymore," he says.

Looking Ahead: Innovation in Prosthetics

Hanger Clinic is focused on further innovation and education to enhance outcomes for rotationplasty patients. "We're inviting more patients and clinicians to educational courses so they know what to ask for and how to support each other," Miller explains.

By expanding its educational platform, Hanger Clinic is ensuring that rotationplasty patients receive the best care possible wherever they are.

Local Support, Nationwide Impact

One of Hanger Clinic's strengths lies in its extensive network of clinics. "Having locations nationwide ensures patients can access resources closer to home," says Miller. This local support is crucial, especially for young patients who might otherwise need to travel long distances to find expertise.

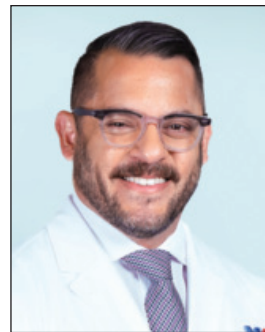
Hanger Clinic connects local clinicians with experienced teams by leveraging video chats and collaborative tools, creating a seamless support system.

A Bright Future for Rotationplasty Patients

Rotationplasty is more than a surgical procedure—it's a second chance for many oncology patients to lead active, fulfilling lives. With Hanger Clinic's commitment to innovation, education, and community support, patients can feel confident in their journey toward recovery. As Miller emphasizes, "It's a solid, life-changing solution that helps patients thrive well into adulthood."

For more information about rotationplasty and Hanger Clinic's services, visit www.hangerclinic.com.

Leading-Edge Cancer Treatment May Seem Too Good To Be True, But It Isn't



BY OMAR H. LLAGUNA, MD, FACS

A groundbreaking treatment for liver tumors, once thought to be the stuff of science fiction, is now a reality and poised to transform the lives of cancer patients within Memorial Healthcare System in 2025.

Introducing the "Edison Histotripsy System" from HistoSonics, a cutting-edge, FDA-approved device that utilizes high-intensity sound waves to obliterate tumors. This non-invasive and highly targeted ultrasound technology generates a "bubble cloud" (imagine an underwater tornado) that mechanically disrupts cancer cells and liquefies tumors for the body to eliminate.

By confining these bubbles within the tumor, healthy tissues, blood vessels, and bile ducts are preserved, allowing physicians to monitor the destruction of cancer cells in real-time.

This innovative approach enables us to treat primary liver tumors, as well as cancer that has metastasized to the liver from other parts of the body, including tumors in patients with cirrhosis. Since the Edison system is non-invasive, patients can undergo treatment without the need for needles, radiation, or surgery. Remarkably, patients with multiple tumors have reported a domino effect, where treating one tumor triggers the body to eliminate other tumor cells.

Significant Benefits, Minimal Risk

Histotripsy complements traditional chemotherapy, which remains the standard treatment for gastrointestinal cancers. Patients utilizing the new technology don't need to discontinue chemotherapy or blood thinners, which can pose risks for some individuals. The procedure is performed under general anesthesia, not due to pain, but to ensure patient stillness. During the treatment, surgical oncologists

use a robotic arm to sequentially destroy the tumor(s). With no incisions involved, there is minimal risk of infection and no concerns about scarring, allowing patients to return home the same day. Clinical trials have shown an impressive 85-95% overall success rate.

A Better Option

Historically, liver tumors have been targeted using needles that either burn, freeze, or electrify the cells. While these methods can be effective, their efficacy may be compromised by suboptimal needle placement, which can lead to additional complications. Further, the treated diseased tissue remains in the body, raising concerns about the presence of viable cancer cells. In contrast, the Edison system offers a treatment option with less pain, faster recovery, and reduced risk of complications.

It's uncommon to find an aggressive treatment approach that doesn't elevate risk. At Memorial Hospital West, where our system will be located, and Memorial Cancer Institute, we're enthusiastic about the transformative potential of histotripsy. While our current focus is on liver tumors, we're confident in its future effectiveness for cancers affecting the breast, brain, thyroid, prostate, and kidney. Liver transplant surgeons are already utilizing this technology to downstage disease prior to surgery.

For more information about histotripsy and our forthcoming approach at Memorial, or if you are a physician interested in making a patient referral, please contact Memorial's Division of Surgical Oncology at (954) 844-9520. Dr. Omar Llaguna is a surgical oncologist with Memorial Healthcare System. To learn more, visit www.mhs.net/services/cancer.

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Community Solutions for Our Healthcare Workforce Shortage

The physician workforce shortage has been well documented nationally as the healthcare community and policy makers look for ways to ensure a sufficient supply of highly trained clinicians to meet the needs of an aging population. The State of Florida has additional challenges that make this issue more acute. Firstly, Florida is one of the largest and fastest-growing states in the nation with a growth of 5% in the last three years. Moreover, Florida is home to a larger percentage of older adults compared to other states which has been recorded as 27.5% of our population, 2nd oldest in the nation. Finally, a fact hidden to most outside of the medical community, is that federal funding and distribution of physician residency training programs has not significantly changed in decades with capped funding and a maldistribution of training programs based on historical development. This final contributing factor means Florida must rely on greater funding at a state level as well as creative ways to encourage the relocation of physicians to meet our growing demand.

The need for access to health care professionals particularly impacts people living in poverty who have higher rates of acute and chronic health conditions and access challenges due to limited transportation, time off from work, and childcare options. Miami-Dade County is no different from other communities in the state that are dealing with an increase in the number of underserved areas.

The Florida Legislature and regulatory leaders need to be recognized for the significant investment they have made in recent years trying to deal with this reality. The passing of the Live Health legislation earlier this year, is the latest and most significant example of the Legislature attempting to address this challenge. Implementation of the bill is ongoing with the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) seeking federal authority to implement, create and expand training programs that will strengthen Florida's health care workforce to meet the growing health needs of our state. Florida is the first state to seek federal support for that matter. Florida is committing almost \$1.4 billion which, with federal support, will provide an average of \$617 million each year for five years to build, strengthen, and sustain the health care workforce and incentivize health care professionals to serve Medicaid recipients in medically underserved areas.

The investment from the State provides a foundation for local communities to con-



BY PATRICIA ARES-ROMERO, MD

sider what else we can do to ensure access to quality health care and a growing quality of life for our residents. The Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders are rightfully looking at additional solutions to make sure Miami-Dade is attracting the best and brightest health care talent from around the country and overseas. Solutions being considered include:

- a) Affordable housing close to healthcare systems.
- b) Financial incentives for homeownership or rentals near healthcare systems.
- c) Accessible and discounted transportation option solutions to ensure that healthcare professionals commute easily to their works.
- d) Assistance and availability for child care.

While some may question the need for incentives for medical professionals, the reality is that we are in a highly competitive environment given our reliance on physician importation. Moreover, the changing

demographics of medical school graduates and the extreme levels of medical student debt make these kind of incentives highly attractive. The downstream impact will be greater growth and investment in our community given our ability to support a highly educated, thriving and productive general population.

A solid strategy for retaining Medical Residents upon graduation, and healthcare workers at large, in Miami-Dade County requires ongoing investment in both the individuals and the communities where they are placed, to achieve persistent improvements in healthcare access and quality.

We urge community leaders to act, to continue to support the increase in the number of residency slots for physicians, to develop and provide affordable housing, encourage loan forgiveness programs, and accessible transportation options to support healthcare professionals. Through this investment, Miami-Dade can create a thriving healthcare workforce; ensuring physicians remain engaged and dedicated to serving our community. The DCMA stands ready to assist our community in securing a positive healthcare future for all of us.

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

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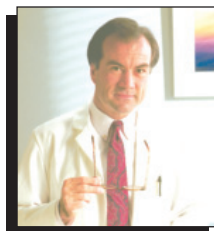


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West Palm Beach VA Announces New Chief of Medicine

The West Palm Beach VA Health Care System (WPBVAHCS) announces the appointment of Dr. Gustavo Lopes, DO, FACOS, as the new Associate Chief of Staff for Surgery for the West Palm Beach VA Healthcare System (WPBVAHCS).

Prior to joining the WPBVAHCS, Dr. Lopes worked for the Palm Beach Health Network Physician Group and Cleveland Clinic Martin Health where he served as Chairman of the Department of Surgery and Digestive Disease Institute Director.

Dr. Lopes holds a notable portfolio, including completion of an internship and residency in general surgery at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey – School of Osteopathic Medicine, Stratford, NJ, and a medical school graduate from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Philadelphia, PA.

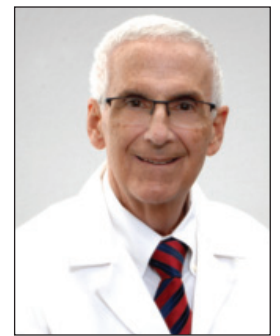


Dr. Gustavo Lopes

Cleveland Clinic Adds Gastroenterologist in West Palm Beach

Mark Molos, M.D., has joined the medical staff at Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital. A highly skilled gastroenterologist with extensive experience in diagnosing and treating a wide range of gastrointestinal conditions, he is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine and the American Board of Gastroenterology.

Dr. Molos received his medical training at the University of Missouri School of Medicine. He completed his residency in internal medicine at the University of Missouri School of Medicine and its affiliated hospitals after an internship at St. Luke's Hospital in Kansas City, MO. He then completed his postgraduate training with a fellowship in gastroenterology at Truman Medical Center and the University of Missouri School of Medicine in Kansas City, MO.



Dr. Mark Molos

David A. Motola, MD, Joins Baptist Health as a General Surgeon

Board-certified general surgeon David A. Motola, M.D., has joined Baptist Health. He is trained to manage a broad spectrum of surgical conditions affecting most areas of the body. He has expertise in bariatric and minimally invasive surgery and performs robotic surgery to address abdominal wall hernias, hiatal hernias, gallbladder disease and other foregut issues. His clinical interests include both medical and surgical weight loss.

After earning his medical degree at New York Medical College in Valhalla, NY, Dr. Motola completed a five-year general surgery residency and a bariatric surgery fellowship at Orlando Regional Medical Center. During his fellowship, he was a general surgeon at Orlando Health South Seminole Hospital and Orlando Health Dr. P. Phillips Hospital.



Dr. David A. Motola

Karl Dhana, MD, Honored with FMDA Robert Kaplan Quality Champion Award

Karl Dhana, M.D., Vice President of Medical Affairs at MorseLife Health System, recently received the Robert Kaplan Quality Champion Award from FMDA – The Florida Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine.

The award recognizes dedicated Florida-based clinicians who provide patient-centered care in Post-Acute and Long-Term Care (PALTC) settings. Named in honor of Robert Kaplan, M.D., a physician who left a legacy of excellence and compassion for the care of the most vulnerable and frail patients, the award is presented to doctors who embody the highest standards of dedication, leadership, engagement and innovation.

Dr. Dhana has been with MorseLife for over 23 years, during which time he has made a profound impact on the quality of care provided to residents. His leadership has driven significant improvements in patient safety, particularly through data-driven initiatives aimed at reducing falls and minimizing the use of physical restraints. Under his astute guidance, MorseLife has created a safer, more dignified environment for residents, empowering them with greater autonomy.

As a Harvard-trained geriatrician, Dr. Dhana is passionate about evidence-based practices and has implemented numerous quality improvement projects that focus on improving patient outcomes. His work has not only reduced hospital readmissions but has also enhanced discharge planning and follow-up care, ensuring that residents receive comprehensive care even after they leave the facility.



Dr. Karl Dhana

PHOTO CREDIT: SAMUEL WU

Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital Welcomes Transplant Surgeon and Neurosurgeon

Transplant surgeon Jiro Kusakabe, M.D., has joined Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital. He has expertise in abdominal transplant surgery and a robust background in gastroenterological and cancer therapies.

After earning his medical degree at Kyoto University in Japan, Dr. Kusakabe completed his residency in general surgery at Kobe City Medical Center, followed by another residency at Barnes Jewish Hospital affiliated with Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, MO. He further honed his skills through a fellowship in abdominal transplant surgery at Cleveland Clinic in Ohio.

Rodrigo Navarro-Ramirez, M.D., a distinguished neurosurgeon and spine surgeon, has also joined Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital. He completed his medical education at the School of Medicine, UNAM in Mexico City, Mexico. Dr. Navarro-Ramirez has an extensive postgraduate training background, including fellowships in minimally invasive spine surgery at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York, NY; neuro-oncology at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD; and adult and pediatric scoliosis at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Dr. Navarro-Ramirez's specialty interests include minimally invasive spine surgery; robotics, navigation, and artificial intelligence in spine surgery; motion preservation spine surgery; awake spine surgery in adults and elderly patients; adult and pediatric scoliosis surgery; neuro-oncology; scoliosis surgery; and biologic intervertebral disc regeneration.



Dr. Jiro Kusakabe



Dr. Rodrigo Navarro-Ramirez

Bachir Berbari, MD, Joins Baptist Health as Medical Oncologist and Hematologist

Bachir Berbari, M.D., has joined the Eugene M. and Christine E. Lynn Cancer Institute, part of Baptist Health, at Boca Raton Regional Hospital, as a medical oncologist and hematologist. Dr. Berbari is certified in internal medicine, oncology and hematology by the American Board of Internal Medicine. He has expertise in treating all types of cancer with a special interest in hematology.

Prior to joining Baptist Health, Dr. Berbari was a hematologist oncologist at Southern Illinois Hospital in Carterville, IL, which is part of the Siteman Cancer Network that is led by Siteman Cancer Center at Barnes-Jewish Hospital and Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis.

Dr. Berbari earned his medical degree at the University of Balamand Faculty of Medicine and Medical Sciences in Lebanon. He completed an internal medicine residency at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai/Englewood Medical Center in Englewood, NJ, and served as chief fellow during a hematology/medical oncology fellowship at Tulane University Medical Center in New Orleans.



Dr. Bachir Berbari



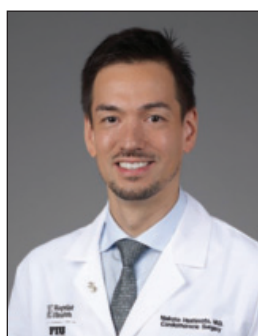
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FIU and Baptist Health South Florida Hire World-Renowned Robotic Cardiac Surgeon

Florida International University and Baptist Health South Florida have achieved a significant milestone in their strategic alliance. FIU has appointed Dr. Makoto Hashimoto, an internationally renowned cardiac surgeon, as a professor and director of robotic cardiac surgery at FIU Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine. He will see patients at Baptist Health Miami Cardiac & Vascular Institute, located at Baptist Health Baptist Hospital, and will perform surgeries at Baptist Hospital and Baptist Health South Miami Hospital.

Before joining FIU and Baptist Health, Hashimoto served as director of the Center of Minimally Invasive Cardiac Surgery and Robotic Cardiac Surgery at Sapporo University.

Hashimoto earned his medical degree at Shimane University School of Medicine and a Ph.D. in Medical Science at Sapporo Medical University, both in Japan. He completed two cardiac surgery residencies and two cardiovascular fellowships. He is fluent in English, Japanese and Finnish, and has published numerous scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals.



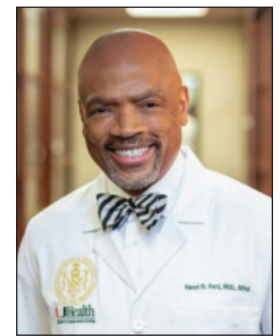
Dr. Makoto Hashimoto

University of Miami Miller School of Medicine Dean Chosen as Part of Elite Group to Govern Joint Commission

The Joint Commission has appointed University of Miami Miller School of Medicine Dean and Chief Academic Officer Henri R. Ford, M.D., M.H.A., to its Board of Commissioners.

"I am deeply honored to join the Board of Commissioners of the Joint Commission, an organization synonymous with advancing excellence in patient care," said Dean Ford, who is the immediate past president of the American College of Surgeons (ACS).

Dean Ford noted that UHealth – University of Miami Health System prides itself on having earned the Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval in 2022, which reflects the health system's commitment to using best practices to improve safety and quality for their patients, staff and community.



Dr. Henri R. Ford

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New Year. Enduring Commitment to Innovation

New beginnings herald promise and optimism. And, a new year, in particular, heralds a commitment to change -- to doing things differently and better.

For Florida hospitals, that commitment to doing things better is a year-round endeavor, with hospitals of all sizes continually striving to innovate and transform how they deliver care to provide greater accessibility, better outcomes, and more efficiencies.

Florida hospitals are leading innovations to transform treatment, advance technologies, drive research breakthroughs, and disrupt delivery system models all to improve access to timely care in the most appropriate setting and to improve health and quality of life.

Innovation and transformation are happening in technology, in advanced scientific pursuits, and in robotics. These innovations that were the stuff of science fiction a couple of decades ago, are now here. Florida hospitals are deploying robotic surgical systems, using remote patient monitoring, and creating prototype labs.

But innovation isn't limited to technology. Innovation is also happening with hospitals repurposing available resources to meet a community need like growing on-site gardens to provide patients and employees with farm-fresh ingredients. And it's happening with hospitals simply doing things differently from the way they've always been done. For example, hospitals are facilitating next-day appointments for patients newly diagnosed with cancer.

Our hospitals' innovations are as vast and diverse as the state itself.

For example, hospitals are using digital tools like the Arthur App to foster communication for non-verbal patients in hospital settings, enabling more effective communication among patients, their families, clinicians, and caregivers. With better communication comes reduced errors and better outcomes.

Other hospitals are using targeted artificial intelligence during endoscopic



BY MARY C. MAYHEW

ultrasound procedures to better detect pancreatic cancer. Still others are using focused sound energy to destroy cancer tumors in the kidney and liver.

And, Florida soon will be home to the first carbon ion therapy treatment facility not just in the U.S. but in the Western Hemisphere to revolutionize how we treat cancer.

Still more hospitals are going beyond the four walls of their facilities to forge community partnerships and deploy innovative programming to address their communities' non-medical needs, such as food insecurity, respite care, and access to green spaces.

Innovation is within reach for every hospital. From the largest of academic health systems to the smallest of critical access hospitals, every hospital has the ability and capacity to be innovative. That's because every hospital in every corner of the state has an expansive vision of what is possible for human flourishing and takes seriously their leadership role to make Florida the pre-eminent health care leader. Florida hospitals are leading the way to reimagine health care delivery for today and for the future, to drive health care transformation, and to ensure that we have world-class care close to home.

As we start anew in 2025, Florida hospitals will carry over their enduring commitment to embracing new technologies, seeking out new partnerships, and reimagining the care delivery experience to make Florida the best in the nation for health care access and outcomes. Continuous innovation in the relentless pursuit of better care is our watchword, and our resolution for 2025 is to maintain that pursuit and identify even more ways to reject the status quo in order to meet the evolving health and wellness needs and expectations of Floridians, now and in the future.

Mary Mayhew is President and CEO, Florida Hospital Association.

Cover Story: Financial Sustainability in Healthcare: Strategies for Overcoming Today's Challenges

Continued from page 1

growing number of uninsured and underinsured patients contributes to higher levels of bad debt and charity care."

Surujon highlights rising operational expenses as another critical issue, particularly the escalating costs of labor and medical supplies. "Labor shortages, especially among clinical staff, have driven wages higher, while inflation has increased the costs of medical supplies and drugs," she notes.

Revenue cycle inefficiencies, including claim denials and payment delays, also pose significant challenges. "Such inefficiencies disrupt cash flow, which is essential for financial stability," Surujon emphasizes, highlighting their impact on daily operations.

Addressing Reimbursement Challenges

Reimbursement changes from insurers and government programs directly affect revenue and future planning. Surujon notes, "Reductions in reimbursement rates erode operating margins, particularly for fixed-cost services like inpatient or specialized care."

She also points to the growing emphasis on outpatient care in reimbursement models. "Many systems now incentivize outpatient and ambulatory services, which can reduce revenue traditionally generated by inpatient care," she explains. Additionally, frequent regulatory changes lead to more denied or delayed claims, further disrupting cash flow.

Cutting Costs Without Sacrificing Care

When asked about reducing operational costs, Surujon emphasizes a balanced approach that preserves the quality of patient care. "Labor costs are the largest expense, so flexible staffing models that align with patient volumes can help minimize overstaffing or understaffing. Cross-training employees also improves efficiency and reduces overtime costs."

To address rising supply costs, Surujon suggests negotiating bulk purchasing agreements, maintaining optimal inventory, and joining Group Purchasing Organizations (GPOs) to leverage collective bargaining power.

She also underscores the importance of discharge planning. "Ensuring that at least 40% of discharges occur before 2 p.m. and utilizing e-prescriptions can reduce readmissions and complications, ultimately lowering costs," she says.

The Critical Role of Revenue Cycle Management

Surujon stresses that effective revenue cycle management (RCM) is critical to financial sustainability. "Streamlined RCM processes optimize cash flow, reduce bad debt, and ensure the organi-

zation can meet its financial obligations," she explains.

Best practices include accurate patient registration, eligibility verification, and financial counseling to improve collections. Surujon also recommends investing in certified coders and conducting internal audits to minimize claim errors before submission.

"Data analytics is invaluable for tracking metrics like Days in Accounts Receivable (AR), denial rates, and cost-to-collect ratios," she says. "These insights enable organizations to pinpoint areas for improvement and make informed decisions."

Smaller Practices in a Competitive Market

Smaller practices face unique challenges in competing with larger healthcare systems. "It's incredibly difficult, but smaller practices can differentiate themselves by offering flexible scheduling, personalized care, and unique services," Surujon advises.

She also recommends joining networks or collaboratives, such as Independent Practice Associations (IPAs), Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs), or GPOs. "These organizations provide access to shared resources, revenue streams, and cost-saving opportunities."

Building trust within local communities is essential. "Smaller practices must position themselves as accessible, high-quality providers. This is their greatest competitive advantage," she adds.

The Power of Technology and Data Analytics

Surujon highlights the growing role of technology in financial decision-making. "Innovative tools that consolidate data into KPI dashboards provide real-time insights into operations and performance metrics, enabling leaders to make data-driven decisions," she says.

She also views technology as a game-changer for RCM. "Automation can streamline coding, billing, and claims processes while identifying trends in denials to prevent future losses," she explains.

Conclusion

Navigating financial challenges in healthcare requires innovation, efficiency, and adaptability. As Surujon emphasizes, "Organizations that thrive will optimize their revenue cycles, control operational costs, and embrace data-driven strategies to maintain financial sustainability."

Her insights offer a practical roadmap for healthcare leaders to address today's challenges and build a more sustainable future.

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Laughter Is the Best Medicine

When Emmy and Peabody Award-winning comedian Paul Mecurio takes the stage at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts, the audience can expect more than just laughs—they'll experience an unforgettable evening of connection, healing, and storytelling.

Some call Mecurio's unscripted, interactive comedy experience, *Permission to Speak*, "comedy therapy." "Laughing is the best medicine," he says. "During my show, the audience willingly shares their stories so there is an indirect mental health focus here. There's not a show like this that can bring people together. We engage and connect with people. We have conversations that everyone can relate to. Storytelling is empowering."

Mecurio brings audience members on stage to share their stories, breaking down barriers and revealing the connections everyone shares. "When we unbox our stories," he explains, "we see we're not so different after all."

Mecurio also understands the benefits of his performance to one's mental health:

- **Self-awareness:** Sharing stories allows people to express themselves in a stress-free, judgment-free zone.
- **Empathy and healing:** Storytelling fosters deeper connections and mutual understanding.
- **Reducing stigma:** Audience members who relate to the stories often feel less shame and isolation.
- **Stress relief:** Laughter helps alleviate symptoms of depression and anxiety.

"This is a blend of sociology meets pop culture meets comedy meets therapy meets serious," Mecurio says. "This is the right show at the right time. We are more alike than we think we are. Our audience walks out happy, mentally healthier



Paul Mecurio

through laughter and knowing they're not alone in their experiences, which can be very comforting"

Mecurio is known for his work on *The Late Show* with Stephen Colbert, HBO and *The Tonight Show* and hosts the popular podcast *Inside Out* with Paul Mecurio, where he interviews icons from entertainment, politics, sports, and science.

Mecurio's Permission to Speak comes to the Amaturo Theater at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts on Friday, January 17 at 7:30 p.m. as part of the Truist Comedy Series.

For tickets and information, visit <https://www.browardcenter.org/events/detail/paul-mecurio-2025>.

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Ryan Seacrest Foundation Selects Nicklaus Children's Hospital for its Newest Seacrest Studio

Nicklaus Children's Hospital has been selected by the Ryan Seacrest Foundation (RSF) as the home of its newest Seacrest Studio, a state-of-the-art studio for pediatric patients to explore the creative realms of radio, television and new media. Soon to be South Florida's first and only Seacrest Studio, this will be the 15th location for RSF. Seacrest Studios are charitable endeavors of the Ryan Seacrest Foundation, founded by radio and television host and producer Ryan Seacrest along with his family.



Whether physically in the studio or in one of the hospital's inpatient suites watching from in-room TV screens, Seacrest Studios will provide a wide variety of programming to patients through a closed-circuit network. Patients will have the chance to be their own version of a media professional with the opportunity to host their own radio and television shows, watch live musical performances, play games, and even interview celebrity guests who visit. The studio will be encased in glass, allowing patients and visitors to view the daily programming happening inside.

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DESCRIPTION

Join us to gain an overview of the FACHE process, including the application process, requirements, and the Board of Governors Exam

DATE

Thursday,
January 23, 2025

TIME

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LOCATION

Virtual via Zoom
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Accolades Accolades Accolades Accolades

Von Biggs Presented with Unsung Hero Award For HIV/AIDS Advocacy

In recognition for his contributions to the HIV/AIDS community, Von Biggs, Holy Cross Health Community Health & Well-Being Community Outreach Coordinator, received the Unsung Hero Award. It was presented by Pridelines, in collaboration with Positive People Network, on World AIDS Day.

A pastor in Indianapolis told Biggs, who was a youth pastor at the time, 17 years ago that God had a plan for him to minister to AIDS patients. As fate would have it, Biggs himself was diagnosed with the virus two years later. Upon moving to Fort Lauderdale in 2018, he struggled to navigate the healthcare system when he needed Ryan White services, which provides primary medical care, medications and support for low-income people who are HIV positive. He also noticed a racial disparity in the quality of care. That experience fueled Biggs' passion to advocate for himself and others.

Through his advocacy work, Biggs seeks to decrease the stigma of HIV, improve access to healthcare and medication, and encourage individuals to get tested. He currently serves as the Vice Chair for Broward County's Ryan White Part A Planning Council and is on the Board of TransEd, a non-profit community-based organization that provides scholarships to transgender and non-binary young adults. In addition to his outreach efforts in his role at Holy Cross Health, Biggs frequently contributes to local publications and appears on Queer News Tonight, a daily news broadcast geared to the LGBTQ+ community.



Von Biggs

Holy Cross Health Presented with Equality Means Business Award



(l-r) Dr. Maya Lucas, Holy Cross Medical Group; Dr. Jason Ceavers, Holy Cross Medical Group; Rudy Molinet, Holy Cross Board Chair; Von Biggs, Community Health and Well-being Coordinator; and Kim Saiswick, VP of Community Health and Well-being.
PHOTO COURTESY: RUDY MOLINET

Holy Cross Health was presented with the Equality Means Business Award during Equality Florida's Studio 54-themed gala.

The Equality Means Business Award recognizes businesses that are courageously, passionately and unwaveringly committed to moving the LGBTQ+ community closer to full equality and businesses that have adopted comprehensive non-discrimination policies and demonstrate their commitment to valuing and pro-actively including all employees. Holy Cross Health was the only business in Broward County to be honored this year.

"It was an incredible celebration for the LGBTQ+ community and Equality Florida, the state's leading LGBTQ+ Human Rights organization," said Rudy Molinet, Holy Cross Health's Board Chair. "This was a proud moment for me personally as a member of LGBTQ+ community and as chair of our Board. I think it speaks volumes for our ministry and broadcasts to the LGBTQ+ community that Holy Cross is a welcoming and inclusive place to meet their healthcare needs. Everyone is welcome at Holy Cross with dignity and respect."



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Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center Designated an Aetna Institute of Quality®

Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center (PBGMC) is pleased to announce it has been designated as an Aetna Institute of Quality® orthopedic facility for total joint replacement and spine surgery.

A facility earns IOQ status by consistently delivering safe, effective care. Aetna makes information about the quality and cost of that care available to its members. This helps them identify facilities that meet their special health care needs.

PBGMC has invested heavily in some of the latest orthopedic medicine technologies including surgical robots, which can help improve patient outcomes, reduce recovery time and minimize complications. This year alone, we achieved two major surgical milestones: 500th Mako SmartRobotics™ procedures in under two years and our 100th ROSA® Robotics Knee System surgery in less than a year.

Holy Cross Health Names 2024 Director, Colleague and Leader of the Year



(l-r) Nancy Snell, Patient Access Representative and Colleague of the Year; Carol Katzell, Manager of Risk Management, Patient Safety Officer & Leader of the Year; and Adrienne Wolfson, Executive Director of Nursing, Director of the Year
Photo Credit: Robert Mayer, Holy Cross Health

Holy Cross Health has named Adrienne Wolfson as Director of the Year, Nancy Snell as Colleague of the Year and Carol Katzell as Leader of the Year for 2024.

Adrienne Wolfson, MSN, BHA, RN, CCRN, Executive Director Nursing Administration, has been devoted to the Holy Cross Health ministry for 35 years. As a leader, Wolfson is known for her integrity, compassion and ability to inspire those around her. She leads by example, fostering a culture of respect, while always putting the needs of the team and the mission first. Her dedication to personal and professional development ensures that those under her leadership meet and/or exceed their potential.

During her nearly two decades of working in patient access services at Holy Cross Health, Nancy Snell has been a beacon of compassion, warmth and professionalism. Her radiant smile and friendly demeanor not only provide patients and their families with reassurance during difficult times, she also lights up the hallways, making it a wonderful workplace for her co-workers. Snell is committed to excellence and empathy. She has superior customer service skills, taking the time to provide patients with personalized care and listen to their needs.

Carol Katzell, BSN, RN, is a respected Patient Safety Officer. Her goal is to achieve Zero Harm to Holy Cross Health's patients, colleagues and community. Over the last 21 years, Katzell has positively contributed to Holy Cross Health by implementing innovative ways to improve patient safety. She is a fearless, loyal leader who doesn't hesitate to speak up in high-stakes meetings and initiate challenging conversations. Her professionalism, passion, dedication, excellence and knowledge are an inspiration to those around her.

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Accolades Accolades Accolades Accolades

25th Annual Guardians of the Children Luncheon and Fashion Show Raises \$920,000 for Holtz Children's Hospital



Guardians of the Children Luncheon and Fashion Show Committee Members

The Jackson Health Foundation's Guardian Angels and their supporters recently gathered for the silver anniversary of the Annual Guardians of the Children Luncheon and Fashion Show at The Ritz-Carlton Key Biscayne. Attendees enjoyed a Saks Fifth Avenue fashion show and an exciting chance drawing, while learning about Holtz Children's Hospital's life-changing impact through an inspiring patient story. Through cornerstone fundraising events like this one, the Guardian Angels and Jackson Health Foundation have raised more than \$40 million to date; this year's sold-out crowd of 500 raised \$920,000 during the luncheon, adding to the outstanding total.

Under the theme of "Best of Holtz Children's Hospital," the afternoon commemorated 25 years of donations, their impact, and the enduring commitment to providing state-of-the-art care for young patients. "Twenty-five years is not just a number; it represents a quarter of a century of hope, compassion, and transformative care for countless children and families," said Silvia Rios Fortun, president of the Guardian Angels. Some of the diverse and meaningful milestones highlighted include the renovation of the pediatric hematology/oncology unit and the remodeling of the Little Miracles Maternity Suites.

"While we proudly celebrate the best of Holtz Children's and lay the groundwork for the future, our focus remains steadfast on projects like the expansion of the neonatal intensive care unit and the future expansion of our pediatric emergency room," said Flavia Llizo, Jackson Health Foundation CEO. "The unwavering support of Miami-Dade taxpayers, combined with Jackson Health Foundation's generous donors and partners are building a stronger community."

West Boca Medical Center Awarded Hip, Knee and Shoulder Joint Replacement Certification from The Joint Commission

West Boca Medical Center has earned The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval® for Hip, Knee and Shoulder Joint Replacement Certification by demonstrating continuous compliance with its performance standards. The Gold Seal is a symbol of quality that reflects a health care organization's commitment to providing safe and quality patient care.

West Boca Medical Center underwent a rigorous onsite review. During the visit, a team of Joint Commission reviewers evaluated compliance with related certification standards including delivering and facilitating clinical care. Joint Commission standards are developed in consultation with health care experts and providers, measurement experts and patients. The reviewers also conducted onsite observations and interviews.

West Palm Beach VA Awarded as an ALS Association Recognized Treatment Center

The West Palm Beach VA Health Care System (WPBVAHCS) announces the award of the Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) Clinic by the ALS Association as a Recognized Treatment Center.

This distinction serves as the first and only VA facility in Florida to receive the renowned title. The recognition is based on established requirements of the program, professionals' skill sets, patients living with ALS served, relationships with local staff and access to care.

"Access to exceptional care is what propels all that we do," says Chief of Staff Dr. Ronald Williams. "The strength is like no other by our Veteran patients battling ALS, but alongside our educated and passionate team they have found a second home to release their mind and discover support. This award is a testament to all that our ALS Clinic team does and will continue to do for local American heroes."

Delray Medical Center Recognized by the Society for Vascular Surgery Vascular Quality Initiative

Delray Medical Center is identified as a Carotid Care Quality Champion by the Society for Vascular Surgery® Vascular Quality Initiative® (SVS VQI) clinical registry recognition program. The program honors healthcare organizations across the country dedicated to improving the safety and effectiveness of vascular care through participation and engagement in VQI's carotid artery stenting and carotid endarterectomy registries.

"Delray Medical Center is proud to be recognized by SVS VQI as a Carotid Care Quality Champion, a distinction that reflects our commitment to tracking patient outcomes and improving the quality of care at our institution," says the hospital's CEO, Heather Havericak. "Our participation in the VQI allows us to monitor performance, benchmark outcomes, and provide the best possible care for our patients."

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A message from our President

Deja Vu All Over Again or Might We See Transformative Change?

It seems like we have been here before, but let's hope that this time, we see some meaningful changes. I could be wrong but I am not hopeful. But if I am wrong, what might we see over the next four years?

The healthcare industry stands on the cusp of transformative change as policy-makers, providers, and innovators address shifting demographics, evolving technology, and the aftermath of a global pandemic. Over the next four years, several trends could redefine healthcare delivery, access, and outcomes.

One major shift involves advancing telehealth and digital health solutions. The pandemic accelerated the adoption of virtual care (which was languishing), and this trend will continue, with more investments in telemedicine platforms, remote monitoring devices, and digital health apps. These tools aim to improve access to care, particularly for rural and underserved populations, while also reducing healthcare costs.

Value-based care will likely gain more traction as governments and private payers focus on outcomes rather than volume. This model incentivizes healthcare providers to improve patient outcomes while managing costs, emphasizing preventive care, chronic disease management, and patient-centered approaches. Again, we have seen glimpses of this new focus and have yet to see the expected definitive



Jaime Caldwell

results.

Policy changes may further shape the landscape. Expanding Medicaid (not likely for Florida), revising drug-pricing policies, and addressing staffing shortages are key areas of focus. Efforts to mitigate the growing mental health crisis, exacerbated by the pandemic, could lead to increased funding and integration of behavioral health services into primary care (this is a critical area of need and it may not rise to the top of programs requiring additional funding for the next administration).

Technological advancements such as artificial intelligence (AI) and precision medicine will continue to evolve, offering personalized treatment plans and predictive analytics. AI-powered tools can assist in diagnosing diseases earlier and more accurately, while genomic research opens new doors for customized therapies.

Finally, addressing workforce challenges will be critical. The number of successful initiatives directed to the recruitment, training, and retention of healthcare professionals are growing, alongside policies promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion across the sector.

As the healthcare landscape changes, collaboration between stakeholders will be crucial. By leveraging innovation, addressing policy gaps, and focusing on patient-centered care, the next four years could herald a more efficient, equitable, and technologically advanced healthcare system.

What we could see versus what we will see might be quite different.

Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center First Hospital in Northern Palm Beach County to Offer TriClip™ System

Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center is the first hospital between Orlando and northern Palm Beach County to perform an Abbott TriClip™ transcatheter edge-to-edge repair (TEER). This is a minimally invasive therapy that treats patients with a leaky tricuspid valve, a condition known as tricuspid regurgitation (TR), without the need for open-heart surgery. TriClip is a first-of-its-kind therapy that repairs the tricuspid valve in patients and is backed by data demonstrating safety, effectiveness and quality-of-life benefits. The procedure was completed by structural cardiologist, Dr. Augusto Villa.

TriClip is delivered to the heart via a catheter inserted through the femoral vein in the leg and works by clipping together a portion of the leaflets of the tricuspid valve to reduce the backflow of blood. Designed specifically for the right side of the heart and the tricuspid valve's complex anatomy, the innovative TriClip and steerable guiding catheter systems allow physicians to independently grasp and effectively clip leaflets of the tricuspid valve to reduce the regurgitation. This minimally invasive approach allows the heart to pump blood more efficiently and relieve symptoms of TR, which improves the quality of life for patients.

"From being the first hospital in the county to perform open heart surgery, to utilizing some of the latest medical technology, this continues our tradition of specializing in heart treatment," said Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center CEO, Erik Cazares. "We put patients first, that's why we are investing in devices like the TriClip, to make sure every patient can have the best opportunity at a positive outcome, so they can get back to doing what they love."

Cover Story: ACHE of South Florida **Member Spotlight: Brian Altschuler**

Continued from page 1

summer 2026. He said it is going to "revolutionize what we're able to do for the community. We're adding 20 new ORs, high-tech procedural areas, new critical care beds, new medical/surgical inpatient beds that will take the hospital to 100 percent private rooms, and new infrastructure that will allow the hospital to be on full generator power in all areas, which is very unusual, for between seven and nine days."

He said the new facility will revolutionize not only the clinical abilities of the hospital to provide state-of-the-art care, but it will also be very team member and patient centric. "It will allow us to be able to perform excellent clinical care in a warm and caring environment for patients and visitors. There will be a retail pharmacy, and not only will the clinical facilities be great, but we're also trying to create a hotel-like feel. There are going to be several food outlets, including a bistro, a little coffee spot, and additional retail. It's set up really nicely."

In looking ahead to 2025 for ACHE, Altschuler said that as incoming president, one of the things he is most grateful for is that previous leadership has continued to set the association up for success. "I'm very fortunate because the prior president (Haroula Norden) set me up for success, which gives me a good platform to continue to innovate. I must recognize the leaders of the past for helping me as incoming president to continue to evolve ACHE South Florida and drive it forward."

"It leaves me with a platform to continue to grow our offerings; for example, in January, we're excited to have an incredible speaker at our kickoff event." In a tease, not yet wanting to reveal the name of the personality, he said, "We continue to elevate our standard of speakers and presenters. For me, for an association to pull in a speaker of this caliber really shows what we're doing."

He reiterated that ACHE is about healthcare education and certification, growth, and coming together for the betterment of the community. "To me, that is paramount to my leadership. Members who join ACHE should look forward to a dynamic 2025."

Altschuler has been a part of the association for seven years, and said he is both humbled and honored to be chosen to lead it with a great team of board members. "I think we owe it to the community to be the best healthcare leaders we can; people put their trust in us, and I'm grateful the association is putting their trust in me as their leader."



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

Albert Borroto Joins Health Care District Board as Newly-Appointed Member

The Health Care District of Palm Beach County's newest board member, Albert Borroto, was recently appointed by the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners for a four-year volunteer term. Borroto brings more than 30 years of experience in emergency medical services with Palm Beach County Fire Rescue. His diverse career reflects a deep commitment to public safety, with roles such as a flight nurse on the Health Care District's Trauma Hawk helicopters, an RN in the JFK Medical Center emergency room, and a public information officer for Palm Beach County Fire Rescue. Currently, he serves as the communications coordinator for the Professional Firefighters Local 2928. Borroto holds degrees in emergency management services and nursing from Palm Beach State College.



Albert Borroto

HCA Florida Mercy Hospital Welcomes Jessica L. Miller as New Chief Operating Officer

HCA Florida Mercy Hospital announces the appointment of Jessica L. Miller as its new chief operating officer (COO). Miller most recently served as chief nursing officer at St. Mary's Medical Center and the Palm Beach Children's Hospital, part of Tenet Healthcare Corporation. Her leadership experience includes additional roles with Tenet Healthcare and Steward Health Care, where she served as the Miami market chief nursing officer. Miller holds a Master of Business Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Florida International University (FIU). She is also an adjunct professor in FIU's Health Service Administration Program.



Jessica L. Miller

CPA Elena Barberis Named VP of Finance at Holy Cross Health

Elena Barberis, CPA, has accepted the role of Vice President of Finance for both Trinity Health Holy Cross Health in Fort Lauderdale, FL and St. Mary's Health Care System in Athens, GA. She and her ministry-based teams will provide financial and strategic planning and support to the CEOs, the regional CFO, boards and leadership teams in addition to Trinity Health's finance department.

Over the past 18 years, Barberis has served in leadership positions in healthcare systems in the Miami and Atlanta metro areas. She spent 11 years at Jackson Health System in South Florida, rising to the position of Vice President of Finance. In 2020, Barberis and her family relocated to the Atlanta area, where she joined Piedmont Healthcare as executive director of finance. Most recently she was executive director and controller for Northeast Georgia Health System.

A CPA in both Florida and Georgia, Barberis earned a Bachelor of Science in Communication and Political Science from the University of Miami and Master of Science in Finance from Florida International University.



Elena Barberis

West Boca Medical Center Names Emily DeJonge as Associate Chief Nursing Officer

West Boca Medical Center (WBMC) appoints Emily DeJonge MSN, RN, as its new Associate Chief Nursing Officer (ACNO). DeJonge brings extensive healthcare leadership experience, all with Palm Beach Health Network, with proven a track record of improving hospital operations while focusing on quality patient outcomes.

DeJonge has more than 20 years of experience across various levels in nursing, including more than 10 years at WBMC. Most recently, she held three concurrent roles at WBMC: medical surgical unit director, orthopedic service line director, and program coordinator for the nurse extern program. Prior to that she was WBMC's patient safety officer and director of risk management. Before joining the WBMC team in 2012, she worked as a nurse at Delray Medical Center, starting her nursing career there in 2004. DeJonge's educational background includes a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Florida Atlantic University, where she graduated magna cum laude. She earned her Master of Science in Nursing, also from FAU.



Emily DeJonge

Florida Coast Medical Center Names Tyler Sherrill as Its New Chief Executive Officer

Tyler Sherrill, MBA, is appointed to the position of Chief Executive Officer of Florida Coast Medical Center. In this role, Sherrill will be responsible for overseeing the opening, development, strategic growth and operations of the hospital - which is scheduled to open in September 2025.

Tyler most recently served as the Chief Executive Officer of East Cooper Medical Center in South Carolina. Prior to that, he was the Chief Executive Officer of Tenet Healthcare's South Carolina Physician Group, where he played an integral role in access expansion, physician recruitment, and operational excellence throughout the state. Before his time with Tenet, Sherrill spent ten years with Community Health Systems, ending his time there as Vice President of Physician Practice Operations. Tyler earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Tennessee before receiving his MBA from King University in Knoxville, TN.



Tyler Sherrill

Broward Health Appoints New CEO of Broward Health Imperial Point

Broward Health is pleased to announce the arrival of Robert Dahl, MBA, FACHE, as chief executive officer of Broward Health Imperial Point. A seasoned, high-impact executive, Dahl has a proven history of long-term results across large, multi-site hospital environments. He most recently served as president and chief executive officer of Ascension Saints Mary and Elizabeth Medical Center in Chicago, IL, where he provided strategic and operational leadership for two campuses. Dahl has also led other Chicago-based healthcare organizations, including as president and CEO of Ascension Resurrection Medical Center and senior vice president and chief operating officer of Surgical Directions.

Dahl earned his Master of Business Administration from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Business in Evanston, IL, and his Bachelor of Science from Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, IL.



Robert Dahl



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

VITAS Healthcare Unveils Inpatient Hospice Unit at Lee Memorial Hospital



Residents of Lee County now have access to dedicated end-of-life care at the new VITAS Healthcare Inpatient Hospice Unit at Lee Memorial Hospital, offering expert, patient-centered hospice services in the comfort of a homelike setting. This inpatient unit (IPU) is the only hospital-based hospice facility in the county and is the first VITAS IPU in Lee County and second in Southwest Florida. It is expected to serve more than 400 patients annually.

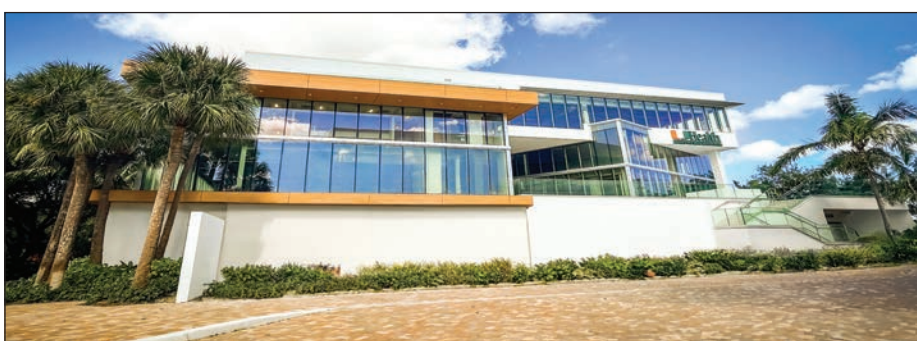
The VITAS hospice unit at Lee Memorial features eight private patient rooms with internet access, flatscreen TVs, private bathrooms and overnight accommodations for loved ones. A shared family room provides space for visiting guests, and children's activities keep little ones occupied. Parking at the facility is free, and access to the VITAS IPU is 24/7.

The hospital-based resources patients can access are designed to enhance their comfort and quality of life—including high-flow oxygen, antibiotics, X-rays, radiology services, blood transfusions and compassionate extubations. VITAS physicians provide daily rounds to ensure each patient's needs are met promptly, and medical direction at the IPU is overseen by a hospice and palliative medicine board-certified medical director.

Additional specialized services include personalized care tailored for veterans, VITAS Paw Pals® pet visits, music therapy, respiratory therapy and bereavement support with handcrafted Memory Bears made from a loved one's clothing to offer comfort and remembrance.

entire team and places Larkin Community Hospital among the nation's elite in health care. Congratulations to all who made this remarkable achievement possible."

University of Miami Health System Opens Expanded Multispecialty



The University of Miami Health System (UHealth) proudly announces the opening of its new state-of-the-art multispecialty practice in the heart of Boca Raton. This expansion underscores UHealth's dedication to delivering world-class academic-based healthcare to the Palm Beach County community.

The newly expanded 15,000-square-foot facility, which officially opened its doors on Monday, December 2, provides an array of advanced medical services, offering patients greater access to the expertise and innovation of South Florida's leading academic health system. The modern space is designed to enhance patient convenience and comfort while delivering the highest standards of care.

By integrating primary care with a wide range of specialties, the practice aims to provide seamless, patient-centered care in a single location. Additionally, patients gain access to UHealth's network of groundbreaking clinical trials and cutting-edge treatments developed by the University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine.

Larkin Community Hospital Earns 2024 Leapfrog Top Hospital Award For Outstanding Quality And Safety



Highlighting its nationally recognized achievements in patient safety and quality, Larkin Community Hospital was named a Top Teaching Hospital by The Leapfrog Group. The Leapfrog Top Hospital award is widely acknowledged as one of the most competitive awards American hospitals can receive. The Top Hospital designation is bestowed by The Leapfrog Group, a national watchdog organization of employers and other purchasers known as the toughest standard-setters for health care safety and quality.

"This award reflects the unwavering dedication of our physicians, nurses, staff, and leadership in delivering outstanding patient-centered care," said Dr. Nicholas D. Torres, CEO of Larkin Community Hospital. "Achieving this recognition demonstrates our commitment to safety, quality, and continuous improvement in all aspects of healthcare."

Nearly 2,400 hospitals were considered for the award. Among those, Larkin Community Hospital received a Top Teaching distinction. A total of 112 Top Hospitals were selected, including:

- 8 Top Children's
- 28 Top General
- 7 Top Rural
- 69 Top Teaching

The quality of patient care across many areas of hospital performance is considered in establishing the qualifications for the award, including infection rates, practices for safer surgery, maternity care and the hospital's capacity to prevent medication errors. The rigorous standards are defined in each year's Top Hospital Methodology.

"Protecting patients from preventable harm is central to The Leapfrog Group's mission," said Leah Binder, president and CEO of The Leapfrog Group. "Larkin Community Hospital has set the standard for patient safety, earning the prestigious distinction of a Top Hospital. This elite honor reflects the exceptional efforts of the entire team and places Larkin Community Hospital among the nation's elite in health care. Congratulations to all who made this remarkable achievement possible." errors. The rigorous standards are defined in each year's Top Hospital Methodology.

FAU Receives \$6M Grant to Propel Expansion of the FAU Marcus Institute of Integrative Health

Florida Atlantic University's Marcus Institute of Integrative Health has been awarded a monumental \$6 million grant from the late Bernie Marcus and The Marcus Foundation to broaden its services, enhance educational programs, and expand community wellness initiatives, ultimately aiming to create a national model that demonstrates the effectiveness of comprehensive integrative health as the optimal approach for achieving overall well-being for everyone.

This latest grant to FAU from The Marcus Foundation, which was made prior to the passing of Marcus in early November, brings its total contributions for advancing integrative health to more than \$10 million, establishing the institute as a transformational hub for advances in this unique field. Its support is significantly reshaping the landscape of health care, research and education in South Florida and beyond. The Marcus Foundation has also supported integrative medicine initiatives at other academic medical centers in the United States, making Marcus one of the leading philanthropists to advance the field of integrative medicine.

Launched in 2019 with a grant from The Marcus Foundation, the FAU Marcus Institute of Integrative Health provides exceptional patient care, innovative educational programs, impactful community engagement, and advanced integrative medicine. Under the leadership of Branson J. Collins, M.D., FAAMFM, ABAARM, director and a triple board-certified anesthesiologist, pain medicine specialist, and anti-aging physician, the institute has made significant strides in advancing its programs, which include integrative pain management and precision image-guided injection therapies for chronic pain, sports injuries, and mental health.

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

Broward Health Medical Center Staff Celebrate Rick Case Automotive Group's Donations to the Hospital



Rita Case, CEO and president of Rick Case Automotive Group, and Broward Health President and CEO Shane Strum hand out pie to Broward Health Medical Center staff.

Rita Case, president and CEO of Rick Case Automotive Group, and Shane Strum, president and CEO of Broward Health, served up pumpkin and apple pie to Broward Health staff during Thanksgiving week to celebrate Rick Case Automotive Group's multiple donations to the healthcare system.

Over the last few years, Rita and Rick Case Automotive Group, have donated \$210,000 to Broward Health to support healthcare initiatives. One of Case's generous donations established a new ECHO Lab at Broward Health Medical Center. This state-of-the-art lab features the latest echocardiography technology to provide detailed imaging of the heart and blood flow, helping healthcare professionals assess and improve heart health.

"Extraordinary care, life-saving technology and high-quality services like those provided by the Broward Health system are so vitally important to our residents," Case said. "We are passionate about giving back and always looking for opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of our communities."

During the celebration, Broward Health also officially unveiled the entry signage for the Rita and Rick Case Automotive Food Court to honor their legacy.

Grover Corlew Welcomes UHealth to 1489 West Palmetto Central

Grover Corlew, a leading South Florida real estate investment management group, has announced the relocation of UHealth Boca Raton to its new 17,000-sq.-ft. home at 1489 West Palmetto Central. Palmetto Central is a 2-building, 170,000-sq.-ft. campus currently undergoing a \$60 million renovation located in Boca Raton.

The transformed 1489 office building is highlighted by sophisticated office spaces with custom buildouts, open patio areas, renovated common areas, floor to ceiling hurricane impact windows and a tiered water featured at the building's entrance.

With this larger space, UHealth physicians are providing enhanced care to patients in the specialties of cardiology, ENT, neurology, urology, pain management, rheumatology, family medicine and the newly added services of dermatology and concierge medicine, among others. Patients in the Boca Raton area have access to the same level of world-class medical care that is provided at all UHealth locations.

The neighboring 88,000-sq.-ft. 1499 Palmetto Central was rebranded in 2018 following significant high-end upgrades that included a bright, modern lobby, remodeled restrooms and common areas, and new elevator and mechanical systems. Among the prestigious tenants in that building are Hair Club, Gilbane Building Company and Texas Instruments.

When fully completed, the \$60 million redevelopment of 1489 and 1499 West Palmetto Park Road will include additional enhancements to fully complete the transformation of the antiquated office properties into signature Grover Corlew Class A buildings.

Memorial Cardiac and Vascular Institute Programs Earn Accreditations

Memorial Cardiac and Vascular Institute, a leader in the prevention, detection, and treatment of cardiovascular disease, has recently earned accreditation from three industry-leading organizations:

- The American College of Cardiology (ACC) has awarded Memorial's Total Heart Center with an accreditation for Heart Failure with an Outpatient Services designation. It is the only facility in South Florida to receive the three-year accreditation and the only center in Florida with the Outpatient Services designation.

- The Adult Congenital Heart Association (ACHA) has recognized the Adult Congenital Heart Disease program at Memorial Regional Hospital as an Adult Congenital Heart Disease Accredited Comprehensive Care Center, the first center in Florida to receive this accreditation.

- The Joint Commission accredited Memorial's Ventricular Assist Device (VAD) program, making it a Joint Commission-accredited VAD program for the tenth consecutive year.

"These accreditations are the result of the hard work and dedication to excellence of our clinical and administrative teams," said Michele Slane, vice president of Memorial Cardiac and Vascular Institute. "They are difficult to earn and indicative of the high level of care we provide."

Jesús Luzardo Family Foundation Announces Beneficiaries of 1st Annual Golf Classic



Jesús Sr., Monica, and Jesús Luzardo Jr. at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital

"Collaboration" was the word of the evening when Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital Foundation hosted the Jesús Luzardo Family Foundation and two other South Florida-based nonprofits for an event in Hollywood where the Luzardo family announced the beneficiaries of its upcoming fundraiser.

Luzardo, a pitcher for the Miami Marlins, will host a celebrity golf event January 13 at the Parkland Golf & Country Club that will benefit Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital, Boys & Girls Clubs of Broward County, and Arc Broward. All three organizations focus on kids, which supports the mission of the ballplayer's foundation to empower and uplift children of all abilities in South Florida while supporting health, wellness, and underserved community programs.

For more information on the golf classic, visit www.jesusluzardofoundation.com/jesus-luzardo-golf-classic-2025.



E-mail your submissions to:
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BUSINESS/RESOURCE DIRECTORY

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Memorial Healthcare System to Expand Emergency Services with Two New Freestanding Emergency Departments



Memorial Healthcare System is expanding access to adult and pediatric advanced emergency services in South Broward and Northwest Miami-Dade counties with the development of two new freestanding emergency departments (FSEDs). The new facility at Miramar Parkway and Red Road in Miramar and the redeveloped and expanded FSED at 801 Douglas Road in Pembroke Pines are strategically located to meet high demand in these rapidly growing areas.

With an estimated construction cost of \$61.8 million, work on the FSEDs is set to begin in early 2025, with anticipated completion by mid 2026. Both projects were approved by the South Hospital District Board of Commissioners in October after swift action was taken by Strum to breathe new life into the projects.

The Miramar Parkway and Red Road FSED, a 16,800-square-foot facility, will serve the fast expanding Northwest Miami-Dade region, where emergency visits comprise 27% of Memorial's total emergency room volume. Equipped with 13 examination rooms, a pediatric treatment area, a trauma/resuscitation room, advanced imaging (CT and X-ray), and on-site lab capabilities, this FSED will provide emergency care to over 32,850 individuals annually. With the local population projected to increase by 10% by 2029, this facility will offer convenient access to care and help reduce wait times.

The Douglas Road FSED will transform a 48-year-old building into a state-of-the-art 30,100-square-foot facility. With 20 private examination and treatment rooms, dedicated pediatric areas, and enhanced imaging services such as CT and X-ray, this facility is projected to care for approximately 55,000 individuals each year, with room for future growth. Designed with a private behavioral health area and trauma/resuscitation room, the Douglas Road FSED is equipped to meet diverse emergency needs and to provide essential care to uninsured and Medicaid-dependent patients who make up nearly a third of the local community.

Cleveland Clinic Commits to Expanding Services in Palm Beach County

Cleveland Clinic is committed to expanding its exceptional care for the residents of Palm Beach County.

For more than 15 years, Cleveland Clinic has cared for patients at the outpatient center at City Place in West Palm Beach. To meet the evolving needs of the community, Cleveland Clinic is planning the construction of a new hospital and a major expansion of outpatient services. Cleveland Clinic's investment will be accompanied by a robust fundraising campaign.

Cleveland Clinic has identified and is in the process of purchasing land for a new hospital in West Palm Beach. The plans for the new hospital include approximately 150 inpatient beds, an emergency department, a medical office building and an ambulatory surgery center.

In addition, Cleveland Clinic will lease space at 15 CityPlace for a new outpatient location that will nearly quadruple the square footage of the existing Cleveland Clinic Health Center. Additional services will include chemotherapy and infusions, a concierge medicine program, imaging, endoscopy and outpatient surgery.

A Hospice Inpatient Unit Can Help in Moments of Medical Crisis

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- Palm Beach**

 - 1. VITAS Inpatient Hospice Unit at Good Samaritan Medical Center
 - 2. VITAS Community Life & Inpatient Center at Delray Beach

Broward

 - 3. VITAS Inpatient Hospice Unit at Broward Health North
 - 4. VITAS Inpatient Hospice Unit at Broward Health Medical Center
 - 5. VITAS Inpatient Hospice Unit at Broward Health Coral Springs
 - 6. VITAS Inpatient Hospice Unit at Florida Medical Center
- 7. VITAS Inpatient Hospice Unit at Sunrise Health and Rehabilitation Center**

Miami-Dade

 - 8. VITAS Inpatient Hospice Unit at University of Miami
 - 9. VITAS Inpatient Hospice Unit at Hialeah Hospital
 - 10. VITAS Inpatient Hospice Unit at MedSquare Kendall
 - 11. VITAS Inpatient Hospice Unit at Palmetto General Hospital

Collier

 - 12. VITAS Inpatient Hospice Unit at Broward Health North

Lee

 - 13. VITAS Inpatient Hospice Unit at Lee Memorial Hospital

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