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Volume 23 • Issue 2 • \$5.00

AUGUST 2026

THE REGION'S MONTHLY NEWSPAPER FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS & PHYSICIANS  
 OUR 23RD YEAR SERVING THE HEALTHCARE COMMUNITY!



Kyla Murphy Faircloth

## Updated DHHS Accessibility Rules May Reduce or Increase Risk

BY VANESSA ORR

Accessibility is important, especially in healthcare. In order to improve healthcare access for individuals with disabilities, in 2024, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) updated accessibility rules for healthcare providers receiving federal financial assistance.

While some deadlines to comply with updates to Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act—which affects hospitals, physician practices and many dental offices—have passed, others are soon to come. It is important that healthcare entities are aware of both medical equipment requirements and digital accessibility requirements to remain compliant with the law.

“This July 8, 2026, marked the deadline for healthcare providers receiving federal financial assistance to have at least one accessible exam table and one wheelchair-accessible weight scale,” said Kyla Murphy Faircloth, AVP National Healthcare Practice, Risk Strategies. “Medical staff had to be trained on operating the accessible equipment and know how to safely assist patients with disabilities.”

In the next two years, providers must meet digital compliance deadlines as well. These include making patient-facing technology accessible, including websites, patient portals, mobile apps, online scheduling, telehealth platforms and self-

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## Healthcare Education

### Florida Atlantic's Executive MHA Prepares the Next Generation of Healthcare Leaders

BY VANESSA ORR

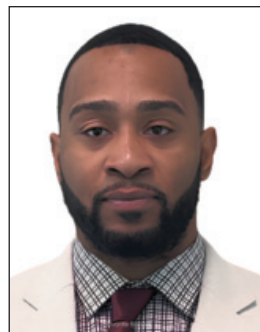
As healthcare organizations continue to navigate workforce shortages, regulatory changes, technological innovation and evolving patient needs, the demand for skilled healthcare leaders continues to grow. Hospitals, health systems, physician practices, public health organizations, insurance companies and others are always looking for those who understand what it takes to manage and command these organizations.

Florida Atlantic University's Master of Health Administration (MHA) programs prepare current and aspiring healthcare professionals to lead organizations, improve patient outcomes, and navigate today's increasingly complex healthcare environment. These degree programs combine business, leadership, finance, healthcare policy, operations, and quality improvement to prepare graduates for administrative and executive roles. The programs also equip professionals with the skills to improve patient outcomes,

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Kadian Goldson



Dvante Baham



Mary C. Mayhew

## Investing in Health Outside the Hospital

BY MARY C. MAYHEW

Florida's hospitals across the state are known for their advanced, world-class care. From the smallest of rural hospitals to the largest of urban academic medical centers, our hospitals provide emergency and trauma care, surgeries, acute care, and complex multi-specialty care. Their teams are curing what's ill, repairing what's broken, and healing what's hurt.

But that's not where their work and commitment start or end.

Because so much of what determines an individual's and a community's health happens outside of an operating room, emergency department, or a med/surg unit, Florida's hospitals are also deeply engaged in work in communities and neighborhoods that supports good health, beyond providing world-class medical care. An estimated 80 percent of health status and outcomes are determined or highly influenced by non-medical drivers – the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. These are factors like nutritious food, community safety, reliable transportation, educational and employment opportunities, and housing.

This health-promoting work is the heart of community benefit. Florida's nonprofit hospitals that are members of the Florida Hospital Association invested \$5.7 billion last year in community benefit activities and programs across the state to promote and support healthy communities, extending their mission well beyond the walls of the hospital.

This work could be hamstrung if lawmakers in Washington advance legisla-

*Continued on page 8*

## Miami Dade College Medical Campus Looks Ahead to 2026–27 With Focus on Workforce Needs, Expanded Pathways

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

As South Florida's healthcare needs continue to grow, Miami Dade College's Medical Campus is preparing for the 2026–27 academic year with a focus on expanding career pathways, strengthening clinical training and ensuring graduates are ready to enter a fast-changing workforce.

For Dr. Alwyn Leiba, president of MDC Medical Campus, the coming year is about alignment: between students, academic programs and the healthcare workforce they are preparing to enter.

“Our top priority is ensuring that our programs continue to meet the evolving needs of the healthcare industry while providing students with high-quality, accessible education,” Dr. Leiba says.

That mission reflects the broader role MDC plays in South Florida. The Medical Campus serves students preparing for careers in nursing, dental hygiene, respiratory care, imaging, emergency medical services and other allied health fields. Many of those areas are seeing sustained demand as hospitals, clinics and health systems work to recruit professionals who can step into patient care and support roles quickly.

Dr. Leiba says the campus is focused on “expanding pathways that lead to in-demand



Dr. Alwyn Leiba

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# Publisher’s Note

## Healthcare's Balancing Act

August has a way of sneaking up on all of us. One minute we’re enjoying summer vacations, longer daylight hours, and the promise of a slower pace. The next minute, school buses are back on the road, lunch boxes are being packed, calendars are overflowing, and healthcare professionals are somehow expected to make it all look effortless.

Of course, if there were an Olympic event for juggling responsibilities, our nation’s healthcare workforce would bring home the gold medal every time.

For many physicians, nurses, administrators, therapists, and support staff, August represents the unofficial beginning of “organized chaos.” Children head back to school with new teachers, new routines, and enough paperwork to rival a hospital accreditation survey. Parents find themselves balancing early morning drop-offs, afternoon pickups, homework, sports practices, and the occasional science project that somehow becomes a family engineering challenge.

Meanwhile, the patients never stop coming. Healthcare has never been a profession that follows the school calendar. Hospitals remain open 24 hours a day, emergency departments don’t recognize holidays, and illness certainly doesn’t wait until after soccer practice. Yet every year, healthcare professionals find remarkable ways to balance extraordinary careers while remaining devoted parents, spouses, caregivers, and community leaders.

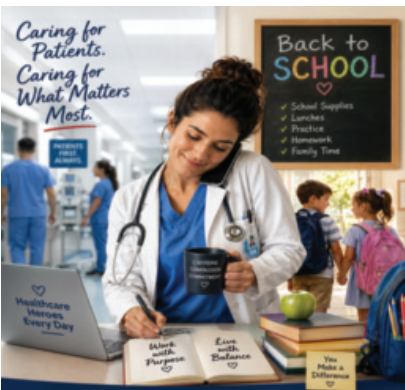
In this month’s issue, we celebrate that balancing act. We recognize the dedication required to provide exceptional patient care while managing the everyday demands of family life. It’s a reminder that behind every white coat, scrub top, business suit, or security uniform is someone working hard to care for both patients and loved ones.

And let’s admit it—there’s always that annual back-to-school tradition of wondering if we’ll survive the first week. Coffee consumption mysteriously increases, alarm clocks seem to ring earlier than ever, and someone inevitably discovers at 10:00 p.m. that tomorrow is “dress like your favorite historical figure” day. Somehow, healthcare professionals handle these family emergencies with the same calm confidence they bring to their clinical responsibilities. That’s a talent worthy of recognition.

As you explore this August edition of *South Florida Hospital News & Healthcare Report*, you’ll find stories highlighting innovation, leadership, clinical excellence, and the people who continue to strengthen healthcare throughout our region. We hope these articles provide valuable insight while reminding you that you’re part of a remarkable community committed to improving lives every single day.

To everyone preparing for another busy season, remember to extend the same compassion to yourself that you so generously give to others. Make time for family dinners, celebrate the first day-of-school photos, enjoy the victories—large and small—and never underestimate the restorative power of a well-earned laugh.

From all of us at *South Florida Hospital News & Healthcare Report*, thank you for everything you do. We wish you and your families a successful, healthy, and rewarding back-to-school season.



Charles Felix 😊

You can reach Charles Felix at  
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# Revenue Cycle Software Trends: The Rise of Intelligent Revenue Cycle Platforms

The healthcare revenue cycle has undergone a remarkable technological transformation over the past decade. What were once primarily billing and claims management systems have evolved into sophisticated, data-driven platforms capable of automating workflows, identifying reimbursement trends, and providing actionable financial insights. As healthcare organizations continue to navigate shrinking reimbursement margins and increasing administrative complexity, revenue cycle software has become an indispensable strategic asset.

Among the most significant trends shaping the industry is the integration of artificial intelligence and machine learning into revenue cycle operations. Modern platforms can now identify claims at high risk for denial before submission, prioritize accounts based on recovery potential, and analyze historical payment patterns to uncover reimbursement opportunities. By automating repetitive administrative tasks, these technologies enable revenue cycle teams



BY TREVOR BIGLIN,  
ESQ.

to focus their time and expertise on higher-value activities that directly improve financial performance.

Another rapidly growing trend is contract intelligence. Rather than simply processing payments, advanced revenue cycle platforms increasingly compare actual reimbursements against contractual expectations, automatically flagging payment variances

and potential underpayments. For healthcare organizations managing numerous payer agreements, this capability provides valuable visibility into reimbursement performance and helps identify trends that may otherwise go unnoticed.

Predictive analytics has also become an increasingly powerful tool for healthcare leaders. Executive dashboards now offer real-time visibility into denial rates, aging accounts receivable, payer-specific performance, and cash flow projections. Instead of reacting to reimbursement issues after they occur, providers can proactively identify emerging risks and allocate resources where they are likely

to have the greatest financial impact.

Automation continues to improve patient access and front-end revenue cycle functions as well. Real-time eligibility verification, prior authorization workflows, and electronic claim editing help reduce preventable billing errors while improving operational efficiency. These advancements not only accelerate reimbursement but also enhance the patient experience by reducing administrative delays and unexpected billing issues.

While these technological advancements have transformed revenue cycle management, software alone cannot solve every reimbursement challenge. Many of today's most significant financial issues extend beyond what automation can address. Complex payer disputes, contract interpretation, out-of-network reimbursement, coordination of benefits issues, and evolving regulatory requirements often require experienced professionals capable of applying strategic, operational, and legal analysis to resolve difficult reimbursement matters.

Technology excels at identifying opportunities, but experienced revenue cycle specialists remain essential for acting on the insights those platforms generate. Likewise, as reimbursement dis-

putes become increasingly complex, many healthcare organizations are finding value in partners who combine advanced technology with deep expertise in managed care contracting, appeals, arbitration, and healthcare law.

Looking ahead, the most successful healthcare organizations will not be those with the most software, but those that effectively integrate intelligent technology with experienced revenue cycle professionals. Revenue cycle software will continue to evolve, providing increasingly sophisticated data and automation. However, maximizing reimbursement will continue to depend upon an organization's ability to interpret that information, develop effective recovery strategies, and respond to an increasingly complex reimbursement environment.

As healthcare reimbursement continues to evolve, intelligent revenue cycle platforms will undoubtedly remain a critical component of financial success. However, technology is most powerful when paired with the expertise necessary to transform data into meaningful financial results.

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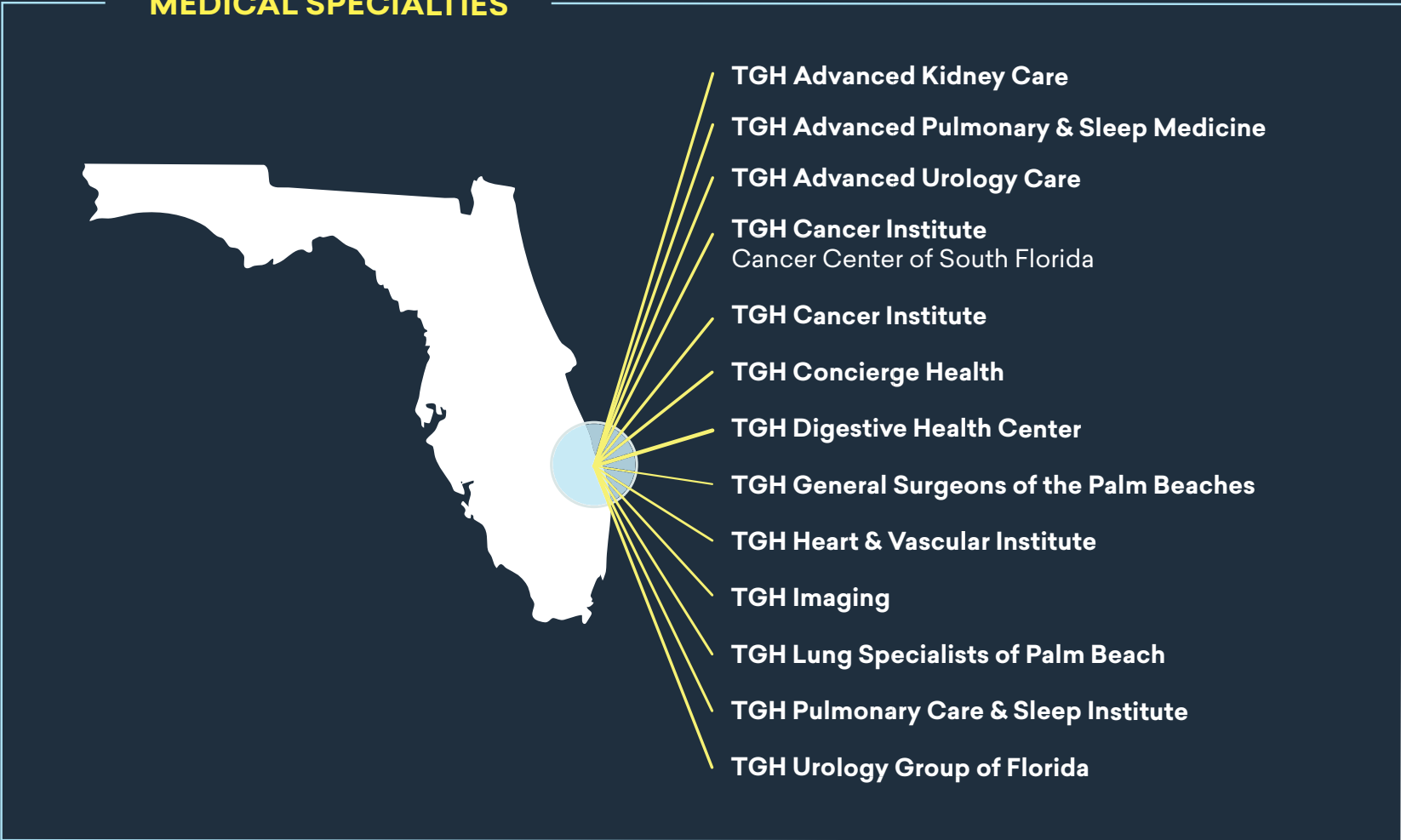
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## Building the Physician Workforce Our Community Deserves

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At Holy Cross Medical Group, we think about that question every day. We have the privilege of building on a remarkable 71-year legacy of serving South Florida and as part of Trinity Health, a national organization of 92 hospitals. We are proud to be the region's only Catholic, not-for-profit health system. Our mission calls us not only to provide outstanding clinical care, but to care for every patient with compassion, dignity and respect, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

That mission continues to attract physicians who want their careers to have both professional excellence and deeper purpose. Doctors, physicians' assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses and the full spectrum of health care professionals choose to work at Holy Cross Health because they believe in providing care in the spirit of the Gospel by treating every patient—regardless of faith, income level, race, ethnicity or sexual orientation—in a compassionate, empathetic, comfortable, hopeful and healing environment.

South Florida is an extraordinary place to live, but it is also one of the nation's most competitive health care markets. While advances in technology, new treatments and innovative models of care continue to transform medicine, none of them replace the importance of having exceptional physicians caring for patients in our community.

Demand for health care continues to rise as our population grows and ages, yet the supply of physicians has not kept pace, and is in fact declining. Every health system is competing to recruit outstanding physicians and advanced practice providers in order to deliver top quality care close to home. Across the country, health systems face growing challenges in recruiting and retaining physicians for a variety of reasons. Today's physicians are more mobile and less apt to commit to a single job for their



BY LAWRENCE WARD,  
MD, MPH, MACP

entire career, as they often did in the past. This frustrates patients who trusted a specific doctor with their health for years, but must cycle through physicians every time one leaves the practice and/or area.

Recruitment today is also about far more than offering a competitive salary. Many experienced physicians are approaching retirement, while younger physicians increasingly seek to join

organizations that support professional growth, teamwork, wellness, a healthy balance between work and family life, and feel connected to a mission that extends beyond medicine itself.

Retention is just as important as recruitment. Patients value continuity and communities are strongest when physicians build long-term relationships with the people they serve. At Holy Cross Health, we prioritize creating a culture where physicians feel respected, listened to, supported and empowered. This ultimately translates into better patient care and healthier communities.

As our community continues to grow, so must the breadth of services we offer. We are continually evaluating opportunities to expand specialty and surgical care, strengthen primary care and develop programs that address the evolving needs of our patients. Whether that means bringing new specialists to our community, enhancing multidisciplinary care or improving access through technology, every decision is guided by one objective: delivering exceptional care where, when and in what manner patients need it.

The future of health care in South Florida depends on organizations that are willing to invest not only in facilities and technology, but in the physicians who dedicate their lives to caring for others. We are optimistic that by remaining committed to our mission, investing in our people and continuing to earn the trust of our community, Holy Cross Health will continue to serve South Florida with excellence for many years to come.

*Dr. Lawrence Ward is Chief Medical Officer of Holy Cross Medical Group.*

## Scans Tell Us About the Cancer. Functional Status Tells Us About the Patient

In an era of precision oncology, we closely track biomarkers, imaging findings and treatment response. Yet one of the strongest predictors of how a patient is truly doing often receives less attention: functional status.

When patients experience progressive fatigue, need more assistance with daily activities or spend more time in bed, clinicians and families may normalize these changes as expected consequences of cancer or treatment.

Yet progressive functional decline is frequently the clearest indication that an illness trajectory is changing. It is often a signal that warrants a broader conversation about prognosis, goals of care and whether the current treatment plan still aligns with what matters most to the patient.

As physicians, we routinely rely on objective measures to assess disease progression. While scans tell us how a tumor is behaving, functional status tells us how the patient is living. Both are essential to understanding prognosis and making care decisions that align with patient goals.

### Looking Beyond the Disease

In oncology, performance status is already an established part of clinical decision-making. Measures like the Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group (ECOG) Performance Status help determine whether patients are likely to benefit from additional systemic therapy.

Too often, declining performance status triggers a discussion about whether another treatment is feasible. It should also prompt a conversation about whether another treatment is meaningful—whether the patient's care plan continues to reflect their priorities.

Consider the patient whose cancer has progressed despite multiple lines of therapy. Hospitalizations become more frequent. Symptoms become harder to control. Walking across the room requires assistance. Meals become smaller. Recovery after each admission takes longer than the last.

Each of these changes represents more than a decline in function. Together, they paint a picture of an illness that is advancing.

### When Functional Decline Changes the Clinical Equation

Functional decline should prompt clinicians to reevaluate assumptions. The clinical question is no longer only whether treatment can continue, but whether continued treatment remains consistent with the patient's goals, priorities and likely outcomes.

Questions worth asking include:

- Has the patient's overall condition changed more than the scan suggests?
- Are repeated hospitalizations helping the patient achieve their goals?
- What does the patient hope to accomplish in the weeks and months



BY DR. ILEANA LEYVA

ahead?

- Would I be surprised if this patient died within the next year?

These conversations are often easier before a crisis develops. When patients still have the ability to participate fully in decisions, they can better express what matters most to them and understand the options available.

### A Shift in Focus

One reason these conversations are delayed is the persistent misconception that hospice represents a last resort. In reality, hospice is a care model designed to support patients whose priorities have evolved as their illness progresses.

A hospice plan of care should incorporate the wishes and values of the patient and optimize the patient's symptom management to allow for the best possible quality of life and function for as long as possible. Hospice is focused on maximizing comfort and preserving dignity, allowing patients to spend their remaining time in the place of their choice.

For patients with advanced cancer, hospice provides expert pain and symptom management while supporting emotional, psychosocial and spiritual needs. It also helps families navigate an increasingly complex stage of illness.

When referrals occur earlier, patients have more time to benefit from these services rather than receiving them only in the final days of life.

Recognizing functional decline allows us to make that transition thoughtfully instead of reactively.

### Seeing the Whole Patient

Cancer care has never been solely about treating disease. First and foremost, we are caring for the person living with it.

By paying closer attention to functional status, we gain valuable insight into prognosis while creating opportunities for more meaningful conversations.

Modern cancer care offers more treatment options than ever before. Yet the measure of excellent care is not how long we continue treatment; it is how well we recognize when a patient's needs and priorities have changed.

Functional decline is often the signal. The challenge for clinicians is deciding whether we are prepared to act on what it is telling us.

*Learn more about how hospice supports patients with advanced cancer and refer patients to VITAS by calling (800) 938-7827 or visiting [VITAS.com/Refer](https://www.vitas.com/Refer), available anytime 24/7/365. Download the VITAS mobile app for seamless, one-touch referrals by patient facesheet.*

*Dr. Ileana Leyva is the regional medical director for VITAS® Healthcare in South Florida. Learn more about end-of-life care at [VITAS.com](https://www.vitas.com).*

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



### MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Paul W. McGourty

BY LOIS THOMSON

Paul W. McGourty, RN, MHA, FACHE, has a lot of letters after his name, but that's just an indication of the progression of his career. McGourty began his career working in hospitality with Marriott International and Ritz-Carlton, and even owned his own restaurant.



Paul W. McGourty

However, he realized, "I always wanted to work in a profession where at the end of the day, I knew my time made a difference, and I wasn't feeling that way or feeling fulfilled in the hospitality industry. Then I felt I was being called to healthcare."

Nursing school held an appeal but because there was a waiting list to enroll – and a two-year degree would have taken more than four years to obtain – McGourty asked if there was a way to speed up the process. An admissions coordinator suggested a certificate program, which, upon completion, would enable him to be placed at the top of the list to get into the nursing program.

McGourty earned a certificate for surgical technology and, as he explained, "It allowed me to work in the operating room (at Brigham & Women's Hospital) as a Certified Surgical Technologist (CST) while I was putting myself through nursing school." When McGourty earned his RN, he was immediately hired into the operating room – a position he loved, but after a while he also recognized, "I wanted to be in leadership."

A position as director of patient experience opened at Holy Cross, and in comparing the requirements of the position with the experience on his CV, McGourty found what he thought was a good fit. "So that's how I transitioned into leadership here at Holy Cross; I've since been promoted to executive director over acute care, and I oversee patient experience for our hospital and our health system."

In that, McGourty has found the fulfillment he was looking for. "The sense of

purpose never goes away: whether you're providing direct care to a patient, or in an office or in the boardroom making decisions affecting the people who are providing the front-line care, you know the work you do ultimately touches many lives. And that's a privilege. Work is sacred, and at the end of the day, knowing you had an opportunity to make a difference is what drives me."

He added that he believes one of his most important responsibilities is to put his colleagues at the center of everything he does. He said if he does that, "I know they will put patients at the center of what they do. I feel you have to put your colleagues first and make sure they have the tools and the resources they need to provide the best possible care."

While in this position of executive director of nursing and patient experience, McGourty studied at Florida Atlantic University for his MHA, which he obtained in 2018, and it was there that he learned about ACHE, the American College of Healthcare Executives. "One of our assignments was to join ACHE, and the chapter president came and spoke to the class, and told us about all the benefits it offered." He maintained his membership, and two years ago decided, "Now I need to become a fellow, and work toward gaining that distinction and certification." He completed that in 2025, earning an FACHE.

McGourty admitted it was a lot of work, saying, "It's definitely a commitment. It's not easy, and it shouldn't be. It's the gold standard for healthcare leaders to attain; it signifies a commitment to lifelong learning and a commitment to the profession."

McGourty appreciates ACHE, with its many networking and volunteering opportunities available. "You're able to contribute and give back to the profession outside the four walls of the healthcare system you work in, which is a great feeling."

## Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare: Physicians Must Lead the Conversation

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming healthcare. From clinical decision support and diagnostic imaging to predictive analytics, ambient documentation, scheduling, and patient engagement, AI is reshaping the way medicine is practiced. The question is no longer whether AI will become part of our daily work, but whether physicians will help shape its future or simply adapt to decisions made by others.



BY CHRISTOPHER  
CHANG, MD

As President of the Broward County Medical Association (BCMA), I have made physician education on AI one of my priorities. Throughout my career, I have enjoyed speaking with medical students, residents, and practicing physicians about AI, each approaching this technology from a different perspective. Students embrace innovation, residents are learning to integrate AI into clinical training, and experienced physicians want practical ways to improve patient care without compromising clinical judgment. Bringing these groups together creates a shared understanding as medicine enters a new technological era.

The BCMA offers two educational opportunities this year featuring AI topics. On August 29, BCMA will host The Business of Medicine, where two sessions will focus on practical AI applications for physicians and medical practices. Then, on October 17, we will present Artificial Intelligence Conference 2026: Exploring the Future of AI in Healthcare, bringing together physicians, healthcare leaders, technology experts, and innovators to examine clinical applications, ethics, cybersecurity, data privacy, and the future of AI in medicine. Sponsor and exhibitor opportunities remain available for both events, providing organizations committed to physician education with an opportunity to support these important conversations while engaging directly with South Florida's medical community. For organizations looking to hire future physicians, this is an opportune time to meet medical students and residents.

Artificial Intelligence must also be viewed through the lens of governance. As

policymakers examine transparency, patient privacy, algorithmic accountability, informed consent, liability, and the responsible use of AI-generated recommendations, physicians cannot be passive observers. We must work alongside legislators, regulators, medical societies, and technology developers to ensure regulations protect patients while encouraging responsible innovation.

That is why BCMA's commitment extends beyond education to advocacy. Working closely with the Florida Medical Association and the American Medical Association, BCMA advocates for policies that protect patients, preserve physician-led care, and ensure innovation advances responsibly. Through legislative advocacy, physician fly-ins to Tallahassee, and collaboration with policymakers, we are committed to ensuring physicians have a meaningful voice as AI becomes more deeply integrated into healthcare. The AMA has reaffirmed that AI should support, not replace, physician judgment, emphasizing transparency, accountability, and physician oversight.

Artificial Intelligence also affects practices differently. Large health systems are investing in enterprise platforms with predictive analytics and workflow automation, while independent physicians need affordable tools that reduce administrative burdens, improve documentation, streamline billing and prior authorization, and strengthen patient communication. AI should help level the playing field, making high-quality care more efficient regardless of practice size.

No matter how sophisticated AI becomes, physicians must remain at the center of medical decision-making. AI can analyze data and identify patterns, but it cannot replace clinical judgment, compassion, ethics, or the trust at the heart of the physician-patient relationship. The future of medicine is being written today, and physicians must help write the next chapter.

*Dr. Christopher Chang is President,  
Broward County Medical Association.*



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# Cover Story: Investing in Health Outside the Hospital

Continued from page 1

tion (H.R. 9504), which further regulates nonprofit hospitals. After passing the Ways & Means Committee in July, the full House could consider the bill before the end of the year.

As drafted, the bill would add significant compliance requirements and costs to the already long list of challenges hospitals face, such as increased administrative burden and costs from health insurance plans, shrinking payments, and a growing uncompensated burden. Likewise, any further regulation that imposes a one-size-fits-all standard will dilute the ability of different hospitals to meet the unique needs of their communities.

One of the primary strengths of community benefit is its responsiveness to local community needs. Hospitals regularly undertake an extensive process to determine their community's health needs through a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA).

This comprehensive survey broadly reviews the needs of a community, such as rates of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, substance use disorder, mental illness, and many other pressing conditions. The results of these surveys help to shape the priorities of hospitals and health systems and their partnerships with other community organizations to improve the health and well-being of the individuals and families in their communities.

Through community benefit activities, nonprofit hospitals are engaged in efforts to support educational goals for children, to expand access to preventive services, to support free clinics, to expand access to dental care, to enhance healthcare literacy, to improve the array of services for our elderly, and to address the ever-growing need for community-based mental health services. Hospitals

are helping to bridge gaps in social services that negatively impact well-being and health outcomes for children and adults. These initiatives often are closely aligned with local or state health department priorities – such as helping moms into early prenatal care, tackling housing instability for those with mental illness, supporting nutrition programs to address food insecurity, or developing innovative programs to overcome transportation barriers.

This work is in addition to the charity care hospitals provide for patients in their communities who are uninsured or do not have the means to pay for their care despite having healthcare coverage. With 2.6 million Floridians lacking healthcare coverage and another 4.4 million Floridians covered by Medicaid, hospitals absorb a large portion of costs associated with caring for these populations. Last year, FHA-member hospitals incurred \$4.6 billion in costs associated with patients receiving free care, financial assistance, or coverage through means-tested programs.

Community benefit programs improve the lives of millions of Floridians every single day by getting to the heart of health and taking a community-centered, holistic approach to well-being.

A healthy Florida begins in the community, well before an individual is admitted to the hospital, and Florida's nonprofit hospitals are an integral part of cultivating healthy neighborhoods and communities where children, adults, and seniors can thrive. More regulation that imposes additional compliance costs or a clunky one-size-fits-all standard will only take essential resources away from these vital community benefit programs.

Mary Mayhew is President and CEO, Florida Hospital Association.

# Seasoned Public Relations Is Moving the Needle in Healthcare Marketing

Healthcare marketing teams have embraced artificial intelligence to draft everything from social media posts to newsletters and even executive messages. The result is greater efficiency—but also growing sameness. Organizations that once had distinct voices increasingly sound alike, relying on the same predictable phrases and formulaic writing.



BY ROSE LUGO, EDD

“We’re celebrating our unwavering commitment to using AI copy. By doing this we’re sounding just like everyone else. It is not about originality. Not about engagement. It is about misusing a tool. In a moment where technology continues to advance, one thing remains clear: we need to know how to use AI.” If this copy could be on your brand’s social media channel or your executive’s keynote, stop and consider.

As AI-generated content becomes more common, originality is giving way to generic messaging that makes brands difficult to distinguish. Ironically, this has made seasoned public relations professionals more valuable than ever.

Artificial intelligence cannot establish an organization’s unique voice, understand its culture, or determine how a message will affect public trust. Those responsibilities still require professional judgment and experience.

In consumer-driven healthcare, patients and families no longer choose providers based solely on physician referrals. They research organizations online, compare credentials, read reviews, evaluate reputations, and often turn to AI platforms for recommendations.

Consumers are asking AI which rehabilitation hospital offers the strongest outcomes, which provider is best equipped to care for an aging parent, or which healthcare organization is most trusted in its community. The answers are based on the digital evidence available to those platforms.

AI evaluates quality of website content, search visibility, online reviews, earned media coverage, awards, accreditations, and recognition from respected organizations. Public relations essentially builds the digital evidence that shapes AI recommendations.

At the same time, digital advertising and streaming platforms continue to draw revenue away from traditional newsrooms, leaving fewer reporters with less time to develop stories. A shift that has expanded the publicist’s role.

The strongest public relations professionals do more than pitch ideas. They identify newsworthy angles, conduct interviews, write publication-ready copy, and provide high-quality photography

and video. They anticipate journalists’ needs with credible sources and complete information. Ever more serving as an extension of the newsroom.

Do not be tempted to ask your team to create promotional copy disguised as journalism. Editors recognize that immediately, and audiences do as well. Effective public relations requires understanding the

difference between what an organization wants to say and what readers will find valuable. Experienced publicists excel at making that distinction.

A seasoned communicator also understands how to adapt a story for different audiences. A clinical advancement may become an industry feature for a healthcare publication, a patient education article for consumers, or an executive thought-leadership opportunity for a business journal. The facts remain the same, but the editorial approach changes. A level of judgment that cannot be replicated by entering a prompt into an AI platform.

Artificial intelligence can accelerate research, organize information, generate ideas, and improve productivity. It is an exceptional assistant. It should not be mistaken for the communicator.

Trust in a healthcare brand is built over time through consistent, credible storytelling. Every executive interview, earned media placement, award submission, patient story, and community-impact article contributes to the brand story that shapes how stakeholders and AI platforms perceive the brand.

Healthcare leaders should ask whether their organizations have the expertise to protect their voice, cultivate media relationships, and translate accomplishments into external credibility.

Marketers will continue to embrace artificial intelligence, and they should. It offers significant advantages, but as access to the same tools becomes universal, professional judgment and originality become even greater competitive advantages.

Healthcare organizations moving the needle are relinquishing volume in favor of building authentic and credible brand stories that resonate through strong emotional connection. Seasoned public relations professionals remain essential to making that happen.

Rose Lugo, Ed.D., is Senior Director of Marketing & Communications at Catholic Health Services, Founding President of the Media Education Society, and a member of both the Public Relations Society of America and St. Thomas University’s Advancement, Engagement & Impact Council. Connect with her @RoseLugoNews.



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# As Skin Cancer Cases Grow More Complex, Early Specialist Alignment Is Critical

Florida's year-round sun exposure contributes to one of the highest rates of skin cancer, particularly melanoma, in the country. Today, physicians are seeing more complex cases, including patients with advanced disease or multiple risk factors. As treatment options continue to grow, deciding when to operate, when to start chemotherapy or immunotherapy, and how to sequence treatment has become equally complex. Skin cancer treatment is no longer routine; it is evolving toward a more integrated, multidisciplinary model that is reshaping how and when specialists collaborate.

Skin cancer treatment is no longer a simple progression from diagnosis to surgery to recovery. Today's treatment pathways often require early decisions about surgical approach, lymph node evaluation and the timing of systemic therapies, such as immunotherapy. In some cases, systemic therapy may be initiated before surgery, further underscoring the importance of early coordination. For more advanced or high-risk presentations, delayed alignment between specialties can limit treatment options and affect outcomes.

Leading care models now prioritize multispecialty evaluation from the outset. At TGH Cancer Institute | Cancer Center of South Florida (CCSF), surgical and medical oncology work in close alignment early in the care process, helping to ensure coordinated, timely and appropriate treatment strategies for each patient's clinical presentation.

The recent addition of surgical oncologist Dr. Kimmerle "KC" Cohen and medical oncologist Dr. Sanjay Awasthi strengthens this collaborative approach. Dr. Cohen has extensive experience in complex skin cancer surgery, including sentinel lymph node biopsy, management of advanced and high-risk lesions, and multiple reconstructive options. Her role is central to determining if surgery is appropriate, how extensive it should be and when it should occur within the overall treatment plan.

Dr. Awasthi specializes in melanoma and systemic therapies, including immunotherapy and targeted treatments. His expertise helps guide whether these therapies should be used before or after surgery, or solely on their own without surgery.

Together, their coordination, supported by additional TGH Cancer Institute | CCSF team members, enables more precise sequencing of care and earlier alignment on treatment strategy, particularly for patients whose disease may not follow a straightforward path.

"The timing of surgery relative to systemic therapy can significantly influence outcomes," said Dr. Awasthi. "Aligning these decisions earlier allows us to tailor treatment more effectively for each patient."

TGH Cancer Institute | CCSF's multispecialty model streamlines complex decision-making and reduces fragmentation in care. Through regular tumor boards, spe-

cialists review cases collaboratively, often early in the diagnostic process and before making definitive treatment decisions. Defined care pathways and direct communication between providers help minimize delays, reduce unnecessary duplication and improve continuity across phases of treatment.

Referring physicians remain connected throughout the process, with timely updates and clear points of contact. This level of communication can be especially important in complex cases where treatment plans evolve. Shared access through the electronic medical record (EMR) system, Epic, further supports coordination, particularly for providers already within the system, helping ensure continuity both during and after specialty care.

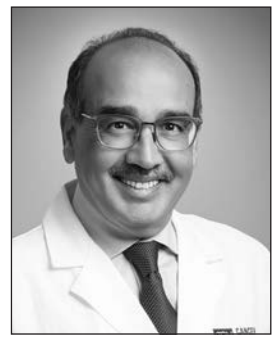
## When to Refer for Multidisciplinary Evaluation

Early referral can help expand treatment options and improve coordination, particularly in the following scenarios:

- Suspected or confirmed melanoma
- Large, deep or rapidly evolving lesions
- Recurrent disease
- Evidence of lymph node involvement
- Cases where systemic therapy may be indicated
- Situations where the treatment approach is unclear



Dr. Kimmerle Cohen



Dr. Sanjay Awasthi

Early engagement allows surgical and medical oncology to align on treatment strategy from the outset, supporting more efficient, coordinated and effective care.

As demand for complex skin cancer care continues to grow in South Florida, TGH Cancer Institute | CCSF is expanding its capacity to meet this need. The addition of Drs. Cohen and Awasthi enhances both surgical and systemic expertise, reinforcing a coordinated approach to melanoma and other high-risk skin cancers.

Backed by academic medicine and nationally recognized for cancer care, Tampa General Hospital provides referring physicians with access to integrated, multispecialty expertise — an approach that can be particularly valuable in the management of complex skin cancers.

For more information about the referral process at TGH Cancer Institute | CCSF, please call (561) 253-3980.

## Cover Story: Updated DHHS Accessibility Rules May Reduce or Increase Risk

Continued from page 1

service kiosks. According to the DHHS, healthcare facilities must meet WCAG 2.1 Level AA standards.

Organizations with more than 15 employees must be in compliance by May 11, 2027, and organizations with 15 or fewer employees must be in compliance by May 10, 2028.

"There are a few different reasons why this is important," said Murphy Faircloth. "First, DHHS is looking to promote equitable access to healthcare and improve patient safety and improve the patient experience as a whole. As changes take place in technology and medical equipment, they also want to make sure that everyone is up to date on these changes."

By evaluating current equipment, training staff, assessing digital accessibility and working with vendors to ensure compliance, it will streamline the healthcare process, making providers' jobs easier and creating a better patient experience.

"With improved digital accessibility, for example, patients can sign up for appointments online, even scheduling six months in advance, without having to call," said Murphy Faircloth. "Today's systems track everything in the practice, which makes it easier for everybody."

According to Murphy Faircloth, while these are primarily civil rights regulations, these updates do have risk management implications as well. Lack of accessible equipment or accommodations can contribute to patient injuries, delayed diag-

noses and increased risk if harm occurs. Compliance improves patient safety, reduces liability risk and demonstrates proactive risk management.

"This could go one of two ways, however," said Murphy Faircloth. "If the equipment and technology is implemented correctly, it reduces risk. But if it is not implemented correctly, or staff isn't properly trained, it could eventually cause more exposure if it results in patient injuries or delayed diagnoses. This could result in carriers less likely to provide coverage if claims increase."

While the rule itself does not automatically increase malpractice insurance premiums, repeated accessibility-related incidents or claims could influence an insurer's assessment of risk. For this reason, proper documentation of accommodations and staff training is imperative.

"It is still the provider's job to double-check everything, just like when entering AI-dictated notes into a telehealth platform," said Murphy Faircloth. "In some cases, medical devices can do services that doctors used to perform, but they still need to be keeping an eye on everything to make sure it is working correctly. New technology should be used as a tool and not a crutch."

For more information, contact Kyla Murphy Faircloth at [kyla.faircloth@bbrown.com](mailto:kyla.faircloth@bbrown.com) or call (800) 966-2120.



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## A message from our President

### **340B: The Healthcare Program You Probably Never Knew Was Helping You**

I generally avoid writing about subjects that require highly specialized expertise. The 340B Drug Pricing Program certainly falls into that category. It is complex, highly technical, and the subject of ongoing debate among hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, policymakers, and patient advocates.

So why write about it?

Because I suspect most people, including many patients who benefit from it indirectly, have never heard of the 340B Program or understand why it matters. While the policy debates often dominate the headlines, the real story is how this program quietly helps hospitals and healthcare providers preserve services that entire communities rely upon.

This article isn't intended to weigh in on every argument surrounding the program. Instead, it seeks to answer a much simpler question:

Why should the average patient care about the 340B Program?

The 340B Drug Pricing Program was created by Congress in 1992 as part of the Veterans Health Care Act. Its purpose was straightforward: help hospitals, community health centers, and other healthcare providers that serve large numbers of low-income, uninsured, and vulnerable patients stretch limited financial resources while expanding access to care.

According to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), which oversees the program, "The 340B Program enables covered entities to stretch scarce federal resources as far as possible, reaching more eligible patients and providing more comprehensive services."

The program works through a simple exchange. Pharmaceutical manufacturers that want their outpatient drugs covered under Medicaid and certain Medicare programs agree to provide significant discounts on those medications to qualifying healthcare providers. Those discounts, often ranging from 20 to 50 percent, create financial savings that hospitals and clinics can reinvest into patient care and community services.

For many safety-net providers, the program has been enormously valuable. It has allowed hospitals to expand services, improve access to care, and continue caring for patients regardless of their ability to pay.

Ironically, that success has also made the program increasingly controversial.

Over the past decade, the 340B Program has grown dramatically. Discounted drug purchases increased from approximately \$30 billion in 2015 to nearly \$100 billion in 2025, making it the nation's second-largest federal drug pricing program. That growth has been fueled by rising specialty drug costs, pharmaceutical price inflation, and an increase in the number of eligible hospitals and contract pharmacies.



**Jaime Caldwell**

much broader.

The savings generated through 340B allow hospitals to maintain services that often lose money but are essential to the community. These include trauma centers, behavioral health programs, cancer services, mobile clinics, neonatal intensive care units, substance use disorder treatment programs, and other services that hospitals simply cannot abandon because their communities depend on them.

Hospitals also use these resources to help subsidize care for uninsured and underinsured patients, strengthen community outreach programs, and invest in services that improve health outcomes beyond the walls of the hospital.

In many communities, particularly rural and underserved areas, 340B funding also helps hospitals remain financially viable. Without those resources, some hospitals would be forced to reduce services or, in extreme cases, close altogether.

Ultimately, these investments benefit everyone, not just the uninsured. By helping hospitals absorb some of the financial pressures associated with caring for vulnerable populations, the 340B Program strengthens the entire healthcare delivery system. It also influences what hospitals must seek from commercial insurers during contract negotiations, helping offset the costs of services that otherwise would have no sustainable source of funding.

The debate over the future of the 340B Program will undoubtedly continue. Like many complex public policy issues, there are legitimate questions about oversight, accountability, and modernization. But amid those discussions, it is important not to lose sight of its original purpose. The program was created to strengthen the healthcare safety net, and for millions of Americans it continues to do exactly that.

Whether you have private insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, or no insurance at all, chances are your local hospital provides services that are supported, directly or indirectly, by the 340B Program. It may never reduce the price of the prescription you pick up at the pharmacy, but it helps ensure that when you or someone you love needs emergency care, trauma services, cancer treatment, behavioral health care, or other essential healthcare services, those resources are available close to home.

Sometimes the most valuable healthcare programs are the ones patients never realize are quietly working on their behalf.

The 340B Program is not simply about discounted drugs. It is about preserving access to healthcare for entire communities, often long before any of us become patients.



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# Caring for the Caregivers: Why Physician Wellness Must Become a Healthcare Priority

Every day, physicians encourage their patients to prioritize healthy habits: exercise regularly, eat nutritious foods, manage stress, and seek help when needed. Yet, as a profession, we too often neglect our own advice.

The consequences are impossible to ignore.

Physician burnout has reached alarming levels, with studies estimating that nearly 82 percent of physicians experience burnout. Research from the American Medical Association found that 45.2 percent of physicians experienced at least one manifestation of burnout in 2023. Even more sobering, physicians face disproportionately higher risks of depression, substance use disorders, cardiovascular disease, and suicide than the general population. In the United States, it is estimated that one physician dies by suicide every day.

These statistics represent talented professionals whose ability to care for others is compromised because they have not had the opportunity or support to care for themselves.

As President of the Miami-Dade County Medical Association (MDCMA), I believe physician wellness is not a personal responsibility alone but a healthcare imperative. A resilient physician workforce is essential to maintaining safe, compassionate, and high-quality patient care. Organizations that invest in physician well-being are investing directly in better outcomes for patients, stronger healthcare teams, and healthier communities.

That is why advancing physician wellness is one of the defining priorities of



BY JULIE LYNN  
KANTOR, MD, FAAP

my presidency. Over the coming months, MDCMA will launch a series of educational programs and resources focused on the three pillars of physician wellness: physical, mental, and financial health. Our goal is to provide practical strategies, foster meaningful peer connections, and remind physicians that seeking support is a sign of strength, not weakness.

This initiative builds upon the strong foundation established by physician leaders who have made wellness a priority for our medical community. I am especially grateful to Dr. Juan Diego Oms, whose passion for physician well-being and leadership has helped shape this important initiative. His work reminds us that wellness begins with self-care and grows through developing emotional intelligence, self-awareness, resiliency, and a sense of purpose. I also want to recognize Dr. Patricia Ares-Romero, one of my predecessors as MDCMA President, whose vision brought the LifeBridge Physician Wellness Program to our association, providing members with confidential mental health support and wellness resources. Through LifeBridge, MDCMA members have access to four complimentary, confidential sessions each year with a licensed psychologist, giving physicians a safe, judgment-free space to address stress, burnout, anxiety, personal challenges, or other concerns before they become overwhelming. In addition, Dr. Patricia Junquera continues to advance physician wellness through her leadership of the MINDS Program at Florida International University and the

upcoming MINDS Symposium, helping physicians better understand and address the challenges of stress, burnout, and mental health. Together, these efforts reflect MDCMA's growing commitment to creating a culture where physician well-being is supported, valued, and recognized as essential to exceptional patient care.

Wellness and leadership are inseparable. Physicians who care for their own well-being are better equipped to lead healthcare teams, mentor future physicians, communicate effectively, and navigate the increasing complexity of modern medicine. Self-care should not be seen as self-indulgence but as a professional responsibility that enables us to serve our patients with excellence.

Medicine has always been a calling built on service. But service should never require self-sacrifice to the point of exhaustion. We should continue to redefine what it means to be a successful physician by recognizing that caring for ourselves is an essential part of caring for others.

If we truly want a healthier healthcare system, we must begin by caring for the caregivers.

*Dr. Julie Lynn Kantor is President, Miami-Dade County Medical Association.*

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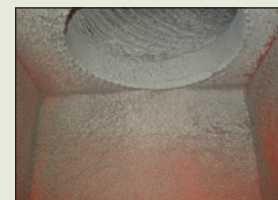
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## Healthcare Education in 2026

AI, AI, AI. Yes, Artificial Intelligence is becoming an increasingly important part of our healthcare sector. It impacts the clinical provision of care, the business of health care relating to such aspects as revenue cycles and the Return on Investment (ROI) of AI, as well as the pedagogy associated with clinical education, healthcare management, and healthcare leadership education.

In all of this focus on AI, we must remember that AI is a tool that aids in our work and our decision making, but it is not an end in itself. Ultimately, whether it be clinical practice or healthcare management and leadership, regardless of the health sector setting, it is critical thinking that remains of significant importance in assessment and effectiveness of outcomes.

Ultimately, critical thinking remains a major part of the processes and outcomes that we focus on in our undergraduate, graduate, and professional healthcare management and leadership programs.

The Miami Herbert Business School offers an Executive MBA Health Management and Policy program (HEMBA), Master of Health Administration program (MHA), a four-year MD/MBA program, and an undergraduate Health Management and Policy program. To meet evolving demand, certificate programs are now provided to the

healthcare community with focus on various aspects of health management, leadership, finance, AI, blockchain, and policy. These programs are provided regionally, nationally, and globally.

The business school-based curricula we offer in our HEMBA, MHA, MD/MBA, and undergraduate Health Management and Policy programs provide our students and alumni with essential skills; skills which are so important in our ever-changing environment. It is apparent, with all the changes in healthcare and the requirements of the sector, that people are seeking knowledge associated with management and leadership in the field.

Our rigorous academic programs have resulted in the Miami Herbert Business School becoming the third business school in the nation to earn "triple crown status" with accreditation from the three most prestigious business school accreditation organizations.

This is a distinction is a notable accomplishment achieved by fewer than 1% of all business schools globally. Accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), EFMD Quality Improvement System (EQUIS), and the Association of MBAs (AMBA) recognizes the high standards of achievement at Miami Herbert. In addition, our Health Executive MBA program and our MHA program are accredited by the Commission on

Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME), making ours the only programs in the country with all four accreditations.

The department continues to actively engage with the highly prestigious Business School Alliance for Health Management (BAHM), an elite, collaborative consortium of business school-based health management programs offering national and global resources, assuring cutting-edge curriculum, the exchange of webinars and conferences, as well as allowing our students access to a global network of fellow students.

Our Center for Health Care Management and Policy hosted its 15th annual conference, The Business of Health Care. This year, the theme was "Navigating Change." Executives from major professional organizations, including America's Health Insurance Plans, American Medical Association, Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, Healthcare Financial Management Association, Medical Group Management Association, National Medical Association, the American Nurses Association, and the head of government relations for the American Hospital Association, joined for a keynote panel discussion on strategies given the significant changes taking place in health care. The conference, with nearly 900 registrants this past year,

offered our students, regional, national and global community, alumni, and supporters unparalleled access to industry experts who are actively shaping the landscape of the healthcare sector.

The University's Center is already planning the 2027 conference, scheduled for February 12, 2027, with the theme being, "The Longevity Economy." We are coordinating high-powered panels to provide invaluable and varied perspectives on these aspects of our industry.

The students, alumni, and faculty in the University of Miami Department of Health Management and Policy continue to achieve success. Both our graduate and undergraduate student teams competed in the South Florida Chapter of the American College of Health Executives (ACHE) case competition, the National Association for Health Service Executives (NAHSE) case competition, the Penn State Health Policy and Administration case competition, Pennsylvania State's and Tulane's virtual competition, and the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) case competition. Our graduate and undergraduate students partook in internship experiences that span over fifteen health systems and organizations, located across multiple states and countries. Our undergraduate students presented their semester-long research at the Healthcare

*Continued on following page*



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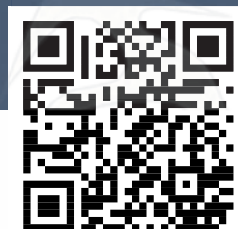
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## Investing in Graduate Medical Education is an Investment in the Future of Healthcare

BY PATRICIA ROWE-KING, MD

Every year in July, hospitals across the country welcome a new class of residents and fellows eager to begin the next chapter of their medical careers. While the annual White Coat Ceremony is a meaningful tradition, it represents something even more significant: the future of healthcare.

Graduate Medical Education (GME) is where classroom knowledge becomes clinical expertise. It is where physicians refine their skills, develop clinical judgment and learn the importance of compassionate, patient-centered care. Just as important, it is where health systems shape the next generation of physician leaders who will care for our communities for decades to come.

As healthcare continues to evolve, the demand for highly trained physicians has never been greater. An aging population, increasing patient complexity and projected physician shortages underscore the critical need to expand residency and fellowship opportunities. Health systems that invest in GME are not only strengthening their own workforce but also helping ensure patients have access to exceptional care in the future.

At Broward Health, we are proud to welcome the largest GME class in our history. This summer, 141 new residents and fellows joined our programs, bringing our GME community to 388 physicians in training across 28 residency and fellowship programs. This milestone reflects years of thoughtful growth and our commitment to preparing physicians in specialties that meet the evolving needs of our community, including cardiovascular medicine, emergency medicine, pediatrics, surgery and, most recently, obstetrics and



*This proud group of new residents and fellows are part of the largest GME class in Broward Health's history*

gynecology and pharmacy.

Growth alone, however, is not enough. The quality of medical education depends on providing residents with an environment where they can thrive academically, professionally and personally.

That is why Broward Health recently opened a new 28,250-square-foot GME training and wellness facility at Broward Health Medical Center. Purpose-built for today's learners, the center includes advanced simulation laboratories, flexible classrooms, collaborative workspaces, resident lounges, private on call suites, a medical library and dedicated wellness spaces. At five times the size of our previous facility, it reflects our commitment to modern medical education while recognizing that physician well-being is essential to delivering exceptional patient care.

Physician burnout remains one of the greatest challenges facing medicine today, particularly during residency. Supporting

residents with resources that promote resilience, collaboration and balance is no longer optional. It is an essential component of preparing physicians for long, successful careers.

Equally important are the physician educators who mentor residents throughout their training. Experienced faculty members and program directors play an invaluable role in developing clinical excellence while modeling professionalism, integrity and lifelong learning.

As Broward Health's GME program continues to grow, so does the strength of its academic leadership. This year, we welcomed some outstanding physician leaders to guide key residency programs, including Dr. Andrew Ryan Martin as Program Director for Infectious Disease and Dr. Mark Shachner as Program Director for General Surgery. Their expertise, commitment to education and passion for mentoring future physicians further strengthen the exceptional learning environment we continue to build.

Graduate medical education is ultimately about more than training physicians. It is about building healthier communities. Residents care for patients every day across our hospitals and clinical settings while learning alongside multidisciplinary teams. They bring fresh perspectives, intellectual curiosity and a commitment to evidence-based medicine that benefits



*Dr. Patricia Rowe-King with Shane Strum, President and CEO of Broward Health*

patients, colleagues and the communities they serve.

As our programs continue to expand, our commitment remains the same: to recruit exceptional residents, support them with outstanding faculty and innovative educational resources and prepare them to become compassionate physician leaders. Every investment we make today in graduate medical education strengthens the healthcare workforce our community will depend on tomorrow.

For more information about Broward Health's graduate medical education, visit [BrowardHealth.org/GME](http://BrowardHealth.org/GME).

Dr. Patricia Rowe-King is Designated Institutional Official, Broward Health Graduate Medical Education.

## Healthcare Education in 2026

*Continued on following page*

Financial Management Association's annual conference, among other impactful activities. The department faculty include Dr. Danielle Ellerbe as the academic director of the MHA program, Dr. Steven Ullmann, who continues to serve as the academic director of the HEMBA and MD/MBA programs, Dr. Michael French, the Department Chair, and Dr. Karoline Mortensen. Dr. Kelsey Moran, and our newest faculty member Dr. Alex Schulte, Ph.D. from U.C. of Berkeley. Our faculty actively publish timely research and take on editorial roles in high-impact journals, serve the community, including the national and global communities, provide insights to the local, national and global media, and hold leadership positions in the department, school, university, and on national boards.

Our courses continue to offer a variety of interdisciplinary, experiential learning opportunities. Our HEMBA public health policy class is co-taught by two former United States Health and Human Services Secretaries (Donna Shalala and Alex M. Azar II). The department hosts a

monthly distinguished speaker series open to students and faculty throughout the academic year, hosting researchers and policymakers from across the nation. The MHA, HEMBA, and MD/MBA graduate programs have attracted increasing numbers of students who desire to augment their future clinical practices and management and leadership opportunities. Our HMP department advisory board, made up of representative leaders from distinguished local, national, and global health care organizations and companies, continues to provide valuable insight.

In this era of AI and significant changes in our domestic and global healthcare environment, the mission of the Miami Herbert Business School, to develop transformative scholarship and principled leaders for business and society, is even more important than ever, and our commitment to advance and shape healthcare for a better tomorrow continues.

For more information about the University of Miami Business School, visit [herbert.miami.edu](http://herbert.miami.edu)

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## Dr. Sonia Brown's Nursing Career Transitions to Education

BY LOIS THOMSON

Sonia Brown, DNP, RN, MSN, currently Assistant Professor – College of Nursing, West Palm Beach Campus of South University, started her career as an acute care Medical Surgical nurse. However, it was what happened after patients left the hospital and went home that really attracted her attention. "I became intrigued with the fact that we had a lot of recurring patient admissions – the same patient would go home and come back in a week or two. It piqued my interest, because I wanted to see what happened when they left the hospital."

This interest resulted in Dr. Brown's introduction to home care. She explained that she became fascinated with it because it gave her the opportunity to see patients in their home environment, which she called their safe space. In a hospital setting there's anxiety, and the patients' greatest desire is to be discharged. However, Dr. Brown said that at home, "You're seeing them in a different environment. Not only was I able to do the clinical things I was supposed to do



Dr. Sonia Brown

for them in the home, but I was also able to do more teaching because they were more relaxed in their safe space." She added that it also gave her the opportunity to see what their home environment was like, because that often contributes to their health and well being, both physically and mentally.

She pointed out that home health combines education with teaching, for as much as you inform the patient, you must also inform the family – the patient's support system – because they are the drivers who manage medications, oversee dietary management, etc., and that plays a large part in keeping the patient from returning to the hospital. "That was fascinating to me and I became hooked on home care."

The combination of working in home care and realizing how much education is involved prompted Dr. Brown to switch her career into academia. Because education is such a large component of home care, she said, "I wanted to see if I could make a difference in terms of the academic preparation of nursing, that does not focus 100 percent on the clinical

self, but on the empathy that goes into it as well."

In progressing through her career, Dr. Brown earned a Bachelors Degree from Long Island University; and a Master of Science in Nursing Education, a Post-Masters in Nursing Leadership and Management, and a Doctorate of Nursing Practice – all from Walden University. She began her career in New York, but relocated to South Florida in 2001, saying, "My mother was in Florida and I'm an only child, and with an aging parent I was looking ahead." She added with a chuckle, "There was also the weather."

Dr. Brown found that South University was a good fit. "It affords me the opportunity to tap into my experience, to utilize the different academic credits I have, because there's a little bit of every component right now in my faculty role. What I like about being here in this culture is that it aligns with my overall philosophy. One of the pillars of South University is that the holism of the patient is important and I am very much a proponent of that; not only do we promote academic excellence, but we also have an environment that addresses the holism of the individual. We're talking about the sensitivity that relates to cultural, social, economic diversity that we

have in our patient population."

Despite her current focus on academia, Dr. Brown keeps her hand in the clinical side of the work. She has gone into acute care settings with groups of students, and also oversees simulation exercises. "We create a clinical environment that is a safe space, so before students get into the clinical setting where they are practicing with live patients, we create a hospital environment where they are exposed to all that they would see at a bedside."

Specifically, for example, Dr. Brown mentioned the clinic is fortunate to have high fidelity mannequins that closely mimic the hospital environment, so students are able to practice in a controlled environment before they go into live experience.

"That's what helps keep me in academia – it's not just about teaching a nurse how to give medications or teaching them how to do wound care, but also to assess – who is that patient you're performing these skills on and what makes them who they are."

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## The Lasting Impact of a Clinical Preceptor

BY AGRIPPINA FADEL

Some of the most meaningful lessons in nursing come from the people who teach by example.

Every semester, clinical preceptors across South Florida welcome Florida Atlantic University Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing students into their units, clinics and practices, sharing not only their clinical expertise, but also their compassion and approach to patient care. Through these experiences, students gain confidence, refine their skills, and begin to envision the kind of nurse they hope to become.

"The Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing is deeply grateful for the clinical partnerships that make these experiences possible," said Dean Cameron G. Duncan, Ph.D., DNP. "Our students learn alongside outstanding nurses and health care professionals in settings ranging from community practices and specialty clinics to leading health systems, including Pediatric Associates, Baptist Health, HCA Healthcare, Palm Beach Health Network and Holy Cross Health. Every preceptor invests in the future of nursing, and every preceptor makes a difference."

For Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) student Sydney, that difference

came in the Intermediate Care Unit at Holy Cross Hospital, where she worked with her preceptor, Jason.

"He made a lasting impact on my clinical experience by fostering a supportive and encouraging learning environment. His patience, professionalism and dedication to teaching helped me become more comfortable and confident in my skills. Jason consistently took the time to explain concepts, involve me in patient care and make me feel valued as a student nurse."

For fellow BSN student Joie, her clinical rotation in the Surgical Intensive Care Unit at Boca Raton Regional Hospital helped confirm where she wants to build her career.

"Entering a unit with a higher acuity than I've ever been previously exposed to, I was nervous about making mistakes, asking stupid questions and not understanding certain disease processes. My preceptor Mike never made me feel unintelligent and was excited to answer all of my questions. He has taught me so much and helped me build the confidence to practice my skills and communicate in interdisciplinary teams. Mike and all of the SICU staff at Boca Regional are team players and have confirmed to me that I have a true passion for the ICU."

The connection between academic



nursing and clinical practice is essential to the success of future nurses, Duncan said.

"Our faculty provide the foundation, and our preceptors help students bring that knowledge to life through real patient care. Together, they prepare graduates who are ready to enter the profession with confidence."

Interested in becoming a clinical preceptor? Learn more about partnering with the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing to help educate and inspire the

next generation of Nursing Owls at [bit.ly/FAUpreceptor](http://bit.ly/FAUpreceptor)

Clinical preceptors may be eligible for a six-credit tuition waiver after completing 300 hours of service, receive a certificate that may be used toward nurse practitioner recertification, enroll in continuing education certificate courses, connect with Florida Atlantic faculty and explore future adjunct or clinical faculty opportunities, and be recognized through the college's communications channels.

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## Cover Story: FAU Executive MHA Prepares the Next Generation of Healthcare Leaders

Continued from page 1

enhance organizational performance, and navigate the evolving healthcare landscape.

According to Sherien Khachiche, admissions coordinator with the College of Business Executive Education team, these courses are geared for two different audiences: those already in healthcare who seek a change from clinical or bedside care into more administrative/ leadership-focused roles, and those transitioning to healthcare who seek a switch from their current career, or who work in a specified department and seek to switch to the healthcare industry. These may include business and data analysts, HR managers, operations coordinators, program/project coordinators and more.

"Pursuing my Executive Master of Health Administration has been one of the most meaningful experiences of my career," said Engagement Consultant Kadian Goldson, '25. "It strengthened my leadership skills, expanded my understanding of healthcare systems, and gave me the confidence to take bold steps toward my future."

FAU's In-Person Executive MHA is offered in person on the Boca Raton campus every three weeks on Saturdays and Sundays. New cohort classes begin in the fall and spring and the next intake date is Aug. 29. FAU's Online Executive MHA is offered in a fully remote environment and can be completed anywhere at any time. The next intake begins on Aug. 22 for this program, which is offered in fall, spring and summer.

### Enhanced Career Opportunities

Earning an advanced degree while working full time requires commitment, but the long-term career benefits can be significant. The Executive MHA program prepares participants to manage teams, drive organizational change, and make strategic decisions that can help them qualify for supervisory, management, and executive positions.

"Our MHA coursework covers healthcare finance, operations, organizational behavior, law and policy, informatics and quality management, and more, preparing graduates to make informed decisions that improve organizational performance and patient care," says Khachiche. "Students also learn to analyze healthcare systems, improve organizational performance, and address complex challenges using data and evidence."

In addition, the programs strengthen knowledge of healthcare policy and regulations to help professionals navigate the evolving healthcare landscape and enhance communication and leadership skills by emphasizing collaboration, negotiation, conflict resolution, and executive communication.

Through the program, participants can also expand their professional networks by connecting with faculty, healthcare executives, alumni and peers. Through internships and Leadership Bootcamp experiences, students collaborate on real-world healthcare challenges while building valuable executive leadership experience.

"The program gives you practical tools and leadership skills you may not find in

other programs," said Supervisor, Medical Support Assistant Dvante Baham, '26. "Experiences like the Leadership Bootcamp provide access to different healthcare leaders and offer valuable insights from professionals in the field."

### Additional Healthcare Leadership Programs

In addition to the Executive MHA program, FAU offers a number of other options to help professionals move forward in their careers. This includes an MBA in Artificial Intelligence and an MBA in Health Administration, among others.

The MBA in Artificial Intelligence is a new concentration offered in all of FAU's MBA programs. It is designed to equip business leaders with the knowledge and skills to thrive in today's AI-driven world.

"This concentration brings advanced AI concepts into the MBA core, giving individuals the breadth of a management degree and the depth to steward AI initiatives across functions," said Khachiche, noting that competitive advantage comes from translating emerging technologies into scalable business results. The program is offered both on-site and on-line. Visit <https://business.fau.edu/masters-phd/mba-program/executive-mba/concentrations/artificial-intelligence/>.

The MBA in Health Administration prepares students to provide leadership, vision, and management for healthcare facilities such as hospitals, physician offices, group medical practices, home health care agencies, outpatient clinics, and nursing care providers. Offered on-

campus or online, this degree is designed for professionals seeking to apply business expertise within healthcare organizations.

For healthcare professionals looking to transition skills and better understand the area of reimbursement, medical billing and coding, regulatory and compliance practice, and overall office operations, FAU offers stand-alone certificates in Medical Business Management. "Any member of the public can complete them and they do not have to be active students," said Khachiche. "This is especially useful for those looking to open their own practices or seeking to advance within their current roles in these healthcare spaces."

The certificate program, offered two to three times per year depending on demand, is offered online and on-campus and is available in three modules; Anatomy, Terminology, Billing and Coding; Legal, Regulatory and Compliance Practices and Office Operations.

FAU also offers over 60 professional development programs designed and taught by subject matter experts. These include Lean Six Sigma Green Belt Certification; Fundamentals of Power BI; Introduction to Project Management; Certificate in Artificial Intelligence in Business; Certificate in Medical Business Management; Executive Certificate in Analysis; Leadership Courses for Rising Executives and more.

For more information, visit <https://business.fau.edu/masters-phd/mha>.

## Cover Story: Miami Dade College Medical Campus Looks Ahead to 2026–27

Continued from page 1

healthcare careers, strengthening experiential learning opportunities, integrating emerging technologies into the curriculum, and continuing to build strong partnerships with healthcare providers throughout South Florida."

Those priorities are especially important in a region where healthcare employers are seeking graduates who bring more than technical preparation. Clinical knowledge remains essential, but today's healthcare workforce also needs professionals who can communicate clearly, adapt to change and serve patients from diverse backgrounds.

MDC's approach centers on aligning classroom instruction with real workforce expectations. Students are prepared through clinical placements, simulation-based learning, and close collaboration with healthcare organizations that understand where staffing needs are greatest.

"South Florida continues to experience a growing demand for healthcare professionals across many disciplines, including nursing, dental hygiene, respiratory care, imaging, emergency medical services, and allied health professions," Dr. Leiba explains.

MDC's approach centers on turning workforce demand into practical preparation. Students are trained through a mix of classroom instruction, clinical placements and simulation-based learning, with input from healthcare employers who understand where the greatest needs exist.

"MDC prepares students by aligning our curriculum with industry needs, offering hands-on clinical experiences in real healthcare settings, utilizing simulation technologies, and maintaining close collaboration with healthcare employers to ensure our graduates are workforce-ready from day one," Dr. Leiba says.

For 2026–27, MDC is adding a Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene, scheduled to launch in Fall 2026. The program is part of a broader push to help healthcare professionals build on their clinical training and move into expanded roles.

"This new bachelor's degree provides dental hygienists with an opportunity to advance their education and expand their career opportunities in areas such as leadership, education, public health, and research," Dr. Leiba says.

The new degree reflects a larger trend in healthcare education: helping students and working professionals see that healthcare careers can evolve. A student may begin in direct patient care, then move into leadership, education, public health, research, health information or other specialized areas.

Technology is another part of MDC's preparation strategy, especially as healthcare programs look for ways to help students develop confidence before they enter patient-care environments.

"In addition, we continue to enhance our simulation labs and instructional technologies while strengthening partnerships with healthcare organizations to provide

students with meaningful clinical experiences and exposure to the latest practices in patient care," Dr. Leiba says.

Those relationships also keep MDC closely connected to the employers who will eventually hire many of its graduates.

"Our community partnerships are essential to student success," Dr. Leiba says. "They provide students with valuable clinical experiences where they can apply classroom knowledge in real healthcare environments under the guidance of experienced professionals."

That continuity can make clinical training more than a graduation requirement. It can become an early bridge into the workforce and a way for local employers to identify future hires.

"Many of our graduates secure employment with organizations where they completed their clinical training, making these relationships beneficial for both students and employers while strengthening the healthcare workforce throughout South Florida," Dr. Leiba says.

Another focus for the 2026–27 academic year is helping students understand the full range of healthcare career options available to them. Many students enter college with a general interest in healthcare but limited exposure to the many roles that exist beyond the most familiar professions.

MDC helps students explore those possibilities through advising, career events, industry speakers, faculty mentorship and exposure to multiple disciplines through-

out their education.

"Healthcare today offers far more career opportunities than many students initially realize," Dr. Leiba says.

For students who are interested in healthcare but unsure where they fit, Dr. Leiba encourages exploration rather than hesitation.

"My advice is to stay curious and explore your options," he says. "Healthcare is an incredibly diverse field with opportunities for individuals who enjoy direct patient care, technology, science, education, leadership, and many other areas."

The key, he adds, is to begin learning, asking questions and gaining exposure. As students move through their programs, they often discover where their strengths and interests align.

"The most important step is getting started," Dr. Leiba says. "As you gain experience, you'll discover the path that best matches your interests, talents, and passion for making a difference in people's lives."

For MDC Medical Campus, that preparation is both a student success strategy and a regional workforce strategy. As South Florida's healthcare landscape continues to evolve, the college is positioning its 2026–27 academic year around access, career mobility and practical training that connects directly to community need.

For more information, visit [mdc.edu/medical](http://mdc.edu/medical).

## Growing Intentionally: The Challenge and Opportunity Facing Health Systems



BY PIERRE MONICE

Health care leaders today face a difficult equation. Labor costs, expenses and economic pressures continue to climb, and many of the decisions shaping our industry happen outside our organizations entirely in policy, regulation and the broader economy. We're being asked to do more with less. At the same time, the need in our communities keeps growing. In South Florida, too many people still lack consistent access to care.

We can't control most of these pressures, but we still have to lead through them. That's the challenge. The opportunity is what we do about it.

At Holy Cross Health, our answer is to grow with intention. We opened a new health center and emergency care facility in Deerfield Beach this year and recently broke ground on another in Fort Lauderdale. But when I stood at that groundbreaking, what struck me wasn't the construction timeline. It was what's actually being built: access to care, so people don't put off treatment because it's too far away or too difficult to reach.

### **Growth Doesn't Mean Being Everything to Everyone**

In a market with abundant health care options, we don't have to be all things to all people. We know what we bring to the table as a faith-based institution, and our job is to double down on it: expanding where the community's need is real and sequencing investments with discipline rather than growing for growth's sake.

Philanthropy remains a cornerstone of that growth. This past fiscal year, the Holy Cross Health Foundation raised \$15.2 million, funding key investments from a new Community Pharmacy launching later this summer to recent mammography equipment upgrades at the Dorothy Mangurian Comprehensive Women's Center. As we expand into Deerfield and Downtown Fort Lauderdale, that same generosity continues to fuel both facility growth and patient care access.

As a not-for-profit system, we don't do this alone. That kind of community partnership is what allows us to keep advancing care even as costs climb, and it's a reminder that growth in this market isn't just a hospital's responsibility. It belongs to the whole community.

### **Culture Is the Hardest Thing to Scale**

Stepping into a bigger challenge doesn't change the fundamentals of leadership. It's still about people: being present, having real conversations and staying connected to those closest to the work. As an organization grows, the impact of those behaviors only grows with it. Every new facility and every new team either reinforces what makes an organization work or dilutes it.

Trust isn't built in big moments. It's built over time, in how we show up with each other every day. It doesn't automatically carry over to a new building. You have to be deliberate about it: in who you hire, how you develop leaders at each site, and whether people feel comfortable saying what's working and what isn't. Those conversations only happen when trust is already there, which is exactly why it can't be an afterthought as an organization scales.

### **Listening Is the Discipline That Makes It Work**

Some of my most valuable insights haven't come from reports or strategy sessions. They've come from walking the halls, from new hires forming their first impressions, from patients and families experiencing our organization in real time. Sitting at the top shouldn't give you all the answers. It should push you to get closer to them and to the people doing the work every day.

That discipline matters more, not less, as we grow. It's easy for leadership to get pulled into capital plans and opening timelines and lose touch with what's actually happening on the ground. The communities we serve and the colleagues delivering care every day will tell you what's working if you're present enough to hear it.

The systems that succeed in this market won't simply be the ones that build the most. They'll be the ones that grow with purpose: clear about who they are, honest about what their communities need, and disciplined about protecting quality and culture as they scale. That's the standard we hold ourselves to at Holy Cross Health today and as we continue to grow.

*Pierre Monice is President & CEO,  
Holy Cross Health.*

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## Profiles IN LEADERSHIP

### From Hidden to High Impact: How KIDZ Medical Elevated Brand Through Modern Marketing Leadership

BY VANESSA ORR

Since 1988, KIDZ Medical Services—a private, physician owned multispecialty group specializing in neonatal, pediatric, and women’s healthcare—has cared for families across South Florida. Despite longstanding partnerships with 19 hospitals across five counties, many patients were not aware that KIDZ Medical was a distinct organization, prompting leadership to strengthen its brand presence.

KIDZ’s President & CEO, Wayne Brackin, engaged marketing and brand consultant and longtime South Florida resident Amanda Gonzalez nearly three years ago to chart a new strategic direction for the brand. After a deep discovery process, Gonzalez delivered a comprehensive plan and has since become an integral part of KIDZ’s ongoing growth and visibility efforts.

“I’d remained in touch with Wayne Brackin over the years from my time at



Amanda Gonzalez

Baptist Health, and always admired his leadership and mentorship style,” Gonzalez said. “I also knew of KIDZ’s cofounders, Dr. Jorge Perez and Dr. Albert Tano, because their clinical and personal reputations preceded them. Needless to say, I was intrigued by the opportunity to support the organization’s next stage.”

Brackin was clear on what KIDZ was looking for in a marketing leader. “I

knew of her knowledge of the South Florida market, and I’d seen her lead the marketing efforts for several major facility launches, so I knew that experience would be invaluable as KIDZ prepared for its next phase of growth,” Brackin said.

That marked the start of their collective work. “We refined the brand standards and messaging while also building the infrastructure to elevate the organization’s reputation. We wanted to make sure families—and especially moms—could clearly see the depth of care, expertise, and collaboration behind the KIDZ name,” Gonzalez added.

She has since served as KIDZ’s fractional chief marketing leader while also consulting for other healthcare systems and organizations in Florida and the Midwest. Unlike a full time chief marketing officer, her consulting model provides executive level strategy through a flexible structure tailored to what each organization can sustain.

“I’m able to provide executive level guidance in a way that’s both forward thinking and adaptable,” she said. “It gives organizations the flexibility to move quickly and use their resources wisely, while ensuring they have the right level of strategic leadership at the right moment in their growth.”

Gonzalez adds that marketing leaders must keep pace with constant technology shifts—from AI and automation to personalization tools, performance tracking platforms, and patient acquisition systems. They also have to navigate fast changing market dynamics, including evolving consumer behavior, payer pressures, and competitive moves.

“What worked last year may not work today,” she said. “Marketing strategists have to be comfortable reinventing the toolkit so it’s effective for the moment, and for each unique client.”

A major focus at KIDZ has been strengthening digital and social visibility and online reputation. Where patients once relied mainly on physician referrals, today they often start with digital touchpoints—online business profiles and reviews, search results, and social media. A healthcare organization’s website isn’t the first digital impression point anymore.

To date, KIDZ Medical’s reputation and visibility have grown substantially by highlighting the expertise, training, and

evidence-based practices that define its services and patient experience. Families, partners, and the broader community now have a clearer view of the professionalism and outcomes behind the organization’s work. These efforts have also driven excellent online patient ratings and a world class-level Net Promoter Score, reflecting the high trust and satisfaction patients and partners have in KIDZ Medical’s care.

These visibility improvements have also supported KIDZ’s business growth, contributing to increased patient volume across its locations, strengthening collaboration and referral pathways with hospital partners, and bolstering recruitment efforts.

For Gonzalez, seeing that trust deepen—especially among parents, partners, and team members—has been one of the most rewarding parts of the work. “The goal is ultimately not to be an outsider; I touch their business every day, and they embrace me as part of their team,” Gonzalez said, noting that she also feels fortunate to have spent her entire career in healthcare.

From her first job as a diagnostic and surgical scheduling coordinator in pediatric neurosurgery at what was then known as Miami Children’s Hospital, to working as a patient advocate at Baptist Hospital of Miami, Gonzalez later joined Baptist Health’s outpatient services division as a marketing/PR specialist in 2005 during a period of rapid expansion.

“That was very early in the walk in/retail health era, and that role truly catapulted my career,” she said. “It was fast moving with dynamic leadership, and I learned a lot in a short time, which propelled me into corporate marketing leadership.”

After 11 years at Baptist Health, Gonzalez transitioned into academic medicine, joining the marketing communications team at Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center and later leading those efforts at UHealth—the University of Miami Health System, where she spent nearly seven years spearheading high profile brand and service line campaigns and major expansion initiatives. In the summer of 2020, during the COVID pandemic, she launched her consulting practice. Gonzalez soon landed a large Pittsburgh-based health system as her first client, a partnership that continues today.

In addition to her physician group consulting work at KIDZ, Gonzalez’s client portfolio includes academic, community, and rural health systems, as well as outpatient care operators and a healthcare professional membership organization, which she feels broadens her perspective.

“No offense to marketers who market widgets, but I feel like there’s an extra special level of meaning when people’s lives are affected by what you do,” she said. “Working alongside an organization like KIDZ, and the people who pour their expertise into caring for women and children, remains my favorite part of this relationship.”

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# Profiles IN LEADERSHIP

## HOLY CROSS HEALTH

### Mary Carter Waren, DMin

As Mission Leader at Holy Cross Health, Mary Carter Waren, D.Min. helps ensure the organization's Catholic identity remains part of everyday life across the ministry. A member of the executive leadership team, she oversees Mission Integration Essential Services including ethics, formation, mission leadership, spiritual care and the well-being of colleagues. For Carter Waren, mission is not separate from healthcare; it is reflected in how people are treated, how decisions are made and how Holy Cross Health serves its community. She helped establish the Holy Cross Health Legacy Program, helping colleagues connect the organization's values and traditions to their daily work. Carter Waren holds a bachelor's degree in music from University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, a master's in pastoral ministries from St. Thomas University and a doctorate in ministry from Barry University.



## HOLY CROSS MEDICAL GROUP

### Teresa Deasy, RN, BSN, MS

As Vice President of Operations for Holy Cross Medical Group, Teresa Deasy, R.N., BSN, M.S. helps lead a physician network of more than 200 providers serving communities across Broward County. Her responsibilities include patient access, network integrity, ambulatory growth, practice operations and oversight of key service lines. Deasy works closely with physicians, practice leaders and staff to strengthen the systems that support patient care, including recent and future growth efforts such as the opening of a new \$41 million medical facility in Deerfield Beach, the development of a more than \$57 million medical facility in Fort Lauderdale at Sunrise Blvd. and continued expansion of specialty services including ENT. A registered nurse with experience in both clinical care and health care administration, Deasy understands that expanding access to care is about making it easier for patients to get the care they need, close to home. She holds a Master of Science in Leadership and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Nova Southeastern University.



## CATHOLIC HEALTH SERVICES

### Christina Sierra-Maurici, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC

Christina Sierra-Maurici, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC, has spent more than 13 years growing alongside Catholic Health Services, advancing from Licensed Practical Nurse to Hospital Administrator through a career defined by clinical excellence and decisive leadership. Her experience spans case management, physical medicine and rehabilitation, internal medicine, infection prevention, nursing leadership, and hospital administration, giving her a rare perspective on every stage of the patient's journey.

Today, Christina leads St. Catherine's West, a 40-bed acute rehabilitation hospital, where she focuses on strengthening clinical quality, patient safety, and operational performance while fostering collaboration across multidisciplinary teams. Her leadership has helped build an environment in which accountability, innovation, and compassionate care go hand in hand.

Committed to developing the next generation of healthcare professionals, Christina invests in mentoring emerging leaders and empowering caregivers to reach their highest potential. She remains dedicated to advancing Catholic Health Services' mission by delivering exceptional care to every patient and family she serves.



## GOOD SAMARITAN MEDICAL CENTER

### Sheri Montgomery

Sheri Montgomery is the CEO of Good Samaritan Medical Center with over 25 years of healthcare leadership experience with an extensive background in hospital operational, financial and strategic excellence. She is leading the development of the next-generation, Center of Excellence on the existing Good Samaritan Campus, which will focus on healthcare, longevity and wellness in downtown West Palm Beach.

The Center of Excellence is envisioned as a catalyst for a stronger and more comprehensive healthcare ecosystem. It plans to enhance services in advanced cardiac care, cancer care, neurosciences, surgical capabilities and more.

Before being appointed as CEO for Good Samaritan Medical Center, she served as the Group CFO for the Palm Beach Health Network. Over her many years with Tenet Healthcare, Montgomery has proven herself through a variety of leadership roles, including CFO of Delray Medical Center and Coral Gables Hospital.

Montgomery is a graduate of Florida Atlantic University where she earned her Bachelor of Business Administration degree before completing her Master of Business Administration in Finance at Nova Southeastern University.



## WEST BOCA MEDICAL CENTER

### Jerad Hanlon

Jerad Hanlon is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for West Boca Medical Center. Previously, he was the Chief Operating Officer for the Palm Beach Health Network, St. Mary's Medical Center and Palm Beach Children's Hospital.

A proven healthcare leader, Hanlon excels in management and relationship building. He has extensive experience partnering with physicians to develop and grow clinical programs. Deeply committed to staff and patient care, he understands the community's needs and works to meet them.

Prior to joining Tenet Healthcare, he worked as the Chief Operating Officer for the Southside Regional Medical Center in 2011. He would later earn a promotion to become the Chief Administrative Officer for the Virginia Market.

Hanlon graduated from James Madison University with a Bachelor of Science in Health Administration and earned his Master of Health Administration from Virginia Commonwealth University.



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# Profiles IN LEADERSHIP

## MEMORIAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM DOUGLAS ROAD ER

### Cinthia Rogers, BSN, RN

Cinthia Rogers, BSN, RN, serves as director of the Memorial Healthcare System Douglas Road ER, overseeing clinical, operational and strategic functions. She also played a role in the opening of the emergency room, expanding access to high-quality emergency care across the community.

As a bedside emergency nurse, Rogers saw firsthand how strong leadership could improve both patient outcomes and the caregiver experience, inspiring her to pursue leadership. She believes leadership is about listening, removing barriers and creating opportunities for others to succeed while fostering a culture of trust, accountability and compassion.

One lesson that continues to shape Rogers' leadership is that investing in people strengthens every aspect of patient care. "Leadership is not about having all the answers," Rogers said. "When you invest in your people, listen to their perspectives and help them succeed, they will accomplish far more than you could alone."



## JOE DIMAGGIO CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

### Breanna J. Vandale, MSN, RN

Breanna J. Vandale, MSN, RN, serves as director of nursing for the Pediatric Heart Institute at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital, providing clinical and administrative oversight for pediatric cardiac services across inpatient, procedural and ambulatory settings. Although she never envisioned a career in healthcare leadership, her passion for improving systems and empowering caregivers led her to leadership roles. Vandale believes growth comes from remaining open-minded and continually challenging yourself and others to strive for excellence. Along the way, she has also learned that leading others begins with taking care of yourself. "You cannot consistently show up as your best for others if you're not taking care of yourself first," Vandale said.

One of Vandale's proudest accomplishments was leading the development of the cardiac areas for the Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital vertical expansion project, bringing inpatient, procedural and ambulatory cardiac services together to create a seamless continuum of care that will benefit patients and families for years to come.



### Megan Turetsky

Megan Turetsky serves as senior director of external affairs at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital, where she leads community partnerships and initiatives that connect families with care across Broward County. After more than a decade advocating for children through education policy, she found a natural transition into healthcare leadership, recognizing the connection between schools, community organizations and children's health.

Having spent much of her career as the youngest person in the room, Turetsky encourages emerging leaders not to underestimate the value of their ideas. "Don't discount yourself if you're the youngest person in the room," Turetsky said. "Age doesn't disqualify you from having something worth saying."

Turetsky is most proud of bringing organizations together around a shared mission, building partnerships that expand access to exceptional pediatric care. With multiple family members receiving lifesaving care within Memorial Healthcare System, the work holds deep personal meaning for her and strengthens her commitment to serving others.



## MEMORIAL HOSPITAL MIRAMAR

### Alberto Garcia, MS, RN, NE-BC

Inspired by a desire to make a meaningful difference in the lives of both patients and healthcare professionals, Alberto Garcia, MS, RN, NE-BC, serves as chief nursing officer at Memorial Hospital Miramar. With more than 20 years of nursing leadership experience spanning critical care, emergency and transplantation medicine, he brings expertise from both academic and community healthcare settings to advance patient care and evidence-based practice. Garcia's advice to emerging leaders is simple: remember that behind every difficult decision are patients and employees. "Success isn't about winning – it's about solving problems," Garcia said. "Creating a culture where people feel valued is the win."

He believes exceptional leaders create cultures where people feel valued, lead with integrity and transparency and invest in the growth of every team member. Looking ahead, Garcia sees flexibility and adaptability as essential to navigating an evolving workforce while continuing to deliver high-quality patient care.



### Carina A. Marrero, MHA

Carina A. Marrero, MHA, serves as chief operating officer at Memorial Hospital Miramar, where she oversees the hospital's daily operations and provides executive leadership for its support and ancillary departments.

A Memorial team member for 27 years, Marrero began her career as a CT technologist after discovering her passion for healthcare through HOSA in high school. She credits Memorial's commitment to developing its employees with helping shape her leadership journey. Known for her collaborative, transparent and servant-oriented leadership style, she keeps patients at the center of every decision. "My advice is to focus less on chasing titles and more on building a strong foundation through every opportunity you're given," Marrero said. "Every experience builds the skills, relationships and perspective needed to become an effective leader."

As healthcare continues to evolve, Marrero believes leaders must balance financial pressures, workforce challenges and emerging technologies while remaining adaptable and committed to improving the lives of patients, families and caregivers.



## MEMORIAL HOSPITAL PEMBROKE

### Marisa Abrahim, PharmD, MBA, BCPPS, CPh

Marisa Abrahim, PharmD, MBA, BCPPS, CPh, serves as director of pharmacy at Memorial Hospital Pembroke. Mentored by leaders who recognized her talent for process improvement, she progressed from clinical pharmacist through a series of leadership roles, driven by a passion for improving patient safety and operational excellence.

Abrahim is especially proud of leading Memorial Hospital Pembroke's retention and recognition committee, helping create a culture where team members feel seen, valued and celebrated. She believes exceptional leaders balance innovation with empathy, empowering others while building trust through collaboration.

Her advice to emerging leaders is to stay curious, listen more than you speak and build relationships rooted in trust. "People feel valued when their voices are heard and they see the impact of their feedback and suggestions," Abrahim said.

One lesson that continues to shape her leadership is that meaningful progress begins by listening.



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# Profiles IN LEADERSHIP

## MEMORIAL HOSPITAL WEST

### Angela Arnold, DPT

Angela Arnold, DPT, serves as director of rehabilitative services at Memorial Hospital West, providing leadership for acute care and outpatient rehabilitation programs while overseeing a team of 130 employees. Her path to healthcare began as a patient after a knee injury at age 15, when months of rehabilitation inspired her to become a physical therapist. Years later, she returned to that same clinic to help guide others through their own recovery.

Known for a leadership style that is fair, transparent and grounded in unwavering support, Dr. Arnold encourages emerging leaders to stay resilient, embrace continuous growth and lead with authenticity. "Stay fiercely committed to your goals," Dr. Arnold said. "Resilience is forged on the hardest days." She credits much of her leadership success to building highly engaged teams that deliver exceptional patient care. Dr. Arnold believes healthcare leaders must embrace innovation while preserving the human connection that remains at the heart of healing.



### Geisy Roca, MSN, FNP-C, AAPRN

Geisy Roca, MSN, FNP-C, AAPRN, serves as director of nursing for MedSurg/Telemetry Services in the Central Tower at Memorial Hospital West. Inspired to develop people and empower teams, she believes strong leadership creates the foundation for exceptional patient outcomes.

Roca encourages emerging healthcare leaders to lead with humility, remain curious and never stop investing in people. "Take the time to listen, seek feedback and learn from every experience," Roca said.

Among her proudest accomplishments is implementing highly reliable care processes that helped sustain exceptionally low healthcare-associated infection rates, including zero infections in most units for more than 12 consecutive months.

Roca focuses on building a culture of trust, accountability and continuous learning while developing future leaders and supporting high-performing teams. As healthcare continues to evolve, she believes one of the greatest challenges is building and sustaining a resilient workforce while adapting to advancing technology and rising patient expectations.



## MEMORIAL REGIONAL HOSPITAL

### Rita A. Bunch, MPH, FACHE

Rita A. Bunch, MPH, FACHE, serves as chief operating officer at Memorial Regional Hospital, where she aligns teams and processes to deliver safe, seamless care across the organization. Partnering with leaders across the hospital, she focuses on improving patient flow, elevating quality and ensuring teams have the support they need to succeed.

Bunch believes exceptional healthcare leaders combine resilience with compassion, building trust through genuine relationships while guiding organizations through constant change. One lesson that continues to shape her leadership is the importance of balancing strength with humanity. "Allowing my team to see my humanness fosters trust and connection without diminishing confidence in my leadership," Bunch said.

She strives to lead with clarity, purpose and heart, believing that when teams feel supported, patients receive the highest quality care. For Bunch, that commitment is reinforced each day by the simple truth that her team's work changes lives.



## MEMORIAL REGIONAL HOSPITAL

### Yesenia Taveras, MBA, BSN, RN, CHFN

Yesenia Taveras, MBA, BSN, RN, CHFN, serves as senior director of the Cardiac & Vascular Institute at Memorial Regional Hospital, overseeing specialized cardiovascular programs, including advanced heart failure, mechanical circulatory support, adult heart and kidney transplant and cardiovascular surgery. Inspired to make a broader impact beyond direct patient care, she pursued healthcare leadership to strengthen systems, support teams and build environments where people can thrive.

Taveras believes leadership is built on trust, integrity and supporting others through both challenges and successes. "Lead with authenticity, stay open to learning and never underestimate the value of listening to the people around you," Taveras said. She is especially proud of helping grow Memorial's advanced cardiovascular programs over the past decade, contributing to the institute's designation as an American College of Cardiology HeartCARE Center National Distinction of Excellence while fostering a culture focused on exceptional patient care.



## MEMORIAL REGIONAL HOSPITAL SOUTH

### Alicia Charles

Alicia Charles leads Support Services at Memorial Regional Hospital South, providing strategic oversight for Food & Nutrition and Environmental Services while leading more than 75 frontline team members. Her path to healthcare leadership began during a dietetic internship, where a mentor demonstrated how thoughtful leadership could shape both patient care and organizational success.

Colleagues describe Charles' leadership style as transformational, grounded in empowering others, fostering collaboration and leading with integrity. As healthcare evolves, she believes leaders must remain adaptable to attract, engage and develop the next generation of professionals.

Charles is especially proud of developing Memorial Healthcare System's Dietetic Internship Program – the first healthcare system-based program of its kind in Broward County – helping strengthen the future nutrition workforce.

She encourages emerging leaders to lead with passion, embrace continuous learning and remain authentic. "When integrity is at the core of your leadership, it becomes a steady guide for everything," Charles said.



### Jennifer Lanthorn

Jennifer Lanthorn serves as director of post-acute admissions at Memorial Regional Hospital South, helping patients transition from acute care to rehabilitation after illness or injury. Combining operations, business development and care coordination, she works to ensure patients receive the right care at the right time.

Lanthorn began her healthcare career 30 years ago as a certified occupational therapy assistant before discovering a passion for post-acute care and healthcare leadership. Inspired by mentors who encouraged her to develop others, she now takes pride in helping others grow into leadership roles.

She encourages emerging leaders to build a strong foundation and seek mentors who will challenge them. "The most impactful leaders take time to build knowledge and experience before stepping into leadership," Lanthorn said.

Lanthorn believes successful teams are built when everyone understands their role, feels valued and works toward a shared purpose. As healthcare evolves, Lanthorn believes its core remains the same: helping people.



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# Profiles IN LEADERSHIP

## BROWARD HEALTH MEDICAL CENTER

### Simon Blanc, MD

As the new Medical Director of Hematology-Oncology at Broward Health Medical Center, Simon Blanc, M.D., leads with a commitment to clinical excellence, collaboration and education.

Triple board certified in internal medicine, hematology and oncology, Dr. Blanc actively mentors the next generation of physicians through Broward Health's Graduate Medical Education residency and fellowship programs. Fluent in Arabic and French, he is dedicated to delivering compassionate, patient centered cancer care to South Florida's diverse community.

"Leadership in medicine begins with listening," said Dr. Blanc. "By empowering our teams, embracing innovation and never losing sight of what's best for our patients, we create an environment where both caregivers and those we serve can thrive."

Dr. Blanc earned his medical degree through a joint program between Université Saint Esprit de Kaslik in Lebanon and Faculté François Rabelais de Tours in France.



### Kevin E. Mnich, MSN, RN, LSSGB

Kevin E. Mnich, MSN, RN, LSSGB, recently joined Broward Health Imperial Point as Director of Behavioral Health Services, where he oversees nursing, case management, social work, utilization review and therapy services.

A strategy-focused healthcare leader with more than 20 years of acute care experience, Mnich is recognized for building high-performing teams, strengthening physician relationships and fostering a culture of collaboration and staff engagement. Passionate about continuous improvement, he leads initiatives that enhance quality, patient safety, financial performance and the patient experience while supporting staff satisfaction and professional growth.

"Caring for people is a privilege that deserves nothing less than a relentless pursuit of improvement," Mnich said.

He earned his Master of Science in Nursing from Chamberlain University and his Bachelor of Science in Nursing from The College of New Jersey.



### Sandra Marte, RN

Sandra Marte, R.N., is nurse manager III of the emergency room at Broward Health Medical Center, where she leads a team of over 100. During her seven years at Broward Health, she has advanced from registered nurse to nurse manager.

"Every day I strive to lead by being present, approachable and supportive of my team," Marte said. "To me, leadership means putting my heart and soul into every aspect of this role. It means showing up for my team, building trust and supporting the growth and success of those around me so we can deliver exceptional care together."

Marte also works with new graduate registered nurses as they transition into one of the hospital's most demanding clinical settings.

Marte is a member of the Emergency Nurses Association, the American Nurses Association and the Florida Nurses Association. She earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from American Sentinel College and is currently pursuing a master's in nursing at Florida International University.



## BROWARD HEALTH CORAL SPRINGS

### Ashley Dabalsa, PharmD, MBA

Ashley Dabalsa, PharmD, MBA, is the pharmacy clinical and operations coordinator at Broward Health Coral Springs, where she oversees clinical pharmacy services, pharmacy operations, regulatory compliance and sterile compounding. In just two years, she advanced from pharmacy resident to pharmacy leader, demonstrating exceptional dedication to servant leadership and operational excellence.

A Lean Six Sigma Green Belt, Dabalsa has led initiatives that strengthen medication safety, improve operational efficiency and support financial stewardship while building successful teams. She is passionate about mentoring future leaders and fostering a culture of collaboration and accountability.

"I believe we are called to lead by serving others," said Dabalsa. "True leadership is measured by how many people you empower to grow, lead and make a lasting impact."



## BROWARD HEALTH IMPERIAL POINT

### Laura Ham, MSPT

As Regional Manager of Rehabilitation Services at Broward Health, Laura Ham, MSPT, brings more than 23 years of experience leading rehabilitation programs across acute care, inpatient rehabilitation and outpatient settings. Based primarily at Broward Health Imperial Point, she oversees multidisciplinary rehabilitation teams dedicated to delivering exceptional patient care while fostering a culture of collaboration, accountability and clinical excellence.

Ham believes "the greatest privilege of leadership is helping others grow into the best version of themselves while never losing sight of why we're here: to improve the lives of our patients." That philosophy guides her commitment to mentoring clinicians, developing high-performing teams and advancing rehabilitation services across Broward Health.

She earned her Master of Science in Physical Therapy, has served as a clinical excellence instructor, been published in American Physical Therapy Association publications and remains active in professional education and mentorship.



### Bradley Pettdos, RN

Bradley Pettdos, R.N., is assistant nurse manager of the Emergency Department at Broward Health Coral Springs, where he helps oversee daily operations, staff scheduling and exceptional patient care in one of the hospital's busiest departments.

A Broward Health team member for nearly 20 years, Pettdos began his career as a paramedic before advancing into nursing. Throughout his career, he has remained committed to clinical excellence and developing the next generation of nurse leaders.

"True nursing leadership is measured not by the authority we hold but by the comfort we provide, the courage we instill and the confidence we inspire in others," Pettdos said.

In 2025, he helped launch Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) training for ER nurses. In 2026, Pettdos collaborated with fellow leaders to coordinate Operation Night Owl disaster preparedness training, strengthening partnerships with local emergency medical services agencies and enhancing the community's emergency response capabilities.



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# Profiles IN LEADERSHIP

## BROWARD HEALTH NORTH

### Cornelius Powell, MD, MBA, CHCQM

As the new chief medical officer at Broward Health North, Cornelius Powell, M.D., MBA, CHCQM, brings more than two decades of experience leading hospital operations, physician engagement and healthcare innovation. A board-certified emergency physician and U.S. Army Special Forces medic, he has advanced initiatives focused on quality, safety and exceptional patient care.

"My goal is to empower our teams, strengthen collaboration and ensure every patient receives the highest level of care," said Dr. Powell. "Strong physician leadership and innovation are essential to building a healthier future for the communities we serve."

Dr. Powell earned his Doctor of Medicine from East Tennessee State University and a Master of Business Administration from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management.



### Madison Workman, FACHE

Madison Workman, FACHE, is chief operating officer of Broward Health North, a 409-bed, Level II trauma hospital, overseeing daily operations, strategic initiatives and a workforce of approximately 800 employees. He also leads Broward Health's Safety and Security Program and is managing more than \$60 million in capital projects.

Workman oversees the Chief Operating Council that has driven operational efficiencies and standardized processes to ensure consistency across the district and new equipment to elevate the level of care.

"Great healthcare starts with great teams," said Workman. "My focus is creating an environment where employees feel valued and empowered to deliver exceptional care."

An American College of Healthcare Executives Fellow and current board member, Workman earned his Master of Healthcare Administration and Bachelor of Science in Health Science from University of Florida. He was recognized as one of Becker's Hospital Review's 2024 Rising Stars: Healthcare Leaders Under 40 and a 2025 South Florida Business Journal 40 Under 40 Honoree.



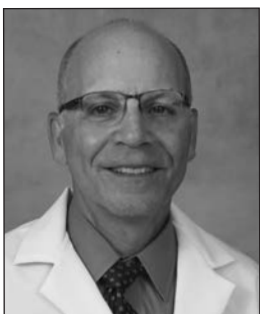
## MAKING ROUNDS...MAKING ROUNDS...MAKING ROUNDS...MAKING ROUNDS...MAKING ROUNDS...

### Prominent Urogynecologist Peter Rosenblatt, MD, Joins Holy Cross Medical Group

South Florida urogynecologist Peter Rosenblatt, M.D., has joined Holy Cross Medical Group. He brings 35 years of subspecialty experience in treating pelvic floor prolapse, overactive bladder and incontinence issues, common conditions that are often a source of embarrassment and cause women to suffer in silence.

Dr. Rosenblatt graduated from Brown University with a Bachelor of Arts in biopsychology and earned his medical degree from Tufts University School of Medicine. He completed an internship and residency in obstetrics and gynecology at University of Massachusetts Medical School, as well as a fellowship in urogynecology and pelvic reconstructive surgery at Brown University School of Medicine, Women & Infants' Hospital.

Dr. Rosenblatt previously worked at Mount Auburn Hospital, Beth Israel-Deaconess Medical Center, Newton-Wellesley Hospital and New England Medical Center in Massachusetts, as well as Catholic Medical Center in New Hampshire. An innovator and industry leader, Dr. Rosenblatt has written research papers and is a sought-after speaker regionally, nationally and internationally. He has served on the Board of Directors for both the American Urogynecologic Society (AUGS) and the Society of Gynecologic Surgeons (SGS) and was President of SGS from 2019 to 2020.



Dr. Peter Rosenblatt

### Alexander Kong, MD, Joins Baptist Health Heart & Vascular Care

Cardiologist Alexander Kong, M.D., has joined Baptist Health Miami Cardiac & Vascular Institute. Dr. Kong completed a fellowship in cardiovascular diseases at Orlando Health Orlando Regional Medical Center, where he received training in interventional and structural echocardiography, cardiac CT, nuclear cardiology, vascular ultrasound, cardiac critical care and cardiac catheterization. Before completing his fellowship, Dr. Kong served as chief resident in quality improvement and patient safety for the Orlando VA Healthcare System and University of Central Florida/HCA Florida. He also worked as an academic hospitalist and assistant professor of medicine, mentoring residents and medical students while contributing to patient safety and quality improvement initiatives.



Dr. Alexander Kong

### Sanjeev Kumar Gulati, MD, FACC, Joins Baptist Health Heart & Vascular Care

Advanced heart failure and transplant cardiologist Sanjeev Kumar Gulati, M.D., FACC, has joined Baptist Health Heart & Vascular Care, and will serve as executive deputy director and system chief of cardiovascular medicine. Prior to joining Baptist Health, Dr. Gulati served as chief of adult cardiology at Sanger Heart & Vascular Institute, part of Advocate Health. Dr. Gulati earned his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania after graduating summa cum laude from George Washington University with a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. He completed his internal medicine residency at Johns Hopkins Hospital, where he also completed fellowships in cardiology and advanced heart failure as well as in transplant cardiology.



Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Gulati

### Sohemi Pagán León, MD, Joins Baptist Health Primary Care as an Internal Medicine Physician

Sohemi Pagán León, M.D., has joined Baptist Health Primary Care.

Prior to joining Baptist Health, Dr. Pagán León completed a fellowship in geriatric medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and an internal medicine residency at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center in Baltimore.

Dr. Pagán León earned her medical degree from Ponce Health Sciences University School of Medicine in Ponce, Puerto Rico. She completed her internal medicine residency at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center and a fellowship in geriatric medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.



Dr. Sohemi Pagán León



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

## Lisbet at Wellington Bay Welcomes Ketton Williams as New Memory Care Director

Lisbet at Wellington Bay is proud to announce the appointment of Ketton Williams as its new Memory Care Director.

Ketton joins the team as a highly compassionate nursing professional and an experienced leader in senior living. With several years of specialized experience in assisted living and memory care, she is a dedicated advocate for older adults. Her extensive background includes overseeing memory care operations, leading multidisciplinary teams, and ensuring that residents living with cognitive impairments receive dignified, person-centered support.

Ketton is widely recognized for her strong leadership in staff development, clinical oversight, and regulatory compliance. She excels at guiding care teams to deliver structured, engaging, and therapeutic environments that enhance safety and quality of life for residents. Her collaborative and accountable leadership style fosters a deep culture of compassion and excellence among caregivers. With a strong commitment to supporting both residents and families, Ketton works diligently to ensure that programs provide robust clinical care alongside meaningful emotional well-being.



**Ketton Williams**

## Lee Health Welcomes Heather Brandon as Vice President of Financial Services

Lee Health has appointed healthcare finance executive Heather Brandon, CPA, as vice president of financial services. Most recently, Brandon was the vice president of finance and system corporate controller at OhioHealth in Columbus, OH. She previously held the roles of hospital chief financial officer at Grant Medical Center and director of hospital support. Earlier in her career, she was controller and accounting manager for The Ohio State University's clinical services division.

Brandon earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from Ohio Wesleyan University and has significant experience serving on boards in healthcare joint ventures, start-ups, banking, transportation and linen services.



**Heather Brandon**

## HCA Florida JFK North Hospital Names Sandhya Henry Vice President of Quality

HCA Florida JFK North Hospital is pleased to announce the promotion of Sandhya Henry, MHA, BSN, RN, CPPS, to Vice President of Quality.

Henry joined HCA Florida JFK North Hospital in 2022 as Director of Patient Safety and Risk Management and has been a driving force behind the hospital's commitment to quality, patient safety, and continuous improvement.

A registered nurse with more than 20 years of healthcare leadership experience, Henry holds a Master of Healthcare Administration, a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, and is a Certified Professional in Patient Safety (CPPS). Prior to joining HCA Florida JFK North Hospital, she held leadership positions with Trinity Health and Henry Ford Health System, leading enterprise-wide quality, clinical operations, and healthcare improvement initiatives.



**Sandhya Henry**

## VITAS® Healthcare Promotes Bryan Wysong to Chief Operations Officer

VITAS Healthcare announced the promotion of Bryan Wysong to chief operations officer (COO). As executive vice president and COO, Wysong will lead companywide operations across VITAS, overseeing hospice care delivery, high acuity services, operational performance, quality improvement, home medical equipment and palliative care services.

Since joining VITAS in 2014 as an internal management consultant, Wysong has held leadership roles of increasing responsibility, including senior director, vice president, head of high acuity services and senior vice president of operational performance. Throughout his tenure, he has helped strengthen operations and support the continued growth of the organization.

Wysong has served on multiple committees for the National Alliance for Care at Home, including the Quality and Standards and Government Affairs committees. He earned an executive MBA from the University of Michigan and bachelor's degrees from The Ohio State University.



**Bryan Wysong**

## Sam Boadi Named CEO of South Tampa and West Tampa Hospitals

HCA Florida Healthcare announces that Samuel "Sam" Boadi has been promoted to chief executive officer (CEO) of HCA Florida South Tampa and West Tampa Hospitals.

Earlier in his career, Boadi served as COO of HCA Florida Lake City Hospital. He also held leadership roles at HCA Florida North Florida Hospital in Gainesville, where he served as vice president of operations and associate administrator. His HCA Healthcare career also includes time with Parkridge Health System and TriStar Health Workplace Partners.

Boadi earned a Master of Health Administration from the University of Memphis, a Master of Science in kinesiology from the University of Tennessee and a Bachelor of Science in kinesiology from the University of Tennessee. He is a graduate of HCA Healthcare's Executive Development Program, the inaugural Executive Residency Program and Early Careerist Collaborative.



**Sam Boadi**

## South Broward Hospital District Board of Commissioners Re-Elects Officers

The South Broward Hospital District Board of Commissioners, the governing body of Memorial Healthcare System, unanimously reelected its officers during its July 22 board meeting.

Elizabeth Justen was re-elected chair; Steven Harvey was re-elected vice chair and Douglas Harrison was re-elected secretary/treasurer.

Justen serves as Chair of the South Broward Hospital District Board of Commissioners, which oversees Memorial Healthcare System. Appointed by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis in 2020 and reappointed in 2025, Justen has been elected Chair by her fellow commissioners each year since 2023. Justen also serves as Executive Director of the Sheriff's Foundation of Broward County.

Harvey continues his role as Vice Chair of the South Broward Hospital District Board of Commissioners. He was appointed to the Board by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis in 2020. Harvey serves as assistant dean of operations and administration at Nova Southeastern University.

Harrison returns as Secretary/Treasurer of the South Broward Hospital District Board of Commissioners and has previously held the role of Chair. He was appointed to the Board by then-Governor Rick Scott in 2013. Douglas Harrison is an attorney with over 30 years of experience. He is general counsel of Blue Mountain Analytics.

Additional commissioners serving on the Board include Brad Friedman, Violet Lowrey, Laura Raybin Miller and Diana Taub.

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

## Broward Health Celebrates Second Freestanding Emergency Room with Ribbon Cutting

Broward Health leadership and physicians, elected officials and the community recently gathered to celebrate the opening of the freestanding Broward Health Sunrise Emergency Room that offers quicker access to high-quality treatment and often shorter wait times for residents in western Broward County.

This is the first freestanding emergency room in the City of Sunrise and is the second Broward Health has opened in June. The first freestanding emergency room opened in the City of Lighthouse Point earlier this month. Together, the new freestanding emergency departments reflect Broward Health's ongoing commitment to bringing lifesaving care closer to the communities it serves.

The new 16,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art Broward Health Sunrise ER delivers the same level of expert care as a hospital-based emergency department, with the convenience of a neighborhood location.

Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, the Broward Health Sunrise ER is fully licensed to provide emergency care for adults and children. Key features include 15 private exam rooms, dedicated resuscitation rooms and advanced diagnostic imaging, including X-ray and CT services for both adult and pediatric patients. Individuals requiring hospitalization or specialized treatment will be seamlessly transferred to Broward Health's integrated network of hospitals, physicians and specialty services. Broward Health anticipates that nearly 15,000 emergency patients will be treated at the new facility annually.

The freestanding emergency room was designed by HKS Architects, built by Skanska and developed with Concord Healthcare Development serving as the owner's representative.



**Broward Health leadership and city officials cut the ribbon at the Broward Health Sunrise ER**

## Holy Cross Health Earns "LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality High Performer" Designation

Holy Cross Health announced it earned the "LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality High Performer" designation from the Human Rights Campaign Foundation (HRC). The honor was awarded as part of HRC's 2026 Healthcare Equality Index (HEI), the industry standard benchmarking tool for LGBTQ+ inclusion and equity practices in the healthcare field, conducted every two years.

Holy Cross Health is one of only three health care organizations statewide to receive a top-tier HEI 2026 designation, and the only acute care hospital in Florida to do so — underscoring the health system's distinct role in delivering LGBTQ+-inclusive, full-service acute care to South Florida.

"At Holy Cross Health, we are committed to providing every patient with access to safe, respectful, compassionate and dignified care," said Pierre Monice, MBA, FACHE, President and CEO of Holy Cross Health. "We are proud, once again, to have earned the High Performer designation from HRC."



**Members of the Holy Cross Health community outreach team at the 2026 Stonewall Pride event in Wilton Manors, Florida**

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## Memorial Healthcare System Opens Douglas Road ER in Pembroke Pines

The South Broward Hospital District Board of Commissioners, elected officials, community leaders and other stakeholders recently celebrated the new Memorial Healthcare System Douglas Road ER with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The event marked the transformation of Memorial's longtime 24/7 Care Center into a larger, more advanced freestanding emergency room that expands access to high-level emergency care for residents of Broward and Miami-Dade counties.

The new freestanding emergency room officially opens to the public in August 2026. The expanded 30,000-square-foot facility was designed to provide rapid emergency care for adults and children while remaining fully connected to Memorial Healthcare System's network of hospitals, specialists and follow-up care services.

Unlike urgent care centers, Douglas Road ER is a licensed emergency department of Memorial Hospital Pembroke, equipped to provide advanced diagnostics, initial trauma stabilization and emergency care 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The facility features 41 treatment spaces, including 18 private adult treatment rooms, four dedicated pediatric treatment rooms, 16 fast-track rooms, five triage bays, a trauma and resuscitation room, a dedicated procedure room, a bariatric room and a quiet room. Advanced imaging capabilities include 24-hour CT scans, X-rays and ultrasound, along with a full-service on-site laboratory to support fast, efficient emergency evaluation and treatment.



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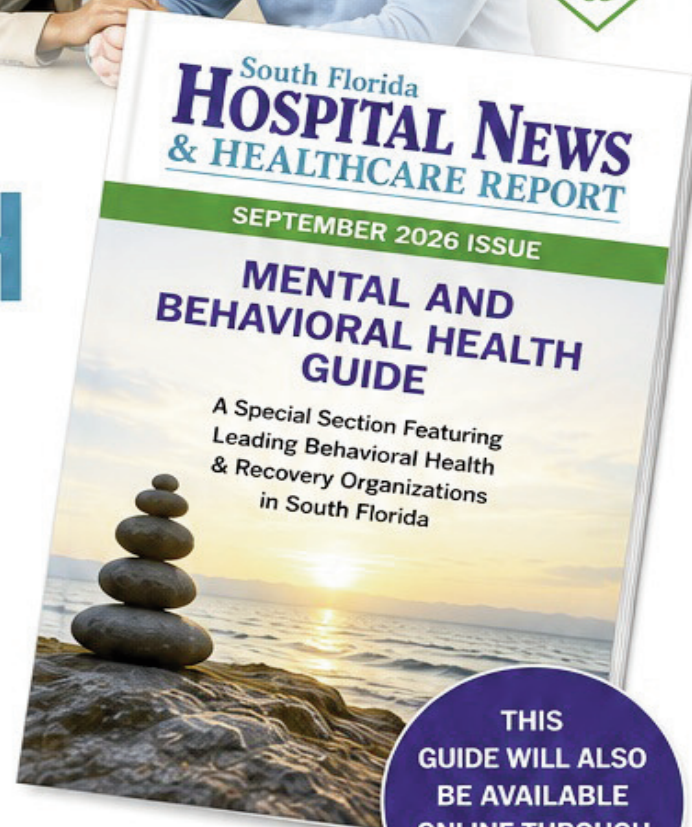
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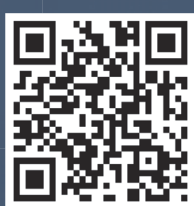
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