



# 01

## OPENLINES

# FOSTERING STRONGER BONDS WITH A GENTLE TOUCH

UF Health offers gentle cesarean sections to benefit mother and baby.

## 03

### North by the Numbers

UF Health North serves more patients, offers more services.

## 04

### COVER STORY

UF Health provides birth alternative that benefits mom and baby.

## 07

### Research Recruitment

Participants needed for a \$2.1 million research project addressing obesity.



**It is through your ongoing, exceptional service that we will continue to be “the region’s most valued health care asset.”**

Three years ago on a bright, sunny morning, the ribbon was cut and the UF Health North medical office building opened to the public. North eventually became the first hospital UF Health built from the ground up in Jacksonville, providing more families in North Florida and South Georgia with greater access to our high-quality health care.

Since the opening of the medical office building and bed tower expansion, UF Health North has continued to see a steady increase in the number of patients served and services offered. Last year, more than 41,500 patients visited UF Health North’s Emergency Department and almost 57,000 people received specialized care from our physicians. Among the new services, expectant mothers who are scheduled to deliver by cesarean section can now do so using a new technique. Gentle C-sections provide small changes to the procedure that make it more family-centered.

UF Health Jacksonville and University of Florida Jacksonville Physicians Inc. are also committed to enhancing the patient experience and have been nationally recognized for their efforts. All 34 of the UF Health Jacksonville and UFJP family medicine, pediatric and internal medicine practices have been recognized as Level 3 Patient-Centered Medical Homes by the National Committee of Quality Assurance. This designation indicates our practices strengthen the patient-provider relationship by providing highly coordinated care using a team-based approach and effective use of technology, such as the MyUFHealth web portal and MyChart mobile app.

As we continue to grow our impact through the health care, education, innovation and research we conduct at UF Health Jacksonville, UF Health North, our primary care and specialty practices, and the University of Florida’s colleges of Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy, our ultimate success relies on our patients’ well-being. Each of you directly or indirectly touch our patients’ lives, and it is through your ongoing, exceptional service that we will continue to be “the region’s most valued health care asset.”

Sincerely,



Leon L. Haley Jr., MD, MHSA, CPE, FACEP



#### HR CORNER

### Launching New Leaders

The 2018 training and development course catalog and schedule are now available on HealthStream. This year, a number of new courses are being offered in a variety of formats, such as classroom, e-learning, one-hour microsessions and work groups. The courses are available at UF Health Jacksonville and UF Health North, with several available through live streaming.

To view the catalog or sign up for a course, UF Health Jacksonville and UFJP employees must sign into HealthStream from the Bridge by going to the Employee Services tab and clicking on the HealthStream link located under HR, Admin and Benefits.

# NORTH BY THE NUMBERS

UF Health North sees continued success with strong year-opening figures.

Three years ago, UF Health North changed the landscape of Jacksonville when the \$140 million medical office building opened to the public Feb. 17, 2015. Last May, the campus nearly doubled in size and services with the \$85 million bed tower expansion, and the year-end totals for 2017 show that the progress of North Jacksonville's only full-service hospital continues.

UF Health North became fully operational with the opening of the Labor and Delivery Unit in August. The hospital provides more than 100 specialty and subspecialty services, using the latest equipment and surgical methods.

Advancements in obstetric care include the Novii wireless fetal monitoring system, which allows laboring mothers to move around their suites instead of remaining in bed attached to equipment. In addition, nitrous oxide is an option for early labor pain management before an epidural is administered or as an alternative to an epidural. Innovative methods in cesarean section deliveries now provide a more involved, compassionate approach to surgical births.

"We're really proud that we've been able to continue the success of the North campus with the opening of the new hospital," said Wayne Marshall, vice president of UF Health North.

Nearly 90 percent of patients admitted through the Emergency Department stayed at UF Health North, with the remaining 10 percent transferred

to the downtown campus. With the bed tower expansion, orthopaedic surgery, women's specialists and the Neuroscience Institute moved into their own dedicated office suites. Overall, UF Health North continues to have high volumes, with an average of 60 patients a day.

"Our commitment to providing our patients with the highest-quality care possible remains at the forefront of all our efforts," Marshall said.

UF Health North's administration closely monitors patient satisfaction scores and regularly reports feedback to staff. In fact, the Emergency Department and outpatient surgery center were recognized with Patient Satisfaction 5-Star Awards for Overall Quality of Care by Professional Research Consultants Inc.

Linda Lawson, associate vice president of Nursing, looks to her strong, professional staff to make 2018 a year of sustained, high ratings from patients.

"It will require constant vigilance to perform at the highest level in employee, patient and quality standards," Lawson said.

Marshall anticipates another prosperous year of continued growth for UF Health North by performing more robotic-assisted surgeries, offering additional complex procedures, such as spine and other neurosurgeries, and delivering more babies every month.

## 92

LICENSED BEDS

## 3,591

ADMISSIONS

5/23/17-12/31/17

## 187

BIRTHS (8/15/17-1/25/18)

93 BOYS AND 94 GIRLS

## 41,592

ER VISITS

## 56,906

SPECIALTY VISITS  
TO UF PHYSICIANS



# FOSTERING STRONGER BONDS WITH A GENTLE TOUCH

**UF Health offers gentle cesarean sections to benefit mother and baby.**

When a mother imagines her child's birth, she envisions laboring, pushing, sweating and finally having her newborn placed on her chest. Cesarean sections are rarely part of that dream, and leave many mothers feeling like they missed out on a true birth experience.

Studies show skin-to-skin contact immediately after birth improves breastfeeding rates, infant cardiorespiratory stability and blood glucose levels. Most mothers who deliver vaginally get that skin-to-skin contact, but mothers who have C-sections may not be able to touch, or even see, their newborns for some time — the infants are often whisked off to a pediatrician before meeting mom.

Obstetricians at UF Health North have taken a different approach by offering gentle C-sections. Brent Seibel, MD, medical director of UF Health Women's Specialists – North, says gentle C-sections are procedurally the same as traditional C-sections, but they focus on the patient's experience.

"We try to make it as similar as possible to a vaginal birth experience while maintaining a safe and sterile environment," Seibel said. "We have a clear C-section drape, so mothers can visualize as much of the delivery as they are comfortable with. Traditional C-sections involve strapping down the arms to arm boards and

putting up a big blue drape, which creates a barrier between patient and surgeon. We would do the C-section without much acknowledgment for mom, focusing on getting the baby out and off to the pediatrician. Now we emphasize reuniting mother and baby as soon as possible."

During gentle C-sections, mothers are alert and receive enough regional anesthesia to feel no pain from the procedure. While partners have always been welcome in the operating room, they can now bring a doula. Moms can even play music. After delivery, the baby is immediately placed on the mother's chest unless medical intervention is needed.

"Skin-to-skin contact and breastfeeding in the room before the surgery is even completed is a goal as well," Seibel said.

Heather Fails, a UF Health labor and delivery nurse, experienced these differences firsthand. Her 3-year-old son, Rowan, was delivered via traditional C-section. Her daughter, Winry, was born Dec. 12, 2017, at UF Health North using gentle C-section techniques.

"As I was going in for a C-section, Dr. Seibel asked me if I'd be interested in the new procedure. I said, 'absolutely.'"

Heather couldn't see her incision, but she could see Winry. "Dr. Seibel held her up to the clear plastic for me the moment she was born so I could see her, just like a vaginal birth mom would. I didn't get to see my son until he was already a few minutes old. With my son, I don't remember a lot of it. But with her, it's a lasting memory because I saw it."

As a mother who has had both types of C-sections, Fails said the gentle C-section provided her a birth experience she can treasure. "I definitely felt more involved in the whole process instead of it being something that happened to me," she said.

A study at Charité University Hospital in Berlin, Germany, found that when comparing gentle and traditional C-sections, there was no increase in complications for mother or child. The study also showed mothers who underwent gentle C-sections had improved breastfeeding rates and overall better experiences.

"We're focusing on labor and delivery experiences that are patient-centered — that's our philosophy," Seibel said. "We're going to give you the same respect and as many opportunities offered during a vaginal delivery that we safely can in an operating room setting. We respect the patient's wishes in the OR, just as we would try to fulfill her birth plan during a vaginal delivery."

Visit [North.UFHealthJax.org/ob-gyn](http://North.UFHealthJax.org/ob-gyn) for more information or to make an appointment at UF Health Women's Specialists – North.





# Connecting Beyond the Clinic

**The National Committee for Quality Assurance recognizes 34 UF Health internal medicine, pediatric and primary care practices for enhancing patient-physician partnerships.**

Every patient seen by a UF Health primary care physician also receives care from a team of experts who are all working to keep them well. From the medical assistant who takes their vital signs to the registered nurse who assists with medications and treatment, each uses evidence-based, patient-focused processes that enhances the patient experience and targets improved outcomes.

"We are committed to making sure our patients get what they need long after their 15-minute appointments with their providers," said Alexanderia Burwell, the Patient-Centered Medical Home consultant. "Established care teams and the use of technology allow patients to have continuous connections with providers for close monitoring of clinical measures and their health care needs."

In December, the National Committee for Quality Assurance, or NCQA, designated UF Health Jacksonville and University of Florida Jacksonville Physicians Inc., the faculty practice plan, as Level 3 Patient-Centered Medical Home providers for using this model of care. This is the second time all 34 of the UF Health internal medicine, pediatric and primary care practices have received the three-year designation. In addition, they are the first health organizations in Northeast Florida as well as the largest academic medical group in the state to receive this recognition.

"We are incredibly proud of achieving this status," said Nipa Shah, MD, a professor and chair of community health and family medicine at the University of Florida College of Medicine – Jacksonville. "We take pride in being the first academic health center in Florida to gain this status and are committed to maintaining it. We continuously

work with our staff to ensure we meet our administrative responsibilities while providing effective patient care."

The NCQA Patient-Centered Medical Home is a method of primary care that provides a personal approach to medicine and strengthens the bond between patients and their providers. Each patient is overseen by a clinician-led care team that manages their treatments across the UF Health system. Research shows that medical homes can lead to higher-quality care and lower costs over time.

"Initially, this method cost us more because we had to hire more people to meet the quality standards," Shah said. "It also requires physicians to spend more time in front of the computer to properly document patient outcomes in Epic. So far, we are seeing small changes with outcomes, and we have seen an overall improvement in our patient satisfaction data."

UF Health Jacksonville and UFJP continue to implement policies and processes that help patients achieve greater access to care through the following improvements:

- Enhanced communication through effective use of the MyUFHealth web portal and the MyChart mobile app
- Extended call center hours
- Same-day appointments
- UF Health Virtual Visits (telemedicine program)

"We want to ensure every aspect of a patient's health is touched," Burwell said. "Following this model of care helps us do that, providing the very best care for every person we serve."



## Nurses Who Have Been Recognized Five or More Times

Debra Belus, Adrienne Blum,  
Margaret Brennessholtz, Paul Carswell,  
Christopher Chambliss, Rebecca Chiaverini,  
Kalee Davis, Lisa Downey, Richard Florendo,  
Gertha Isma, Lynn Iturra, Jason Jacobson,  
Karen Kreger, Grady McNabb, Sarah Pane,  
Christian Shotwell, Yolanda Susanne,  
Audra Sypniewski, Umerah Uzonwa,  
Elizabeth Wiard, Roslyn Winters  
and Brittany Yonker

# Meticulous Monitoring to Save Lives

**UF Health Jacksonville nurses follow extensive guidelines when stroke patients receive tPA.**

When someone has a stroke, seconds count. Immediate treatment can minimize the long-term effects and even prevent death.

A stroke occurs when a blood vessel in the brain is blocked by a clot or ruptures, preventing the flow of oxygen. The longer you go without oxygen, the greater your chance of brain damage. With each minute that passes, a stroke patient loses approximately 2 million brain cells. After about 10 minutes, the damage can be severe.

Most strokes in the United States are ischemic, or caused by blood clots. Tissue plasminogen activator, or tPA, is a clot-dissolving medication used to treat ischemic strokes. It must be administered to most patients within three to four-and-a-half hours of the onset of symptoms, but that is not the only time constraint involved with the use of this medication.

“A side effect of receiving tPA can be bleeding from the body or the brain,” said Vicki Coppen, stroke program coordinator at UF Health Jacksonville. “It does not happen often, but can be devastating when it does. So, it is imperative for the nurses to do frequent vital sign and neurological checks to catch any side effects early.”

According to The Joint Commission guidelines, patients who receive tPA are required to have their vital signs checked and a neurological assessment performed at specific intervals: every 15 minutes for two hours, every 30 minutes for six hours and hourly for 16 hours.

“You can imagine how difficult this is on a typical day, let alone when the departments are exceptionally busy,” Coppen said. “If a patient experiences a severe side effect, such as bleeding in the brain, early recognition can not only save their life, but also save the quality of their life.”

UF Health Neurology – Jacksonville recognizes nurses who complete 100 percent of the required vital signs and neurological assessments with a certificate of appreciation. In the two years recognitions have been given, more than 200 nurses from the Emergency Department, interventional radiology, medical intensive care unit and neuro intensive care unit have been awarded at least once — with some as many as seven times. Since the inception of the program, the compliance rate has increased from 30 to 70 percent.

“The nurses who take care of these patients are highly trained in the recognition of neurological changes through their assessments,” Coppen said. “By completing and documenting them, they satisfy The Joint Commission requirements, but most importantly, give patients the best care possible.”



# A Culturally Sensitive Approach to Weight Loss

**Black women participants are sought for a \$2.1 million research project targeting obesity.**



UF Health researchers are looking for primary care patients to take part in a study targeting obesity among black women. The weight-loss study is being funded by a \$2.1 million award from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute.

Studies show that among all race and gender subgroups, black women have the highest incidence of obesity in the United States. More than half — 57 percent — of black women are obese. The disease increases the likelihood of developing diabetes and other chronic diseases, and decreases quality of life and life expectancy. However, black women have been underrepresented in weight-loss trials and weight-loss maintenance studies.

This study seeks women who are already patients in the UF Health Jacksonville primary care network and have had at least two visits with their primary care physician within the past two years. Participants must be black, 21 or older and have a body mass index of 30 or more.

Community health workers have been hired specifically to facilitate a program called Health-Smart, which will encourage dieting, healthy food choices and exercise. Cultural beliefs about weight will also be addressed, says Lori Bilello, PhD, a co-investigator and research assistant professor of medicine at the University of Florida College of Medicine – Jacksonville.

“A core theme of this program is that lifestyle issues, and not necessarily genetics, are causing weight gain,” Bilello said. “We want to focus on the habits, choices and mindsets.”

The program, which is free of charge for patient participants, begins in June and will be implemented at 20 of the UF Health primary care practices in Jacksonville. The aim is to have at least 680 participants.

During this six-month program, patients will meet for weekly or biweekly sessions, with the goal of all participants losing at least 5 percent of their body weight in that time. After the six months, participants will periodically meet with their primary care physician to discuss ways to maintain their new weight or lose even more weight.

As part of the study, half of the participating physicians will be trained beforehand to implement a “patient-centered, culturally sensitive” weight-loss maintenance program while the others will use a “standard behavioral” approach. The first approach involves greater emphasis on making the patients feel respected and comfortable talking about their weight and overall health. The latter focuses more on using empirical data to motivate patients.

Patients will meet with the physicians for a year, and researchers will compare the differences between the two approaches at the end of the project. Sustained weight loss will be measured, as well as biometrics such as blood pressure and blood glucose levels. Questionnaires will also be involved.

Carolyn Tucker, PhD, a professor of psychology and director of the UF Health Disparities Research and Intervention Program on the Gainesville campus, will serve as principal investigator of the project. Nipa Shah, MD, a professor and chair of community health and family medicine at the UF College of Medicine – Jacksonville, is the co-principal investigator.

“I am confident this project will be successful because it will be implemented using a partnership approach that involves community health workers, community stakeholders, patients, researchers, insurance companies and primary care providers,” Tucker said. “Furthermore, the lead researchers in this partnership, as well as others involved in implementing this project, are genuinely committed to empowering black women patients to take charge of their weight and health.”

► **If you are interested in participating in the study or serving in an advisory capacity, contact Erica Guerrido at [Erica.Guerrido@jax.ufl.edu](mailto:Erica.Guerrido@jax.ufl.edu) or 244.9276.**

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## OPENLINES

### NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

May – March 16

June – April 13

Submit your copy and photos via  
email to **[openlines@jax.ufl.edu](mailto:openlines@jax.ufl.edu)**.

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**[UFHealthJax.org](http://UFHealthJax.org)**

### PHOTO SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

We welcome photos that are taken or submitted by employees. Photos should be at least 3 megabytes (3MB) in image size to be published. Please try to take or submit photos that are clear (camera is held very still); not backlit (flash is used and/or light source is not behind the subject); and framed correctly (feet are not cut off and/or subject is not shown too far away). Employees are encouraged to arrange photography with the Media Center before an event to ensure quality. **Direct questions to [openlines@jax.ufl.edu](mailto:openlines@jax.ufl.edu) or call 244.9750.**

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