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OPENLINES



SAVED

BY SELF-ADVOCACY

03

Supervising Swimmers to Save Lives

Water Watchers program helps families stay safe around bodies of water.

04

COVER STORY

Mother diagnosed with breast cancer finds the care she needs at UF Health.

06

Minimizing Medication Errors

More communication about medication leads to better outcomes.

A Hospital That Listens and Heals

UF Health is proud to have some of the region's most skilled and highly trained specialists working in our facilities. They not only care for patients, but also conduct innovative research, participate in prestigious worldwide medical conferences and teach the next generation of providers through the University of Florida colleges of Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy.

While their expertise is often unmatched, it means nothing without their ability to effectively listen to the patients and families they serve. Active listening leads to better understanding — a crucial component in determining the next step of a patient's care. Whether you are making a diagnosis, deciding on a treatment plan or assessing an injury, listening is the first step toward making an informed decision.

One of the most important things we can do for our patients is to really listen to what they have to say and aggressively work to incorporate their needs, feelings and lifestyles into their treatment and management plans. In this issue, you will read about a mother with a terminal cancer diagnosis who was able to receive lifesaving care through UF Health. Our providers listened to her concerns and administered medical treatment that allowed her to remain active in her son's life.

Our staff also uses effective communication to enhance the patient experience regarding medications. At the downtown and north campuses, providers from several departments work together to take an active role in educating patients about their medicine, potential



side effects and instructions for proper administration.

It is through attentive and responsive listening that we are able to gain a patient's trust and ease any concerns and fears they may have, in order to promote healing. By sharing knowledge that comes from the patient and the physician, UF Health providers can develop treatment plans that lead to positive outcomes.

Sincerely,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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

SUPERVISING SWIMMERS TO SAVE LIVES

UF Health TraumaOne teaches families how to keep swimmers safe through the Water Watchers program.

Three children drown every day, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Most of these incidents happen in commercial and residential swimming pools, and may have been prevented if the child had proper supervision.

UF Health TraumaOne works year-round to prevent children from drowning. Its educators train parents and caregivers on the Water Watchers program, stressing the importance of supervision and drowning prevention techniques.

"We've included this initiative in our education and prevention training program because there is a need in our community," said Rebecca Melvin, TraumaOne education coordinator.

A responsible adult, or Water Watcher, is designated to monitor swimmers with 100 percent attention. A rotation may be arranged if there is more than one adult present. The designated Water Watcher wears an official tag and has a cellphone nearby in case of an emergency.

The CDC reports drowning as the second-leading cause of unintentional injury death in children ages 1 to 14. A drowning can be a fatal or nonfatal event, where an individual has been submerged under water and experiences difficulty breathing, according to the World Health Organization. The lack of oxygen during a drowning can compromise several body systems and can lead to death.

"A drowning is not like what you see in the movies with flailing and noise," Melvin said. "Most drownings are quick and

silent, with the child slipping under the water."

Andrew Schmidt, DO, an assistant professor of emergency medicine at the University of Florida College of Medicine – Jacksonville, teaches adults the most important steps to take when caring for children around bodies of water. Guidelines include enrolling in swim lessons, keeping in physical contact with nonswimmers and not relying on flotation devices.

"These devices, such as water wings and life vests, cannot replace physical contact and attentive supervision," Schmidt said.

Schmidt strongly recommends CPR training for anyone in the household who supervises swimming activities. In drowning situations, victims need CPR using mouth-to-mouth ventilations, or another form of oxygen delivery.

If any swimmer shows signs of injury or distress, having a designated Water Watcher with an easily accessible cellphone to call 911 may save a life.

"It's important for families with pools to get educated," Melvin said. "It takes less than 2 inches of water for a child to be in trouble."

TraumaOne offers Water Watcher kits free of charge. Each kit contains a lanyard with a whistle and tag with information about the duties and responsibilities of the Water Watcher. To learn more or to get a Water Watcher kit, contact the Trauma Prevention Program at Trauma1@jax.ufl.edu or 244.3400.

A mother with stage IV breast cancer did her research, shopped for care and found exactly what she needed at UF Health.



SAVED

BY SELF-ADVOCACY

When it comes to your health, you are your own best advocate. That became crystal-clear for C.J. Jackson-Gonzalez, 28, when a biopsy revealed stage III triple-negative breast cancer in April 2016. Six months had passed before her Southern California health care provider even ordered a biopsy. It was supposed to have been nothing serious.

"If nobody feels like this is something to stress about, then I'm not going to stress about it," Jackson-Gonzalez said, recalling her frame of mind in the early stages of her cancer journey.

CHALLENGING CANCER CARE

When the biopsy confirmed it was cancer, her attitude changed. As a single mother of an 11-year-old boy, survival was imperative, but ongoing, debilitating chemotherapy was not an option. After the delayed diagnosis, she was not going to sit back and blindly take anyone's advice anymore. She went forward with an immediate double mastectomy, but was extremely critical of her future treatment.

"I had to ask questions and make them explain to me what's going on," Jackson-Gonzalez said. "I had to do my research and try to align it with what they were saying. These are things that matter because at the end of the day it is my life on the line."

Jackson-Gonzalez involved herself deeply in her own care. She needed to find a provider willing to work with her and her self-described "bulheadedness." It was this outlook, in part, that led Jackson-Gonzalez and her son, Jeffrey, to leave their California home shortly after the mastectomy. They returned to Jacksonville, where she had spent time working a few years prior.

Her first oncologist in Jacksonville told her she didn't need to be scanned for cancer because she did not have any physical signs of illness. But in San Antonio, where she had traveled for reconstructive breast surgery, her surgeon had to abort the procedure when he discovered cancer in the lymph nodes surrounding her lungs.

A subsequent PET scan and MRI revealed the cancer had progressed to stage IV. Within days, she underwent emergency surgery to remove a 2.5-centimeter brain tumor. Her neurologist gave her a year to live, with or without treatment.

Three separate oncologists agreed indefinite, intravenous chemotherapy was the best course of action. Jackson-Gonzalez wasn't having it. That treatment plan would leave her exhausted and unable to care



for Jeffrey.

"That's not going to work," she told them. "You need to give me a timestamp of when we are starting and when we are ending because we are not going to just keep doing that."

Her research indicated an aggressive combination of two chemotherapy drugs, administered within a defined window of time, may be more successful against triple-negative breast cancer. They shrugged her off.

"This is how we treat stage IV," one of them told her. "When you are stage IV, you're on IV chemo indefinitely."

Jackson-Gonzalez, who was younger than most patients with stage IV cancer and had exhibited very few physical manifestations beyond the original lump in her breast, viewed her own case as unique. The standard treatment was unacceptable to her, especially when her own research showed other options were available if only she could find a willing provider.

PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF

She sought another second opinion — call it a fourth or fifth opinion — from UF Health Hematology and Oncology — Jacksonville, where the providers were receptive. They listened, explained and worked with her. Together they charted a course that would allow her to continue working as long as possible, as well as driving her son to school, soccer practice and piano lessons.

Her UF Health doctors opted to proceed with a 12-week course of the two chemotherapy drugs she had learned about in her research. Her UF doctors explained that, yes, indefinite, IV chemotherapy is how stage IV is traditionally attacked, but there are thousands of subtypes of triple-negative breast cancer. The standard approach may not apply in all cases, particularly with a young patient.

"Even a stage IV patient can be controlled for a long time, as long as we have a well-coordinated, multidisciplinary team and a patient's participation," said Fauzia N. Rana, MD, chief of the hematology and medical oncology.

She began chemotherapy with UF Health in July 2017. Through 10 weeks of treatment, she continued working. She continued to drive Jeffrey to Hendricks Avenue Elementary School, to his piano lessons and across town to the beach for soccer practice, where she would work remotely from her car.

A PET scan in August revealed signs of hope, but there was still more work to be done. Radiation began in October — 30 rounds daily for six weeks. Jackson-Gonzalez finally took some time off work, but was there for her son throughout her treatment.

"He did try to act out a couple of times," she said. "He almost got into a depressive state, where he didn't want to play soccer, didn't want to play piano anymore and didn't care about school. I told him this is a lot for both of us to carry, but your fear is lying to you. You've got to let it go and focus on what you need to focus on."

Jeffrey had an A/B average that fall. He will be taking a year off from soccer, but earned a scholarship for his piano lessons. As for Jackson-Gonzalez, January tests revealed she was cancer-free. She is currently in remission, with no evidence of the disease.

SATISFYING SOLUTION

The pair celebrated with a trip to New York City, a first for both of them, before she started taking an oral chemotherapy drug used to reduce the risk of cancer recurrence. Her doctors remain confident that she should expect to live another 15 to 20 years, or longer.

"Nowadays, late-stage cancer can be treated as a chronic disease, and patients can have a good quality of life," Rana said. "This patient is a perfect example of new treatment options and of a patients' active participation throughout the treatment process."

She is thankful for her providers at UF Health, who were caring enough to listen and to see her as an individual and more than another stage IV case.

"I have fought with three or four doctors," Jackson-Gonzalez said. "I have fought with my family, who said you have to just listen to your doctor. Everyone wanted to talk about what would happen if I didn't listen to the doctor. Fortunately, my UF Health providers were willing to listen to me and my needs, providing me with the best results."

MINIMIZING MEDICATION ERRORS, ENHANCING PATIENT EXPERIENCE

Initiatives to improve communication about medication lead to better outcomes.

Hundreds of medications are given to patients at UF Health Jacksonville and UF Health North daily. If medications are not properly administered, it can lengthen the recovery time or even prolong a patient's hospital stay.

"The more patients are educated about their medicine, the more they are able to take care of themselves," said Bernadette Belgado, PharmD, director of Pharmacy at UF Health Jacksonville and co-chair of the Medication Communication Committee. "They can take responsibility for their own health care. They are able to detect if they are having an issue with their medication or if it is something different going on with their disease state."

UF Health nurses, respiratory therapists, pharmacists, and pharmacy residents and students all spend time educating patients about their medications. They inform them about the names and doses of each medicine, possible side effects and instructions for taking each one.

"This is also important in reducing readmission rates," said Stephanie McCormick, PharmD, manager of education and training for Pharmacy. "With more knowledge, patients are more likely to take their medications properly and lower the chances that they will have to come back to the hospital."

As an academic health center, residents and students play a major role in this initiative. Ten pharmacy residents are accepted to practice at UF Health Jacksonville. The department also receives around 100 students from the University of Florida College of Pharmacy annually for six-week rotations. In addition, Pharmacy has eight part-time interns who are fully integrated into the department and primarily focus on patient education. Regardless of the role, all are assigned to specific hospital floors or units, where they speak directly to patients about medications.

"For students, their education typically happens in the laboratory setting, with acting and role playing with their classmates," Belgado said. "Here, they are able to come into the hospital and talk to real patients who have real situations. They are definitely learning from that and it gives them an advantage by developing that skill." The interns undergo proper training and are supervised by the pharmacists on duty.

The use of interns, residents and students, along with communication from nurses and respiratory therapists, ensure patients receive medication information multiple times during their stay.

"We have a process of following up with our patients to see if they remember some of the information that we've given them," said Lamont Hogans, education coordinator for Respiratory Care Services. "We have an informational brochure that is given to all the patients we treat. We also developed a video depicting, among other things, how to educate our patients. Lastly, we provide re-education at discharge to COPD patients who will be using respiratory therapy medications at home."

"Our nursing units have taken a vested interest in increasing their patients' knowledge of their medications," said Sabastian Webbe, nurse manager and co-chair of the Medication Communication Committee. "We have implemented various strategies, such as acknowledging nurses who consistently educated their patients on their new medications to employing unit-specific processes, such as 'Medication in a Box.'"

Flyers with medication information are also included in patient discharge folders, signs are posted in patient rooms and nurses wear buttons to prompt patient conversation about medications and potential side effects.

"This is not just a pharmacy effort," McCormick said. "It is not a nursing or physician effort. It involves everybody, including respiratory therapy and management. Everyone has a role to play in educating patients."

Better You STRIDES

Start Earning Rewards Today!

BlueRewards is now Better You STRIDES.

The Better You STRIDES program is a positive way for GatorCare members to improve their health and receive rewards. UF Health and UFJP employees must earn 500 points by Thursday, Nov. 15, to receive the 2019 wellness credit and save money on monthly premiums.

All users must create an account this year. This new program is personalized, so you earn points from wellness activities that matter most to you. Take the first step toward earning rewards by completing your online health assessment.

It is easier to be rewarded when you can report your progress right from your mobile device. Once you have activated Better You STRIDES, download the CaféWell app from the Apple Store or Google Play to take your Personal Health Itinerary with you wherever you go!

USING A COMPUTER

Log in to your account at FloridaBlue.com today. Navigate to the Better You STRIDES section on the right side of your homepage to create your account.

USING A MOBILE DEVICE

Download the CaféWell mobile app. Click “Register Now.” Follow the instructions to set up your account. Sponsor code: betteryoustrides

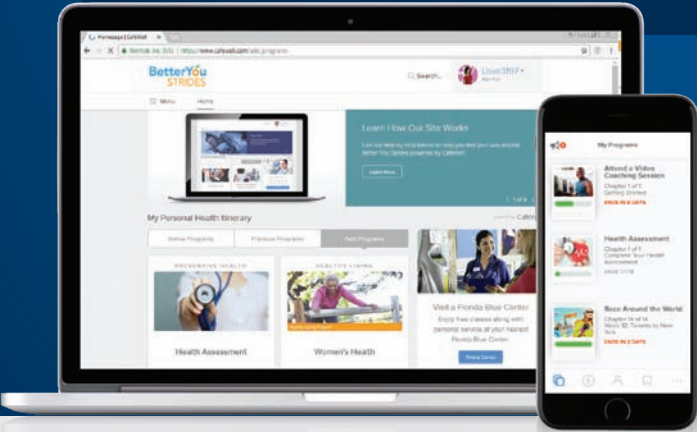
After completing your health assessment, you can enroll in virtual Healthy Living and Healthy Habit programs to earn additional points.

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES	POINTS	MAXIMUM POINTS AVAILABLE
Online personal health assessment	100	100
On-site biometric screening	100	100
Flu shot	100	100

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES	POINTS	MAXIMUM POINTS AVAILABLE
inControl Blood Pressure Management Program	100	100
inControl Diabetes Management Program	100	100
Back in Motion (back injury prevention program)	50	50
Healthy Living Programs (WellCards)	50	200
Healthy Habits Programs (WellCards)	25	200
Preventive screening (colonoscopy, mammogram, etc.)	50	50
Annual wellness exam with primary care physician	50	50
Million Steps to March Challenge	50	50
On-site coaching – Meet with an Employee Wellness coach	25	50
Fall Into Wellness – Fall wellness challenge	50	50
Participate in Wellness Wednesdays	10	50

There are several required activities you must complete in order to receive the 500 points, including the online health assessment, biometric screening and receiving the flu vaccine.

Contact the GatorCare Health Educator Nick Tennant at 244.9713 or Nick.Tennant@bcbsfl.com for more information.



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Submit your copy and photos via
email to **openlines@jax.ufl.edu**.

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EDITOR

Dee Russell

DESIGN & LAYOUT

Darcy Ladd

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Karel Danzie

Nelson Keefer

Carmela Nelson

CONTRIBUTORS

Sarah Miller

Tripp Miller

Jesef Williams

.....



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