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OPEN LINES

SAVING THE HEART *that is* SAVING THE WORLD



03

Building Healthy Communities

The number of primary care locations has nearly doubled since 2011.

04

COVER STORY

Wildlife biologist continues to save endangered animals thanks to UF cardiologists.

06

A Heads-up on Helmet Safety

UF Health TraumaOne provides free helmets to prevent pediatric brain injuries.



Groundbreaking Health Care Happens Here

UF Health continues to be a leader in innovative patient care, education and research. We became the first health system to open a comprehensive medical office building and 92-bed hospital in North Jacksonville, greatly improving accessibility to our high-quality care. In addition, we bring new life to the region through our 12-bed Labor and Delivery Unit, which opened at UF Health North Aug. 15, 2017, and has delivered more than 450 babies since that date!

We are further expanding into Nassau County through a forward-thinking partnership with Raydient Places + Properties that is set to become a national model for building healthier communities. The University of Florida and UF Health were selected to provide medical and wellness services to the Wildlight community, which is slated to grow to 24,000 housing units on 25,000 square acres.

A groundbreaking ceremony for our first UF Health Wildlight facility will be held in mid-August in the community on Highway 200. The 40,000-square-foot ambulatory facility will include primary care, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, mental health, urgent care, dentistry, imaging and laboratory services. Over time, other medical specialties may be added, such as sports medicine and orthopaedics, depending on the community's needs and interests. Our second facility with Wildlight will be a 35,000-square-foot building for rehab services and a YMCA.



The new facility will expand our presence in Northeast Florida and ensure the Nassau County community has greater access to UF Health's nationally recognized, high-quality care, programs and services.

Our success and growth is not possible without your ongoing commitment and dedication to our patients. Each of you plays a major role in our progress by providing high-level, compassionate care that makes us the region's most valued health care asset.

Sincerely,

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



BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES IN YOUR BACKYARD

UF Health primary care locations have nearly doubled since 2011 to better serve you.

The number of UF Health family medicine practices in Northeast Florida and Southeast Georgia will have grown from 18 offices in 2011 to more than 30 by the end of 2018. The rapid increase is the result of building expansions, new construction and acquiring existing spaces in strategic locations.

Nipa Shah, MD, a professor and chair of community health and family medicine at the University of Florida College of Medicine – Jacksonville, led the department through the aggressive development plan and helped create two associate chair positions to strengthen collaboration and share best practices among the offices.

“There are many moving parts involved as we continue to expand,” Shah said. “The associate chairs will not only assist in ensuring things go as planned, but they will also keep our patients in the forefront during this process.”

Christopher Scuderi, DO, medical director of UF Health Family Medicine and Pediatrics – New Berlin, and Charles Haddad, MD, medical director of UF Health Family Medicine – Dunn Avenue, were appointed to the new associate chair roles, in which each will oversee a group of practices. In addition, each physician will assist with a new practice opening in 2018: UF Health Family Medicine – North and UF Health Family Medicine and Pediatrics – Nocatee.

“With the increased number of practices comes the opportunity to expand services,” Haddad said. “Many offices offer chronic care management, women’s reproductive health, dermatologic procedures, including minor surgeries, and cryotherapy. Others provide services by licensed mental health counselors and pharmacists.”

Services have also expanded to provide added convenience for patients and to support the department’s whole-person approach to health care. Some locations offer extended hours to include early morning, evening and Saturday appointments. In addition, telemedicine through UF Health Virtual Visit is now an option with many providers.

“We have a team approach to treat the whole person,” Scuderi said. “We are always looking for ways to expand our services and create meaningful relationships with patients.”

Nurse care coordinators in a centralized location reach out to patients who have experienced a recent hospital stay to check on their condition and arrange any necessary follow-up visits. Preventive medicine measures include reminding patients when it’s time for regular screenings, such as mammograms and colonoscopies.

“The most important services continue to be our preventive health services and public health initiatives,” Haddad said. “These services help to keep patients from becoming ill or help to manage large groups of patients with similar health conditions, such as diabetes.”

With the added associate chair positions, practices receive more concentrated operational support to improve quality for patients.

“This is a best practices goal,” Scuderi said. “We are learning from each other and building a stronger infrastructure for family medicine.”

SAVING THE HEART *that is* SAVING THE WORLD

UF Health cardiologists perform a lifesaving procedure on a world-renowned wildlife biologist who protects endangered animals.

They were once considered the mythical unicorns of the forest, with many people unsure they even existed. The large mammal looks like a mix of deer, giraffe and zebra, and can only be found deep inside the African jungles of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"The okapi is entirely dependent on the forest sanctuary for its survival, and deforestation, along with poaching and mining, have led to its decline," said John Lukas, conservation manager at the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens.

Lukas, 69, is the president of the Okapi Conservation Project and is a founding member and vice president of the Wildlife Conservation Network. He has dedicated the last 30 years to trying to save this elusive animal from extinction.

"The okapi is extremely rare and was only discovered in 1901, even though they have been living in the forests of the Congo for 6 million years," Lukas said. "We estimate that there might only be around 25,000 left in the wild."

It's just one of many endangered animals the conservation biologist works to keep alive, including the five remaining species of rhino. He travels all over the United States and Africa to address congressional committees, attend fundraisers, conduct research, speak at conferences and manage the okapi sanctuary.

"When I took this project on in 1987, there was no protected area for this animal in all of Africa," Lukas said. "The Okapi Wildlife Reserve is now almost 14,000 square kilometers, or about one-and-a-half times the size of Yellowstone National Park."

Last year, Lukas' active lifestyle significantly slowed down. He became too weak to travel or speak at conferences, so he made an appointment at UF Health Cardiovascular Center – Jacksonville.

"He noticed significant deterioration in his exercise capacity and experienced shortness of breath and fatigue that was unusual for him," said Daniel Soffer, MD, medical director of endovascular cardiology. "It worsened within a few months to a year, so it was a relatively rapid deterioration."

Lukas has degenerative aortic valve disease, which causes his heart valves to harden over time. Ten years ago, Lukas underwent open-heart surgery in New York to have a tissue valve replacement. Tests showed the valve had weakened since his surgery, severely limiting the amount of blood going through his heart.

"His echocardiogram showed there was severe narrowing of the valve, which required a transcatheter aortic valve replacement, also known as a TAVR," Soffer said.

"Open-heart surgery carries significant risks the first time you do it, but open-heart surgery a second time carries a much higher risk," said John Pirris, MD, a cardiothoracic surgeon at UF Health Jacksonville. "Based on the fact that he had prior open-heart surgery and a few other medical problems, we felt it best that he have a TAVR."

Similar to a stent placed in an artery, the TAVR approach delivers a fully collapsible replacement valve through a catheter. Once the new valve is expanded, it pushes the old valve out of the way and the tissue in the replacement valve takes over the job of regulating blood flow. Soffer was able to perform the procedure through a small incision in the groin.

"We are able to perform it with just a poke in the groin in more than 95 percent of our patients, which is far greater than any other program," Soffer



said. "Most of our patients are awake with minimal sedation, and we are able to keep them comfortable throughout the procedure. It provides a quicker recovery and allows us to take care of higher-risk patients."

Immediately after the TAVR, Lukas had a pacemaker implanted to further improve blood flow to his heart. Despite having two procedures, he was able to walk out of the hospital the next day.

"My recovery this time around was nothing like when I had open-heart surgery," Lukas said. "Ten years ago, I was down for more than a month, but with this procedure, I was back on my feet after two nights."

Lukas was even able to speak at the 2017 Fall Wildlife Conservation Expo in San Francisco, which serves as a major fundraiser for the Okapi Conservation Project.

"It is through education that we are able to save endangered wildlife in important places around the world," Lukas said. "It is how we fight the exploitation mentality and help people on the ground level understand."

Pirris refers to Lukas as an example of how minimally invasive techniques can be used to achieve excellent outcomes.

"We applaud Lukas for his effort and ability to be able to recover as quickly as he did and go on to live a very fruitful life," Pirris said.

Since his procedure, Lukas has returned to Africa three times and has continued flying around the country, advocating for the protection of endangered species. Thanks to his UF Health providers, Lukas can continue fighting to ensure okapis can live peacefully in the Congo for many more years to come.

UF Health TraumaOne provides helmets and bicycle safety sessions to help prevent pediatric brain injuries.

Riding a bicycle can be a fun and healthy way to enjoy summer, but for many, the trip can end in the emergency room. Each year in the United States, about 800 bicyclists are killed and another 500,000 are transported to hospitals, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Roughly half of these injuries occur in children and teens, with a third of those cases involving head injuries.

"A bike helmet is the best line of defense against a severe head injury," said Rebecca Melvin, TraumaOne education coordinator. "When it's worn on your head correctly, it can help save your life."

UF Health TraumaOne hosts several bike rodeos annually as part of its Trauma Prevention Program. The hourlong event provides hands-on instruction on bike safety basics by allowing children to ride through an obstacle course. Every child is also fitted with a helmet.

"Before you get on a bike, you need to make sure the chain is intact, the brakes work and the tires are in good condition to ensure it is suitable to ride," Melvin said.

In Florida, bike riders on the road are considered motorists and must adhere to all of the traffic signs and laws. "If there is a stop sign, you must stop," Melvin said. "If there is a yield sign, you have to yield."

Bike riders 16 and under are also required to wear a helmet in Florida. Melvin says the best way to ensure your children adhere to this is by wearing one, too. "Children learn best by example," she said. "If they see you in a helmet, they are more likely to wear theirs."

Phyllis Hendry, MD, is the pediatric medical director of UF Health TraumaOne. She says helmets are as vital in bicycle riding as they are in sports.

"Wearing a helmet is similar to wearing a seat belt," Hendry said. "It doesn't mean you won't get into an

accident or have a head injury, but it definitely lowers the severity of the injury."

A traumatic brain injury, or TBI, occurs when there is a disruption or change in the normal brain function that can be caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head. The four common causes of TBIs are falls, motor vehicle or traffic accidents, collisions of any kind and assaults.

"Symptoms can range from headache, vomiting and fatigue, to being unresponsive or having seizures," Hendry said. "Symptoms can last hours, days or, in severe cases, be permanent. The effects of a TBI or concussion can include impairment to thinking, memory, movement, vision, hearing or emotions, such as personality changes and depression. Fortunately, most patients with TBIs fully recover

over a period of days to weeks; however, severe cases not only affect the child, but also have lasting effects on families and siblings."

Helmets protect the brain by absorbing most of the impact during a collision or fall. They come in several sizes and must be replaced as the rider grows to ensure proper fit. In addition, helmets should have the U.S. Consumer Product Safety

Commission sticker to ensure it meets proper safety standards. Any helmet worn during an accident should be replaced, even if there are no visible signs of damage.

"The integrity of a helmet is no longer there once a child falls with it on," Melvin said. "It may look OK, but you need to get a new one because it probably can't withstand another fall."

TraumaOne typically gives away 500 to 800 helmets every year. To learn more or to schedule a bike rodeo for your community or event, contact the Trauma Prevention Program at Trauma1@jax.ufl.edu or 244.3400.

A HEADS-UP ON HELMET SAFETY



Opioid prescriptions for acute pain are now limited to three- or seven-day supplies in Florida.

Pain is one of the top reasons people visit their health care providers, but how these providers treat pain in Florida has changed. On July 1, new restrictions were placed on prescription painkillers in an effort to save the 16 Floridians who die every day from opioid drug overdoses, according to state officials.

"If your practice prescribes controlled substances, especially opioids, on an outpatient basis, this law affects you," said Alberto Ardon, MD, chair of the Pain and Opioid Stewardship Taskforce at UF Health Jacksonville.

Opioid prescriptions for acute pain can only be prescribed for three days or, when deemed medically necessary, for seven days.

"The prescriber must adequately document in the patient's medical record the acute medical condition and lack of alternative treatment options that justify deviating from the three-day supply," Ardon said.

These medication restrictions do not apply to traumatic injuries with an injury severity score of 9 or above, cancer, chronic pain, terminal conditions or palliative care.

Physicians are now required to take a two-hour, Florida board-approved continuing medical education course on prescribing controlled substances. In addition, they or their staff members are required to check the statewide prescription drug monitoring program before prescribing or dispensing any controlled drugs on an outpatient basis.

"Previously, only physicians who prescribed a lot of pain management prescriptions were usually registered," Ardon said. "Now all Florida physicians who prescribe any controlled substances are required to register and actively access the database."

The new law also affects pharmacists. Any dispensed controlled substance must be reported in the database no later than the close of the next business day, unless an extension or exemption is approved. Failure to do so can result in a series of citations that can escalate to a first-degree misdemeanor.

"The new law has changed the workflow within clinics, but these changes are not insurmountable if the providers and staff have anticipated and prepared well for the changes," Ardon said.

UF Health Jacksonville and UF Health North were already making changes to their pain management policies based on national recommended guidelines, but this law has sped up efforts.

"Our surgery patients, who may be accustomed to getting a specific number of pills, are now receiving significantly lower amounts," Ardon said. "We continue to work to minimize postoperative pain in other ways, such as using nerve blocks and prescribing non-narcotic medications like acetaminophen and anti-inflammatories. Patients also play a major role in pain management. Eating healthier diets, exercising and using relaxation techniques can really impact a person's perception of pain."

The new law allocates an additional \$53 million in state funding to enhance opioid treatment, law enforcement response and provide the lifesaving overdose-reversal drug Naloxone to first responders.

"The national opioid epidemic is a multifaceted, multicontextual problem with no clear single solution," Ardon said. "It is going to take changes in law enforcement, medical care, accessibility to mental health and rehabilitation services, and patient mindsets to see success and save lives."

NEW LAW LIMITS PAIN PRESCRIPTIONS



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Submit your copy and photos via
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