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A Time to Give, and to Look Ahead

As we begin the holiday season in earnest, I want to take time to recognize the efforts of our organization and its people who are working to give back to the community we serve.

Facilitated by our exceptional Volunteer Services staff, UF Health Jacksonville and the University of Florida College of Medicine – Jacksonville have put food on local tables through a Feeding Northeast Florida food drive, and will put presents under local trees through the Angel Tree toy drive. UF Jacksonville Physicians Inc. has been working once again with our neighbors at the Mt. Herman Exceptional Student Center to ensure each and every family has their holiday needs met. During this time of year, it's important to give thanks and to give back, and I'm proud of the way we do just that.

It's also important to remember that the holidays can be a stressful time for some. Please be mindful that although you may be struggling to get your shopping done, your cards mailed and your parties planned, many of our patients are dealing with all of that plus the added complication of a hospital emergency or other ongoing health issue. Be kind, be patient and always maintain the high level of compassionate care we provide throughout the year.

Looking ahead to the coming year, I also want to acknowledge some of the major organizational achievements that marked 2018. We successfully passed our Joint Commission survey in the spring. UF Health TraumaOne, which celebrated its 35th anniversary this year, became the first trauma center in our region to be nationally verified by the American



College of Surgeons. We broke ground on UF Health Wildlight, which will extend our ability to provide top-notch care for patients in Nassau County. Additionally, the opening of the University of Florida Jacksonville Aging Studies Center, or JAX-ASCENT, expanded the breadth of biomedical investigation and clinical research occurring on our campus.

As the year comes to a close, take a moment to look back and recognize your own good work. Then, look ahead to 2019 and chart a course for your own continued success.

Sincerely,

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

Hope for the Holidays

UF Health Jacksonville celebrates the children whose lives have been changed by the work of CMN Hospitals.

Since 1983, Children's Miracle Network Hospitals have been actively supporting better health care for kids. Today, there are more than 170 CMN Hospitals worldwide, specializing in treating children. UF Health Jacksonville is one of two local hospitals that are a part of this network.

A founding principle of CMN Hospitals is that all funds raised stay local. Everything raised in Northeast Florida and Southeast Georgia is used to purchase medical equipment, child life activities and educational resources for the pediatric programs at UF Health Jacksonville and Wolfson Children's Hospital. The following stories provide a glimpse of the type of life-changing work health care providers in these organizations are doing.

TABITHA

Traumatic Brain Injury

When Tabitha was 3 years old, she fell 15 feet from a second-story window onto a concrete driveway. She was rushed to UF Health TraumaOne, where she was intubated and CT scans of her brain and body were obtained. After being diagnosed with a skull fracture, a cerebral hemorrhage and a pulmonary contusion, Tabitha was transferred to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit for recovery. She surprised all of her doctors when they were able to discharge her only four days after the incident. Four weeks later, Tabitha returned to preschool.

ISAIAH

Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia

Isaiah's parents brought him to the hospital with a persistent fever. Bloodwork revealed his white blood cell, red blood cell and platelet levels were all low. After further testing, doctors diagnosed the 3-year-old with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. He immediately received a blood transfusion and his first chemotherapy treatment. For the next nine months following his diagnosis, Isaiah received multiple spinal taps, blood transfusions, weekly chemotherapy treatments and many different medications. Although Isaiah is still not completely free of cancer, there are currently no abnormal cells in his bone marrow and he is responding well to treatment. He will be in the maintenance phase of treatment for the next two years, still receiving oral chemotherapy, multiple medications and spinal taps. Isaiah's resilient spirit and determination in spite of what he's endured inspire those who know him.

SANDRA

Congenital Heart Defect

Sandra was born with congenital heart disease and was admitted to the hospital with the label of "failure to thrive" at 3 months old. She spent more than a week in the hospital with a feeding tube to help her gain weight. A few days later, Sandra had surgery to repair a nasal blockage and stayed overnight for observation. Sandra had her first open heart surgery at 7 months old, weighing only 7 pounds. After four months of recovery at home, her health began to flourish. Sandra is now a happy and thriving toddler who amazes her family and friends with her strength and good spirit.



As a participating CMN hospital, UF Health Jacksonville:

- Is the only adult and pediatric Level I trauma center in Northeast Florida and Southeast Georgia
- Offers a specialized pediatric ER

Comprehensive Care for Multiple Sclerosis

National recertification means UF Health remains the premier location for treatment of MS.

UF Health remains the premier location in Northeast Florida and Southeast Georgia for the treatment of multiple sclerosis, as evidenced by a prestigious designation from the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

The society has recertified UF Health Neurology – Jacksonville as a Center for Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Care. The Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Program, part of the UF Health Neuroscience Institute, has held the certification for nearly a decade. This is the third time the program has been recertified.

The designation means UF Health is a “one-stop shop” for people with multiple sclerosis, or MS — an autoimmune illness affecting the central nervous system, with symptoms including numbness, impaired speech and muscular coordination, blurred vision and severe fatigue. UF Health has the only MS program in the region that is certified as comprehensive by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

The program features a multidisciplinary team consisting of specially trained neurologists, a nurse practitioner, occupational and speech therapists, a patient care navigator and a case manager. They combine their skills to optimize and personalize care for each patient. Other program resources include patient education, physician-led support groups for MS patients and their families, a dedicated social worker to coordinate counseling and emotional support services, and a team of researchers who offer the most promising MS treatments available only in clinical trials.

“We operate at the highest level of affiliation with the National Multiple Sclerosis Society,” said Scott Silliman, MD, a UF Health neurologist and director of the MS program.

“Because certification is difficult to attain, we are pleased to have held this certification for almost 10 years. It speaks to the quality of services we continuously provide for people with MS.”

The program is one of the largest clinical MS programs in the Southeast, caring for nearly 1,000 patients. Although many of the program’s patients live in the greater Jacksonville area, referrals come from as far south as Melbourne, as far west as Pensacola and as far north as Savannah, Georgia. The program has recently begun an in-depth research study on telemedicine and its application to rehabilitation, mobility and the delivery of stable neurologic care to people in rural and underserved areas.

“Multiple sclerosis is difficult to diagnose, and it’s equally as difficult to find a specialty center that accepts your insurance and also has the expertise and leading-edge technology to manage this very rare, yet dynamic, neurological disorder,” said Adam Chaifetz, DC, coordinator for the MS program. “Our facility is the only Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Center south of Atlanta and north of Orlando. The only other comparable centers in Florida are in Tampa and Miami.”

More than 2.3 million people are affected by MS worldwide, according to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. There is no cure for MS, although its symptoms and disease progression can be managed.

For more information about the Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Program at UF Health Jacksonville or to request an appointment, visit UFHealthjax.org/neurology or call 633.1022.



We’ve Got Your Back

The Lift Team supports patients and nursing staff at UF Health Jacksonville

Nursing injuries resulting from lifting and assisting patients are something hospitals work hard to avoid. The Lift Team at UF Health Jacksonville was first developed in 2010 as a pilot program under the direction of Cynthia Gerdik, DNP, associate vice president of nursing, in response to an increase in staff injuries in the intensive care units. The team works to streamline the process of patient movement to ensure safety for all patients and staff.

Valerie Platt, DNP, clinical nursing director of cardiology, neurology and orthopaedic services, oversees the Lift Team and ensures staff are trained and prepared to use necessary lift equipment.

Successful innovations such as the Lift Team support the health of nurses and other providers while improving patient care at UF Health Jacksonville.

“The Lift Team’s success is largely due to the multidisciplinary Critical Care Council’s involvement in its development, the innovative approach to training its members, the team’s implementation and its initial roll out in the organization, and administrative support,” Platt said.

Campuswide, there are 14 specially trained staff members on the Lift Team who work in two groups of two during day shift and one group of two during night shift. The team is responsible for coordinating patient mobility at all times.

The team’s primary focus is movement of patients requiring maximum assistance for mobility, including bed repositioning and transfers to the bed, chair, stretcher or toilet.

“Most commonly, we are called to move patients in and out of bed and to provide boosts, where we help sit the patient upright,” said Deshi Banks, a Lift Team member and patient care associate.

The Lift Team conducts proactive rounding to ensure padding is

placed under all devices and braces. They are also highly trained to assist with calls for cardiac arrest, performing chest compressions and assisting with falls.

“We consult with staff nurses before moving any patients,” Banks said. “We take the time to learn any restrictions patients may have, so we are sure to turn them the proper way.”

Proper lifting techniques and lift equipment have a direct impact on patient improvement, as well as reducing staff injuries. Lift Team techniques help prevent patient injuries, such as pressure ulcers, and they help support early ambulation, getting the patient up and moving, which leads to improved blood flow.

Lift Team staff complete training throughout each year to stay up-to-date on the equipment used to assist patients. Physical therapists at UF Health Jacksonville also guide nursing staff in proper technique and form to prevent injuries.

The equipment most commonly used are mats, lifts and specialty chairs — all designed to reduce the weight patients and staff have to support.

“The equipment makes moving easier and more efficient,” said Corey Lee, a Lift Team member and patient care associate. “We’re working to save the backs of our nursing staff colleagues.”

Nursing staff have peace of mind thanks to the ease of coordination provided by the Lift Team.

Dalton Ringle, a Lift Team member and patient care associate takes seriously the charge of keeping staff safe from injury.

“We’ve heard from new nurses who say other local hospitals don’t have a specialized team for lifting,” said Ringle. “The nurses are always appreciative of the help.”

COPING WITH LOSS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Fond memories of holiday traditions likely come to mind as the winter months approach. The season is meant to be a joyful time to reconnect with family and friends. But for people who have lost loved ones or are experiencing physical or emotional separation, this time of year can be difficult.

Grief can weigh heavily as we think about those who aren't with us. It can trigger feelings of loneliness and isolation. In cases of a loved one's death, survivors may feel guilty about enjoying themselves as their loss weighs on their conscience.

Phylliss Taylor, MD, medical director of outpatient services for UF Health Psychiatry – Jacksonville, provides counseling for those coping with grief. She says grief is normal, but how you handle it can make a difference.

"We see an uptick in appointments during the holiday season as patients experience complicated grief reactions," Taylor said. "It's the time of year when feelings of loss and sadness can bubble up."

Taylor provides the following advice for those coping with grief during the holidays:

Recognize grief

It is important to recognize that grief often flares up around holidays and special occasions. These feelings are normal, whether the loss is recent or not. Always remind yourself that no two people experience loss in the same way.

Honor your loved one

Do something special to honor your lost or estranged loved one. You might consider an activity, such as lighting a candle, saying a prayer, writing a letter, watching a movie or visiting a place of shared significance.

Self-care

Don't forget to invest in your own well-being. Take care of yourself by eating healthy foods and getting plenty of sleep. Avoid the use of alcohol or any illicit drugs, which can exacerbate negative feelings. Try taking a walk and staying physically active to improve your mood.

Create a new tradition for yourself, such as a visit with friends or dinner at a new restaurant. Participating in volunteer work or otherwise helping others can also be rewarding and help redirect your attention toward something positive.

Seek professional help

If you are feeling overwhelmed, seek professional help, such as individual or group counseling. Psychologist Purnima Kumar, PhD, offers group grief counseling every Friday from 9:30 – 11 a.m. at UF Health Community and Family Medicine – Jacksonville.

"Remember you are not alone," Taylor said. "Life is for the living, so try to find ways to help yourself move forward."

If you are experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety related to grief, please visit UFHealthJax.org/psychiatry or call 383.1038 to schedule an appointment.

More upgrades coming to MyUFHealth

Changes to include email notifications and more viewing options.

More upgrades and conveniences are coming to the MyUFHealth online patient portal, which continues to experience significant increases in registration and usage.

MyUFHealth has been available to UF Health patients since 2014. This secure web portal allows existing patients to access parts of their medical record and schedule appointments directly with their primary care provider. In addition, users can view released test results, request prescription refills, pay balances and communicate electronically with their providers.

Beginning in April 2019, patients will also be able to:

- ▶ Set up email alerts when a balance is available
- ▶ Save specific providers as "favorites" for quicker scheduling in the future
- ▶ Upload advance directives, including living wills, making them readily available in the electronic health record
- ▶ View and edit personal information, such as preferred name and emergency contacts
- ▶ View recent test results from the MyUFHealth homepage

"We look forward to soon introducing these enhancements," said Kris Conroy, RN, an application support manager for University of Florida Jacksonville Physicians Inc. We believe the upgrades will provide further convenience and ease of use for patients."

MORE MYUFHEALTH USERS

Through September 2018, about 87,000 patients in the UF Health Jacksonville network had signed up for MyUFHealth, with about 2,500 to 3,000 being added each month. Rita James, vice president of ambulatory care services, said she is pleased with the growth.

"The goal we established for the 2019 fiscal year is to have 100,000 patients signed up," James said. "I am confident we will reach that within the next few months."

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OPENLINES

NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

February – Dec. 7

March – Jan. 11

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

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