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HEALING TOGETHER

When I retired from my role as CEO of UF Health Jacksonville at the end of 2017, I didn't imagine I would be back again three and a half years later. Although the circumstance of my return is not a happy one, there's nowhere else I'd rather be than here, supporting this wonderful organization in the aftermath of losing our beloved Leon L. Haley Jr., MD.

I am here to support and guide UF Health Jacksonville during this time of change, alongside Linda Edwards, MD, who serves as the dean of the UF College of Medicine – Jacksonville. You will read more about Dr. Edwards in this issue, including more about her background and vision for the college.

I want to share a little more about who I am for those of you who haven't worked with me yet. My history with UF Health goes back nearly 20 years. I served as the CEO of UF Health Jacksonville from 2013 until my retirement in 2017. Before that, I served as associate vice president for finance and planning for UF Health in Gainesville and Jacksonville for almost 10 years. Prior to UF Health, I was president of Armistead Consulting LLC, a North Carolina firm that provided management and consultation services to academic health centers, hospitals and other health care organizations.

I have navigated numerous areas of business during my years in the workforce — from finance to clinical operations — with the goal of supporting the highest-quality patient care, education and research. My background in health care began at Wake Forest University School of Medicine, where I served in various leadership positions over the course of 24 years, including as vice president for health services administration and senior associate dean for administrative services.

Today, it's my pleasure to return to UF Health Jacksonville and continue leading this enterprise in the direction Dr. Haley was taking it. COVID-19 has taken an immeasurable toll on all of you, and I am here to support each and every one of you during this time. I appreciate the hard work you do every day, despite the current circumstances. Please continue to stay dedicated and steadfast as we work through this challenge together.

In my first video update, I said I want everyone to feel comfortable reaching out to me directly, and I mean it. Thank you for your warm welcome back, and I look forward to positive days ahead. It is a privilege to be your CEO again!

Sincerely,



Russell E. Armistead, MBA
CEO, UF Health Jacksonville

BetterYou STRIDES

2021 Wellness Credit

The Better You Strides wellness credit criteria has changed this year. To obtain the credit, employees must earn a total of 500 points by Nov. 15.

Points may be earned in various ways, including appointments with a health coach via Zoom. Call 244.9355 or via email wellness@jax.ufl.edu to schedule an appointment.

Visit the Employee Wellness page on the Bridge to view the full 2021 points sheet and learn how to access the Better You Strides portal, Onlife.


This is for GatorCare members only. Log in to FloridaBlue.com to get started.

GatorCare
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UF Health Jacksonville now has an Instagram account. Follow us there and on our other social media channels to receive the latest news and information. From heartfelt patient stories and upcoming events to the latest information on COVID-19 and other important health care news, UF Health Jacksonville keeps you informed.

As a reminder, all UF Health employees are required to follow certain guidelines and adhere to compliance requirements, code of conduct and UF Health Jacksonville policies. The social media policy can be found on UFHealthJax.org/employees.

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HEALTH MATTERS BLOG: blog.ufhealthjax.org

THE University of Florida College of Medicine – Jacksonville remains committed to excellence after the unexpected passing of our former dean, Dr. Leon L. Haley Jr. Newly appointed Dean Linda Edwards, MD, has now stepped in to continue his vision. Since 1985, Edwards has been dedicated to the college, assuming many leadership roles throughout her tenure, making her best-suited to act as dean at this time. Recently, a virtual town hall allowed Edwards to outline next steps for the college to faculty and staff.

“I am humbled that I have been asked to accept this position after the sudden loss of our leader and friend, Dr. Leon Haley Jr.,” Edwards said. “In our sadness, we must push forward and continue moving our institution and its learners to greater heights. That is how we will honor Dr. Haley.”

Carrying out the enterprise’s mission, to heal, to comfort, to educate and to discover, serves as Edwards’ primary focus and reflects her priorities for the year. Ranking first on that list is continuing the growth of the UF College of Medicine – Jacksonville. This includes preparing to launch a regional medical school, which will accommodate full-time, third- and fourth-year UF medical students. The highly anticipated regional medical campus was a vision of Dr. Haley’s, and construction and renovations continue on the UF Health Jacksonville campus to accommodate the plans. With education fueling its purpose, Edwards expects the school will act as the hub for progressive learning in our region, and a group of students is expected to pilot the program in May 2022.

Noting her experience as senior associate dean for educational affairs since 2013, Edwards wants to prioritize programs that help faculty become more efficient educators. That work is already underway in the Office of Educational Affairs as they continue building their faculty development programs. Led by Elisa Zenni, MD, and Colleen Kalynych, EdD, the goal is to allow professors and staff to strengthen their teaching capabilities while enhancing the learning experience for medical students. In 2022, Edwards expects

Top row: Dr. Edwards addresses medical students at the UF College of Medicine – Jacksonville graduation ceremony. **Bottom row from L-R:** Dr. Edwards celebrates UF Health Jacksonville’s 150th anniversary with a smile next to her cardboard cutout; Dr. Edwards dean of the UF College of Medicine – Jacksonville with Colleen Kalynych, EdD, assistant dean of medical education.

the faculty development program will provide more opportunities for staff improvement.

In addition to education, Drs. Haley and Edwards shared a mutual passion for research. Research remains a driving force as the Office of Research Affairs works to discover solutions for better health and wellness for patients and the community. As a result, Edwards plans to continue fostering research at an increased pace to initiate and execute mission-focused clinical and community-based research. The dean also noted opportunities to expand boundaries, challenging faculty to incorporate artificial intelligence into the curriculum.

In her pursuit to execute our mission, Edwards emphasized that the quality of care given to patients and their families should continue to set the enterprise apart. The dean is confident Kelly Gray-Eurom, MD, assistant dean for quality and safety for the UF College of Medicine – Jacksonville and chief quality officer for UF Health Jacksonville, will continue pushing these initiatives forward as she and her team have received national recognition and awards for quality of care projects. The goal is that each year, measurable improvement in quality and safety will be seen with residents, fellows, medical students and faculty.

Committed to promoting diversity and equity, Edwards made clear that the work centered on inclusion, diversity, equity and access, or IDEA, must continue. As this work is being led by Anne-Marie Knight and Madeline Joseph, MD, Edwards hopes to take a deeper look into minority representation at the college. That analysis will give insight to help further promote diversity and inclusion in the educational programs as well as in individual departments.

Finally, during this transition, Edwards asks leadership and faculty to work together to advance the UF College of Medicine – Jacksonville. She believes collaboration will make it possible to reach the common goal of educating the next generation of health care leaders who will serve patients and communities near and far.

DR. LINDA EDWARDS LAYS OUT PRIORITIES FOR UF COMJ FOLLOWING APPOINTMENT TO DEAN



BATTLING A SPINAL TUMOR

A patient undergoes spinal surgery at UF Health North at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Juan Sanchez is a restaurant manager who works long, busy hours. In late 2019, while at work, Sanchez began to experience weakness, tingling and numbness in his left foot. He initially put off seeing his primary care physician, but as the symptoms began spreading to his left arm and hand, Sanchez made the choice to seek medical care at UF Health.

Sanchez met with Jeremy Coleman, MD, medical director at UF Health Family Medicine – Wildlight, who ordered an MRI of his neck. While waiting for the results of the MRI, Sanchez returned to work.

Hours later, Sanchez missed a follow-up call from Coleman. Due to the urgency of the situation, a nurse called Sanchez's girlfriend, Stephanni Marin, who was listed as his emergency contact.

"The nurse told her to get ahold of me right away and let me know I shouldn't look up or down or lift anything heavy for a long period of time," Sanchez said. "I was carrying two large buckets of ice in the restaurant when Stephanni told me."

Discovering the unexpected

The MRI revealed a dark spot on Sanchez's neck, which Coleman suspected was the cause of Sanchez's weakness on his left side. Coleman referred Sanchez to Kourosh Tavanaiepour, DO, medical director at the UF Health Comprehensive Spine Center.

Additional scans clearly disclosed the presence of a tumor between the C6 and C7 vertebrae, which was blocking the flow of spinal fluid from his brain to his spine.

The highly trained physicians, nurses and clinical specialists at the UF Health Comprehensive Spine Center – North work together to give each patient individualized attention before, during and after surgery. Although Sanchez's case was rare and complicated, the spine center's multidisciplinary team was prepared to identify and remove the tumor.

"When I left the office, I was full of emotions," Sanchez said. "I was scared, but I knew I would be OK because Dr. Tavanaiepour was very calm and confident they could help me."

Although Sanchez's symptoms were relatively mild at the time, it was imperative to schedule his surgery as soon as possible. Not only was the tumor growing at an unknown rate, but Tavanaiepour's team did not know if the mass was cancerous. These variables could

complicate treatment options and recovery, making it necessary to get a sample immediately.

"If Mr. Sanchez continued to get weaker, we may not have been able to get him back to 100%. We wanted to bite the problem before the problem bit us," Tavanaiepour said.

A new chapter

March 24, 2020, was the start of Sanchez's next chapter. That was the day of his surgery and the first time he had to stay in a hospital. Adding to an already stressful situation, the state was shutting down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Inpatient protocols were modified to contain the virus, so family and friends were no longer permitted to visit patients once they were admitted for surgery.

Sanchez underwent an 11-hour surgery with recovery in the ICU for 14 days without his family. Even though his family wasn't there, Sanchez didn't feel alone. A staff member checked on him every hour to fill the conversation gap usually met by visitors.

"Every single doctor and nurse was amazing," Sanchez said. "At one point, I had bad heartburn, so they gave me ice cream just to make me feel better."

The road to healing

Fortunately, a biopsy revealed Sanchez's tumor was benign, and he was healing well from his spine surgery. Once out of the ICU, he went through physical rehabilitation to recover the movement and sensitivity he had lost due to the tumor's pressure on his spine. Therapists worked with him three times a day for several weeks, helping Sanchez relearn how to use his left arm and leg.

A year later, Sanchez is back to work and hopeful about his future. Although he has some lingering discomfort in his left hand, he is grateful for the care he received at the UF Health Comprehensive Spine Center – North.

"The morning of the surgery, I had a lot going through my head," said Sanchez. "I wanted to play soccer again. I wanted to work again. I wanted to have kids and be able to hold them. I was scared, but I did my research, and after I met him, I knew Dr. Tavanaiepour and his team were the best."

Visit North.UFHealthJax.org/spine to learn more about the UF Health Comprehensive Spine Center – North.



Andrew Schmidt, DO, MPH, has more than 20 years of experience in lifeguarding and is committed to teaching others lifesaving techniques.

UF Health TraumaOne deputy medical director is committed to saving lives on land and in water.

Drowning is one of the leading causes of preventable deaths in the U.S., and Florida has the highest number of cases each year. Preventable is the key word, as parents, caregivers and other water waders can take steps to prevent future drowning incidents.

These statistics hit close to home for Andrew Schmidt, DO, MPH, an assistant professor of emergency medicine at the University of Florida College of Medicine – Jacksonville and deputy medical director of UF Health TraumaOne, who has dedicated his life to helping prevent drowning incidents.



DROWNING PREVENTION

KNOW YOUR LIMITS

Dr. Schmidt with his wife, Anne, on their wedding day in 2009. They have passed their passion and respect for the water on to their "little fishes," Addy and Asa.



A lifetime of lifesaving

Schmidt is originally from Ponte Vedra, Florida, and frequented Jacksonville beaches while growing up. He was consistently around lifeguards, including his older sister, eventually following in her footsteps. Schmidt became a junior lifeguard by age 12 and a lifeguard by age 16. He even met his wife, Anne, who is currently a physician assistant at UF Health North, while lifeguarding in 2000.

His experience near the water and lifesaving training led him to become an emergency medical technician and then, later to attend medical school to pursue a career in emergency medicine.

A commitment to educating others

In 2006, Schmidt co-founded Lifeguards Without Borders with Justin Sempstrott, a longtime lifeguard, friend and emergency medicine physician. The nonprofit organization offers drowning prevention and lifesaving training and development across the globe, with the goal of decreasing incidents of drowning through education and improving the science of open-water lifesaving.

Schmidt is also medical director of the Jacksonville Beach Ocean Rescue and the Volunteer Life Saving Corps, both of which provide lifeguard and lifesaving services for Jacksonville's beaches, along with ongoing education in the community.

In the past, Schmidt also held trainings at the beach for emergency medicine residents at the UF College of Medicine – Jacksonville and local lifeguards. The training is scheduled to restart again this year.

"Residents spend a lot of time saving lives indoors and in a medical environment," said Schmidt. "I wanted them to know how to save lives anywhere they are."

During the pandemic, Schmidt and his colleagues had to think fast. Numerous internal collaborations occurred to discuss best practices for ensuring the safety of lifeguards, and determining when it would be safe for the public to return to beaches and pools.

"The pandemic taught us that lifeguards are important frontline workers who need to be protected," said Schmidt. "They are sometimes overlooked, but they are your first line of defense when you're at the beach or pool."

Preventing the preventable

When it comes to preventing drowning incidents, Schmidt stresses to know your limits. This includes knowing how comfortable you are swimming or wading in water of any condition or depth. It also means remaining within arm's reach of children or loved ones who aren't experienced swimmers.

Schmidt encourages all beachgoers to follow weather and surf alerts before heading to the coast, and to be wary of rip currents or inclement weather. Stay close to a lifeguard, and ask where it is safe to swim.

"Lifeguards are positioned high up and in specific spots on the beach in order for them to see the currents. They are trained to know where it's safe to swim. Use them as your resource," encouraged Schmidt.

Don't ever go to the ocean alone or if no lifeguard is in view. Currents can be stronger than you assume, even if you are considered a strong swimmer.

"We've pulled people out of the ocean daily who know how to swim," warned Schmidt.

Pools are another huge factor in drownings, especially for young swimmers. Always be a hand's distance away from your child in the water. Try to get children trained as early as you can, so they feel comfortable, but never let this replace direct supervision. There are plenty of resources and lessons that parents can take advantage of in the community.

For adults, it's never too late to learn how to swim.

Though we encourage all to take preventive measures and know their limits to stay safe, UF Health is ready to handle any emergencies 24/7 and is staffed by board-certified emergency physicians as well as highly trained nurses and other medical professionals.

Abbreviated Breast MRI

UF Health Imaging Center – Wildlight helps to detect breast cancer in women with dense breasts.

Women with dense breasts have an increased risk of developing breast cancer. Although mammograms help in the detection of the early signs of breast cancer, it may be difficult to see small lesions or cancer in women with dense breasts.

UF Health Imaging Center – Wildlight has introduced a new screening technology unique to Northeast Florida. The abbreviated breast MRI procedure is a fast and effective supplemental screening tool in addition to 3D mammograms for the early detection of breast cancer in women with dense breasts and for women with a family history of breast cancer.

Abbreviated breast MRI, also referred to as AB-MRI, or fast breast MRI, is a radiation-free, shortened version of a breast MRI that screens for breast abnormalities, including cancers, not seen on a mammogram. AB-MRI is a quick procedure, only taking 15 minutes to complete.

Smita Sharma, MD, chief of the division of women's imaging at UF Health Jacksonville, and Haley Letter, MD, assistant professor and program director of the breast imaging and intervention fellowship at the UF College of Medicine – Jacksonville, have collaborated with the UF Health Women's Imaging team to make this screening available to patients.

"AB-MRI is shown to detect breast cancers that may be missed on 2D and 3D mammograms due to the masking effect of dense breast tissue. It's demonstrated to be the most sensitive tool for finding cancer in women with dense breasts," Letter said.

The science of breast tissue

Breasts consist of fatty, fibrous and glandular tissues, including lobules, as well as milk ducts and glands. Breast density refers to the amount of fibrous and glandular tissues. When viewed on a mammogram, dense breasts have more glandular and supportive tissues and less fatty tissues. While fatty tissues appear dark and transparent, dense tissues, as well as benign and cancerous masses, appear solid and white on a mammogram.

Nearly 50% of women ages 40 and older are found to have dense breasts during the preventive screening process. Although it is normal, heredity and other factors may affect breast density.

"While advanced aging, having children and taking tamoxifen hormonal therapy can reduce breast density, low body mass index and postmenopausal hormone therapy can be associated with higher breast density," Sharma said.

Density isn't felt or seen through breast self-exams or clinical exams, but is determined through mammography, with radiologists examining breast images for breast density.

Breast density screening process

Breast density is measured at four levels:

- Almost entirely fatty
- Scattered areas of fibroglandular tissue
- Heterogeneously dense
- Extremely dense

After a routine mammogram, the patient and referring health care provider receive a letter with results stating if dense breast tissue is present and identification of breast density category. The health care provider and patient may discuss mammography results and personal breast cancer risk to determine if a supplemental screening is recommended.

Women referred for an AB-MRI are evaluated to ensure their safety. Before the exam begins, a technologist places an IV with contrast dye in the patient's arm to enhance visibility of blood vessels and breast tissues. The patient lies face down on the MRI table, with the breast placed without compression into cushioned openings in the table.

AB-MRI is currently offered as a self-pay service, although expenses may be covered with flexible spending and health savings accounts.

Visit Wildlight.UFHealthJax.org to learn more about available women's imaging services and to schedule your routine 3D mammogram. Talk to your health care provider about your results and for a referral for an AB-MRI.

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ANCC Magnet Recognition® is the highest and most prestigious distinction that a health care organization can receive for nursing. As a Magnet-recognized organization, UF Health Jacksonville achieves excellence in five key areas:

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| SUPPORT
Collaboration across teams and departments | SHARED LEARNING
Evidence-based best practices and research | INNOVATION
Leadership in health care processes and delivery | CONFIDENCE
Nurses who are empowered to lead and work independently | PATIENT CARE
High standards and quality of care, resulting in better outcomes |
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Magnet recognition demonstrates our commitment to improving patient care and outcomes. Visit our website at UFHealthJax.org/Nursing to learn more about how we're continuing to lead health care delivery and patient outcomes.

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NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

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

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