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# NEW YEAR, NEW EXPANSIONS

We are officially in a new year with exciting plans underway. I am thrilled to be part of what's coming, and to share the progress and growth with all of you.

Construction will begin this year on our new 120-bed hospital tower at UF Health North. This will expand our capacity to care for more patients.

We are adding to our services with new hybrid emergency room and urgent care centers, bringing a new concept in emergency care to Jacksonville. The three centers are scheduled to open in late 2022. Jacksonville is the third city in the state to open a hybrid model, and our UF Health centers will be the first in Northeast Florida. The facilities will have ER physicians on staff, on-site lab equipment and a radiology suite with X-ray and multi-slice CT scanners.

Right now, people have to decide whether to go to an emergency room or to an urgent care center. This new model will give patients one place to go when they're not sure how serious their illness or injuries are.

Additionally, UF Health East is projected to open in the summer. Located at J. Turner Butler Boulevard and Kernan Boulevard in Jacksonville, the new facility will be three stories and span 53,000 square feet. It will feature an ambulatory surgery center and a medical office building that will house several specialties, including neurosurgery, orthopaedics, gynecology and more.

All of these changes are critical steps toward our goal of expanding our footprint across Jacksonville and Northeast Florida, and to help us achieve our vision of being the region's most valued health care asset.

As always, it is an honor and privilege to be your CEO.

Sincerely,



Russell E. Armistead, MBA  
CEO, UF Health Jacksonville



## New Art Sculptures at UF Health Jacksonville

UF Health Jacksonville has beautiful and unique sculptures displayed across the downtown campus thanks to an anonymous donor and a local artist, Scotie Cousin. The new, vibrant art pieces feature colorful animals and flowers.

Cousin has been making art for nearly 45 years, but he's recently focused on nature-themed sculptures, sand and chalk designs. His sculptures are made from plastic and other recyclable materials.

The new additions bring splashes of color to the campus and smiles to patients, visitors and employees.



# FROM FIGHT RING TO SURGICAL SUITE



◀ From L to R: Daryoush Tavanaiepour, MD.  
Ariane Carnelossi. Kourosh Tavanaiepour, DO.

## Professional Brazilian MMA fighter receives emergency spine surgery at UF Health North.

As a professional MMA fighter, Ariane Carnelossi knows what it takes to fight through pain. Training camps for professional fighters push combatants to their physical and mental limits, so competing with persistent injuries can be part of the job.

On April 24, 2021, however, Carnelossi's preliminary match in Jacksonville did not go as planned. She had pain resurface in the weeks leading up to the fight from herniated disc surgery performed the year prior. She wasn't able to move without extreme pain, much less train to fight an opponent with 17 professional fights under her belt. Carnelossi recalled how much pain she was in — barely able to walk — going into the fight that night.

"I thought I would not be able to fight, but the promoter allowed me to and I won," Carnelossi said. "After the adrenaline wore off, the pain returned, and I needed a doctor immediately."

Carnelossi was taken to UF Health North, where imaging revealed she would need another surgery to repair the herniated disc. Unbeknownst to Carnelossi, UF Health neurosurgeons Daryoush Tavanaiepour, MD, and Kourosh Tavanaiepour, DO, had floor seats at the fight and witnessed her extraordinary performance.

"When we reviewed the MRI, it was like a bomb had gone off in her lower spine," Kourosh Tavanaiepour said.

The large herniated disc was out of place and was pushing on all of the nerves. The surgeons could see she was in agony.

The surgery would be complicated, since it was a revisionary procedure from the prior surgery done in Brazil. Another complication was that Carnelossi only spoke Portuguese. After working with an interpreter to review her medical history and speak with her doctor in Brazil, the Tavanaiepours realized they had to contend with scar tissue and possible nerve damage, which could lead to weakness

or bladder issues. With the additional information and their combined expertise, the Tavanaiepours felt confident a minimally invasive approach would work.

"One thing I am very proud of, and why I love working at UF Health Jacksonville, is that we have patients from different communities all over the world, and our infrastructure supports all patients," Daryoush Tavanaiepour said.

As fellowship-trained, board-certified neurosurgeons, the Tavanaiepours launched the UF Health Comprehensive Spine Center – North in 2016. Their goal was to provide leading-edge care for the treatment of complex spine conditions and improve patients' quality of life by providing the highest level of care. Carnelossi's issue was complicated, but her condition was no match for the experienced team, which specializes in difficult cases.

"Ariane's case was challenging, but we are a comprehensive spine center," Kourosh Tavanaiepour said. "We don't just do fusions, but any surgery involving the spine, including minimally invasive to complex scoliosis cases and even spine tumors. We have a planned process that follows the patient from surgery to recovery to physical therapy."

Once out of surgery and placed in the ICU for observation, it was clear Carnelossi's procedure had been a success. The extreme pain she experienced leading up to and after the fight had subsided.

"Everybody at UF Health took care of me. Not only the Tavanaiepours, but all the nurses made me feel like I was at home," Carnelossi said. "It was the first time in my life I didn't want to leave the hospital."

**Visit [UFHealthJax.org/spine](https://UFHealthJax.org/spine) to learn more about the UF Health Comprehensive Spine Center – North and the services offered.**





## A UF Health Jacksonville emergency nurse started her career in health care after seeing her brother in action.

Most health care professionals can describe why they chose their career, whether it's a desire to care for the community, interest in science or family connection to medicine. For Andrea Koller and her brother, Brian Brown, their passion for health care runs deep and has only gotten stronger over the past 20 years.

### Finding their calling

Koller, an emergency medicine charge nurse at UF Health Jacksonville, can vividly recall when she was inspired to go into patient care. More than 20 years ago, she was working as a surgical technician. Her role offered limited, if any, interaction with patients, and she just didn't feel like the job was the right fit for her.

Koller had always been very close with Brown, who is a firefighter and paramedic for Baker County. He initially started a career in insurance after college, similar to what their parents did. However, his heart wasn't in it. Brown was always interested in medicine, ever since he was transported in an ambulance at 15 years old after breaking his leg playing baseball. He remembered

how the first responders who transported him to the emergency room were cautious yet swift, ensuring he could receive care as quickly as possible.

While Brown was still working in the insurance field, a friend who worked in the Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department encouraged him to work toward becoming an EMT. While in school, Brown was a wheelchair driver for a private ambulance company. One evening in 2000, Koller was able to join her brother on an ambulance call. She observed how he helped others and carefully transported patients, and she was fascinated. She then decided to follow in his footsteps and become an EMT herself.

Both Koller and Brown furthered their education and careers, with Koller eventually becoming a nurse and Brown becoming a paramedic. Koller began her journey at UF Health as an emergency room nurse in October 2012. When UF Health North opened in 2017, Brian served as the intra-campus critical care paramedic, so he was able to work more closely and frequently with his sister.

## Working together to save lives

The siblings' roots in Jacksonville, paired with their health care expertise, have helped them provide the best patient care possible. Brown knows the area well, and his history at UF Health opened his eyes to the fantastic care from TraumaOne specialists.

"It's great knowing the staff in trauma and the emergency room," said Brown. "Though we always transport patients to the nearest hospital, UF Health is usually my go-to, since 99% of the time we are transporting trauma patients."

When Brown is transporting patients to UF Health Jacksonville, he calls and alerts Koller that there will be an incoming trauma patient. They are able to easily communicate and coordinate to ensure patients are taken in safely and cared for quickly.

## Expanding care outside the community

Besides saving lives in Jacksonville and surrounding areas, Brown and Koller are passionate about serving others who don't have easy access to care. Brown has participated in multiple medical mission trips, and Koller joined him in 2019 on a trip to El Salvador.

"It's a life-changing experience," said Koller. "Just seeing other people in another country and the medical care they don't have that we do is eye-opening and humbling."

Along with a team of pharmacists, paramedics and a nurse practitioner, physician assistant and physician, Koller and Brown set up a mobile medical clinic, during which they dispersed medications, screened patients for health issues and referred them to a physician assistant or physician for additional treatment as needed.

Koller and Brown look forward to going on mission trips in the future and continuing to provide care to those who need it.

## A meaningful career at any age

Koller and Brown stress that anyone interested in working in health care can do so at any age and to stay fearless and honest.

"Go for it — go all in," said Koller. "You're never too old to do anything. If [health care] is what you really want to do, do it."

Koller is truly passionate about working in an academic health center, as it allows her to learn from other nurses, residents and physicians. She also appreciates how everyone works together so easily, no matter their title or responsibilities.

For Brown, being in medicine for 21 years has allowed him to see patients recover after experiencing trauma. He remembers one instance, during which he loaded a 17-year-old patient into an ambulance after the teen experienced cardiac arrest. The teen was a star swimmer and tennis player for a local high school. It was tough for Brown to see such a young and seemingly healthy person in an emergency situation, but thankfully, the teen recovered and is doing fine.

"Being able to see the after-effect, the patient who can walk away and live after experiencing an emergency, is the most rewarding part of my job," said Brown.

Brown's advice, along with not being afraid to change your career, is to own your mistakes and grow from them. He encourages those interested in health care to do things in confidence and not arrogance, and grow from constructive criticism.

UF Health Jacksonville stands ready to handle emergencies 24/7 with highly qualified, board-certified emergency medicine physicians and experienced, compassionate nurses and staff.

# SIBLINGS WHO SAVE LIVES



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## OPENLINES

### NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

April – Jan. 15

May – Feb. 15

June – March 15

July – April 15

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)**

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