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RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING CARE

I am exceedingly proud to work alongside all of the faculty and staff at UF Health Jacksonville, the UF College of Medicine – Jacksonville and the University of Florida Jacksonville Physicians Inc. You are the heart of our enterprise and the ones who make a difference in a patient's care.

We continuously hear great feedback from patients and have received notes thanking a few employees. Recently, Lashaye Parker, a phlebotomist at a UF Health oncology infusion center, was praised for her caring and positive personality. Thanks to her encouraging demeanor, the patient feels comfortable coming in for regular bloodwork.

Several employees were also recognized for outstanding care to a patient with multiple medical issues who was averse to coming to the hospital for testing. Visiting the doctor, especially for those battling illness, can be a daunting experience. Everyone, from the front desk staff to the nurses to the doctors to the support staff, made the patient feel cared for and at ease.

Additionally, this summer, more than 50 of our physicians were recognized in Jacksonville Magazine's Top Doctors issue. This is not only a great recognition, but validation for our amazing faculty members who work tirelessly for the well-being of our patients.

The magazine highlights some of our region's leading physicians and serves as a tool to help guide residents in their health care decisions. I was thrilled to see UF well represented across most specialties in the region.

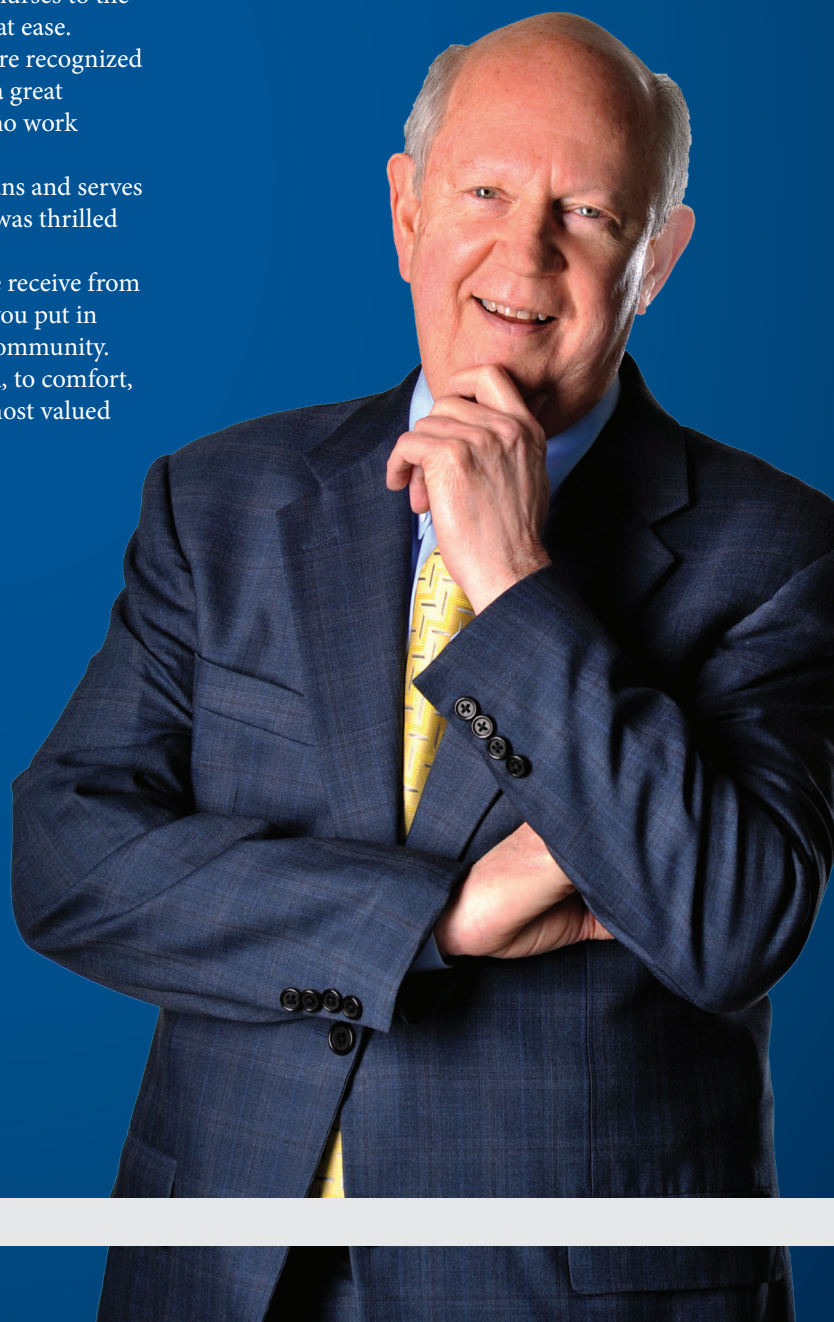
These examples are only a glimpse of the positive feedback we receive from patients and the community, and a testament to the hard work you put in every day to provide the best care possible to our patients and community.

We thank all of you for your dedication to our mission to heal, to comfort, to educate and to discover, and to our vision to be the region's most valued health care asset.

Sincerely,



Russell E. Armistead, MBA
CEO, UF Health Jacksonville



BetterYou STRIDES



Earn points and save on your wellness plans

The Better You Strides program is a positive way to improve your health and put money back in your pocket. UF Health Jacksonville and University of Florida Jacksonville Physicians Inc. employees with GatorCare insurance must earn 500 points prior to Tuesday, Nov. 15 to receive the wellness credit and save money on 2023 health insurance premiums.

Start now by following these steps:

1. Log in to your Florida Blue account at floridablue.com. Navigate to the top toolbar and click "Health and Wellness" and then click "Better You Strides."
2. Complete your required personal health assessment for 100 points.
3. Additional activities can be completed online to earn points. The full list of rewardable activities can be found on the Employee Wellness page on the Bridge.

IMPORTANT NOTES

The personal health assessment and flu vaccination are required to receive the wellness credit. You can self-report the following items for points:

- Flu vaccination — 100 points
- COVID-19 vaccination — 100 points
- Annual wellness exam with physician — 100 points
- Preventive screenings (2 max) — 50 points each
- Run 5k/active gym membership — 50 points

All points must be earned prior to Nov. 15, 2022.

IMPROVING HEALTH EQUITY

The Urban Health Alliance celebrates new funding and growth.



From L-R: UF Health leaders at the Social Services Hub ribbon-cutting in June 2021; Francis Paige, a Total Care Clinic patient, shops in the Food Pharmacy's "grocery store" as part of her nutrition plan with the program.

The UF Health Urban Health Alliance, or UHA, opened the social services hub and headquarters in the Professional Office Building in June 2021. The program has been active for more than two years after launching in late 2019. It has experienced tremendous growth and accomplishments within the past year alone, and is continuously working toward eliminating health disparities.

UHA is a comprehensive resource and community health network that brings organizations and services together to help improve the health and wellness of those considered to be the most vulnerable populations in the community. UHA is built on four pillars: service, education, research and policy.

Service

The Food Pharmacy was created to support UF Health Total Care Clinic – Jacksonville patients who have chronic conditions and food insecurity, while also providing nutrition classes to make a long-term impact on their lives. Nutrition classes consist of education and food demonstrations. Topics included eating healthy on a budget, understanding food labels and educating on chronic diseases such as diabetes, cholesterol and hypertension.

This past year, the Food Pharmacy served approximately 240 patients each month. Francis Paige, a Total Care Clinic and Food Pharmacy patient, expressed her gratitude for the program.

"I have a better understanding of what I should be eating while living with diabetes," Paige said. "Since I began receiving food from the pharmacy, my cholesterol has also improved."

The Food Pharmacy reported a 75% improvement in hemoglobin A1C for diabetic patients and a 36% improvement in blood pressure for patients with hypertension. The program continues to welcome new patients and support the UHA's goal of improving the health of vulnerable patients.

Another program under the UHA service pillar is the Social Services Hub. The hub opened in June 2021, and collaborates with other organizations to assist patients who need support locating housing, finding jobs and much more. On-site staff ensure each patient is connected with what they need. Organizations working with the Hub, such as Yoga 4 Change, provide an opportunity for patients to engage with each other and offer support and encouragement. Other organizations, such as Family Foundation, provide educational resources to support patient needs.

Education

From the earliest days of the pandemic, UHA prioritized COVID-19 education. In the beginning, the focus was on offering testing for residents, and it now encompasses vaccine education in order to increase understanding, reduce fear, eliminate myths and increase vaccination rates. The UHA team recognized the need to shift quickly from testing to vaccine education. Volunteer staff and community health workers engaged and educated more than 2,312 residents across the community, specifically in areas with higher health vulnerabilities. This helped to mitigate fears and concerns among residents.

Research

In January 2021, UHA received a \$248,000 award from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute's Eugene Washington PCORI Engagement Awards program to drive patient participation in health disparities research.

This allowed the UHA team to work on new projects, such as:

- Conducting listening sessions with patients, community members, providers and other stakeholders to identify key barriers and solutions to improve health equity.
- Developing a patient-centered research approach.
- Recruiting and training community members to serve as citizen scientists.

The grant also contributed to the development of a health disparities data center, which collects and houses data and reports generated by UF Health personnel and other community members.

Policy

Earlier this year, UHA was also awarded \$3.7 million in grant funding by the Florida Blue Foundation to establish the Center for Health Equity and Social Justice. The center is bringing together diverse stakeholders to conduct research and educate the community. The center's work has begun with strategic planning and infrastructure building, which will be led by the center's director, Atiya Abdelmalik, PhD.

The UHA will continue to address many complex needs that focus on the social determinants impacting our patients' ability to live the healthiest lives possible. For more information, to volunteer, or to contribute and share thoughts, please contact the UHA team at uha@jax.ufl.edu.

Faheem Guirgis, MD, director of the Center for Research Training, engages in conversation with a faculty member in the program.



LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH

As UF Health Jacksonville and the University of Florida College of Medicine – Jacksonville move forward in the collective mission to heal, to comfort, to educate and to discover, the Center for Research Training provides unique resources that promote discovery and research.

The Center for Research Training is part of the larger ecosystem within the Office of Research Affairs and provides faculty a variety of opportunities to learn how to conduct sound and impactful research. More importantly, the center is structured to allow engagement across the full spectrum of interest levels, from those looking to obtain general knowledge on research processes to those wanting to build large, federally funded research programs.



RESEARCH ESSENTIALS

All Faculty, Fellows and Trainees

Study Design; Basic Biostatistics;
Scientific Writing; Networking;
Career Forums

RESEARCH TRAINING ACADEMY

Select Faculty

In-Depth Study Design; Grant Writing Course;
Grant Support and Funding Opportunities;
Career Coaching

JAX SCHOLARS

Top RTA Applicant

Two-Year Program;
Dedicated Protected Time;
\$15k/year for Research; K Grant Application

The Tiers

The Center for Research Training comprises three research training programs that offer a tiered curriculum ranging from the basics of clinical research to applying for grants. The tiers include Research Essentials, Research Training Academy and Jax Scholars.

Tier 1: Research Essentials provides a broad introduction to research and features free monthly seminars for anyone interested in research.

Tier 2: Research Training Academy, or RTA, targets a more specific group of faculty members selected by their department chairs and offers them protected time to engage in more intensive training on grant writing and research methodology.

Tier 3: Jax Scholars represents a very select group of faculty with a deep personal commitment as well as support from their chair to build and maintain federally funded research programs. These scholars are selected from the group of RTA participants, and receive funding to conduct research projects and advance their research careers. In addition to internal funding support, they also receive career coaching from the Office of Research Affairs staff and center directors Faheem Guirgis, MD, and Colleen Kalynych, EdD.

Sarah King, program manager for the Center for Research Training, says the program has seen great success and hopes to generate more interest from eligible faculty.

“Currently, there are three Jax Scholars in Tier 3 who are receiving support to build independently funded research programs in cardiology, pediatric genetics and cancer biomarkers/therapeutics. In parallel, more than 20 faculty across several departments are or have participated in the Tier 2 Research Training Academy since its inception in 2019,” King said. “These programs are valuable tools we have developed for our faculty that foster growth, mentorship and development for those who want to dive into research on any level.”

While all tiers are important for learning the research process, Jax Scholars is significant. Following the completion of the course and a grant submission process, one faculty member is selected to receive the Jax Scholars award. The award allows selected faculty 30% of protected time for research activities and career development during the two-year position. The award winner also receives \$30,000 in research funding split evenly between the two years.

Tina Bottini, senior associate dean for research affairs, says this program provides a balance between research pursuits and clinical duties.

“Our training programs are designed to help faculty achieve success in the research process,” Bottini said. “These resources are readily available and serve as a tool to increase and encourage clinical research on our campus as we work to find solutions to advance medicine.”

Visit med.jax.ufl.edu/center-research-training for more information or call 904.244.9276 to learn how to apply.

Faculty members in the Center for Research Training program during a research session.



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OPENLINES

NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

November/December: Aug. 15

January 2023: Sept. 30

February 2023: Nov. 15

March 2023: Dec. 15

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

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