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OPENLINES



DONATE LIFE: A LEGACY OF LOVE

04

Vision Fest: Life Transformed

Celebrating UF Health's strategic vision and goals.

06

COVER STORY

A young woman continues helping others through the gift of organ donation.

08

Calming the Tremors

Deep brain stimulation improves patient's quality of life.

TRANSFORMING OUR COMMUNITIES

It's been an exciting year so far. With the help of our community partners, we were able to expand access to medical care by opening three innovative centers that combine Emergency and Urgent Care. It was a pleasure to celebrate each of those milestones with ribbon-cuttings and share the news with people in the surrounding neighborhoods.

We also gathered in February for the UF Health Vision Fest. With a variety of speakers and presentations, we reflected on how we have grown as an organization and where we are headed next. David Nelson, MD, senior vice president for health affairs at UF and president of UF Health, spoke about our continued goal of improving health in our local communities and shared our new strategic roadmap — One UF Health Together.

The event also focused on our ability to directly impact the health of the Jacksonville community. Ann-Marie Knight, MHA, FACHE, vice president of community engagement and chief diversity officer at UF Health Jacksonville, shared details about our overall efforts to support and improve community health during the Vision Fest event. We will continue to use research and outreach to learn and implement best practices that will improve access to health care for those in our most vulnerable neighborhoods.

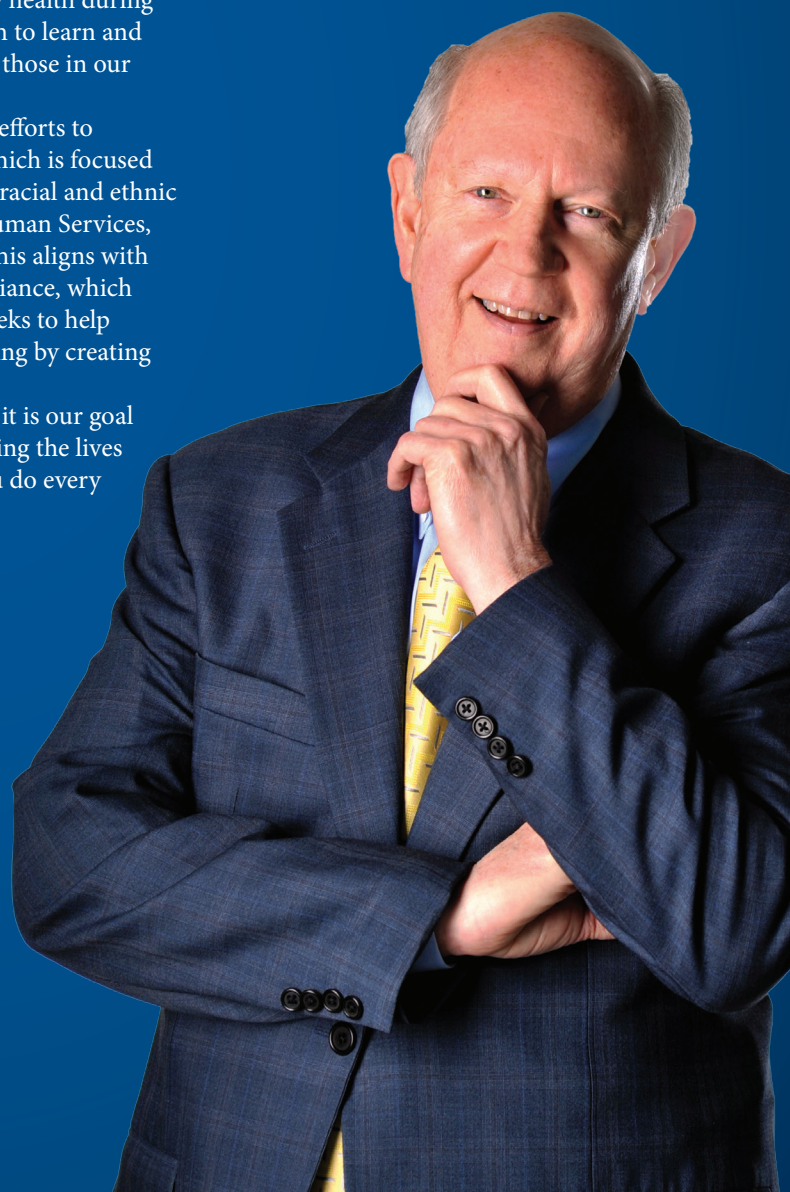
This month, we are again reminded about the importance of our efforts to improve health equity. April is National Minority Health Month, which is focused on raising awareness about health disparities affecting people from racial and ethnic minority groups. According to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, this year's theme is Better Health Through Better Understanding. This aligns with our goals and programs, including the UF Health Urban Health Alliance, which aims to improve health equity for minority groups. The program seeks to help residents achieve their full potential for optimal health and well-being by creating community-initiated, self-sustainable solutions.

It will take time to make permanent changes and see growth, but it is our goal to continue striving toward improving health equity and transforming the lives of our community members. As always, thank you for the work you do every day. It is an honor to serve as your CEO.

Sincerely,



Russell E. Armistead, MBA
CEO, UF Health Jacksonville



Chief Nursing Officer

Patrice Jones
Leaves Behind a Legacy
at UF Health

From l-r: Patrice with her grandchildren; Patrice and her daughter, Emily, at her graduation, where she earned her doctorate of nursing practice; Patrice with Ileana Martinez, RN, and Leny Quindoza, RN, at the Magnet conference in 2013; Patrice with Daisy Award winner Kyra Knighton, RN, (right) and her nurse manager Cindy Collins, RN, (left).

Patrice Jones, DNP, RN, NE-BC, vice president and chief nursing officer at UF Health Jacksonville, is retiring at the end of April after more than a decade at UF Health Jacksonville and more than 40 years in the nursing profession. Patrice has been an instrumental leader for the Nursing department and leaves behind an incredible legacy.

Under her guidance, UF Health Jacksonville has maintained its status as a Magnet-recognized hospital by the American Nurses Credentialing Center, an honor that signifies the organization's commitment to highest-quality nursing practice and offers patients the highest quality care possible. Patrice led the organization through Magnet recertification twice — once in 2016 and most recently in 2021.

Patrice also made great strides in improving staff and patient interactions through the use of initiatives such as relationship-based care. She began an effort to develop the role of clinical quality nurse leaders dedicated to improving patient care by working with staff at the bedside.

Patrice also encouraged our nursing staff to achieve higher education. One of her proudest moments as CNO

was collaborating with the UF College of Nursing to launch undergraduate nursing programs at UF Health Jacksonville. Together they were able to offer an online RN to BSN program for staff and the UF Accelerated BSN Nursing

Program (Academic Partnership Unit Program), which was designed for second-degree students who wanted to obtain a nursing degree.

Under her leadership, the number of bedside nurses to earn a bachelor's of science in nursing increased from 48% to 77% today — a remarkable achievement. Patrice also led by example, earning her doctorate in nursing practice during her time at UF Health Jacksonville.

These are just a few examples of the impact Patrice has had on the nursing teams as a dynamic and caring leader.

Though she will be greatly missed, Patrice

is looking forward to spending time with her family and five grandchildren here in Northeast Florida and also on her farm in Alabama, where she can cheer on her beloved University of Alabama Crimson Tide. Patrice loves to read and already has several books lined up to enjoy in retirement. She also plans to stay active and travel, with several family trips to the beach already planned for this summer.

“I love nursing and my nurses. I encourage you all to keep raising the bar for excellence and be the leaders for quality and safety in our hospital. I will miss you all but I know you are well positioned for any future opportunities.”



Improving Community Health

Nelson shared that one of UF Health Jacksonville's strengths is improving health through community engagement. Ann-Marie Knight, MHA, FACHE, vice president of community engagement and chief diversity officer at UF Health Jacksonville, shared her passion for improving the health of the local community through various programs her team has implemented.

Leigh Neumayer, MD, chair of the department of surgery at the UF College of Medicine – Jacksonville, also touched on this important subject as she discussed how they leverage local research to directly impact the care of her patients.

“The UF Health mission and vision aligns with my core values and those around me. The teamwork and commitment to improving the health of individual patients and the underserved population in our community is clear throughout this organization, and I am proud to be a part of this team.”

– Joe Tucker, RN

A special event at UF Health Jacksonville celebrated UF Health's strategic vision and goals.

In February, faculty and staff gathered to celebrate the future of UF Health and how we are evolving as we continue working toward our goals to transform the lives of our patients and improve the health of our community.

At the event, David Nelson, MD, senior vice president for health affairs at UF & president of UF Health, spoke about UF Health's new strategic roadmap, "One UF Health Together," and the core values that unite us in our efforts to transform lives, offer hope and come together as one at UF Health. Nelson also discussed our goals, which encompass patient care, research, education, community partnership and work environment.

"It's a time to reaffirm our existing values and to infuse additional emphasis on things like integrity, respect, teamwork, well-being and inclusion — all critical for success as we move forward," Nelson said. "Our biggest measurement of success will be whether we leave the world, the state of Florida and our communities in a better place than how we found them."



During the event, we also heard from Kevin Green, MD, pulmonary and critical care medicine fellow at the UF College of Medicine – Jacksonville, as well as Joe Tucker, RN, PICU nurse manager at UF Health Jacksonville, who has been with the enterprise for 20 years.

"The UF Health mission and vision aligns with my core values and those around me. The teamwork and commitment to improving the health of individual patients and the underserved population in our community is clear throughout this organization, and I am proud to be a part of this team," Tucker said.

Lastly, Vonceil Bradford, a breast cancer survivor and former UF Health Jacksonville patient, shared her incredible story about her fight against breast cancer and how UF Health saved and transformed her life. Read Bradford's full story at OpenLines.UFHealthJax.org.

Vision Fest: Life Transformed

by Sarah Le



From l-r: Cinnamon lived her life to the fullest; James, Taylor and Cinnamon pose together for a family photo.

DONATE LIFE: A LEGACY OF LOVE

A young woman continues helping others through the gift of organ donation.

Cinnamon Smith is described as vibrant, bold, loving and caring by her family members. She enjoyed being outdoors, caring for animals and fishing. Cinnamon was especially enamored by sunflowers. "She always had a smile on her face and knew how to make others feel better," said James Diamond, Cinnamon's brother.

Most of all, she enjoyed helping others. She continued this even in death. In April 2021, Cinnamon died at the young age of 30. As a registered organ donor, however, her story didn't end. Cinnamon was able to donate her liver, both kidneys and her heart to three recipients. Her gifts of life to others occurred during April, the month designated as National Donate Life, a time dedicated to honoring organ and tissue donors.

Caring for Others

Cinnamon's decision to become a donor showed that her spirit of giving to others was present in everything she did. She had a love for the medical field early on and participated in Doctors Without Borders, helping with corrective leg surgery for young children in the Dominican Republic.

Though her family greatly misses her, they are comforted in knowing she was able to help provide a second chance to someone else gives them hope.

"If she could help someone better their life, or help them live, that's what she always wanted to do, even now that she's gone," said Taylor Diamond, Cinnamon's mom. "She believed in giving life."

Despite Cinnamon's physical absence, her legacy of love and kindness continues through the donation of life she has given to others. Though the recipients never met his sister, James believes her gracious spirit is with them.

Quoting a poem written to honor her daughter, Taylor finds peace in Cinnamon's generous gift. "Our baby girl will live on through this gift. May the light she gave us find its way to give life and hope to others."

Saving a Life

Cinnamon's organ donation helped saved the lives of others. One organ recipient wrote a thank-you letter letting Cinnamon's family know how grateful they are: "Through the gift of organ donation, I will have the chance to be there for my wife, children and my wonderful grandson. My family and I can't thank your family enough for this precious gift."

Cinnamon's legacy will continue to live on through those who received her organs and were given a second chance at life. Her family encourages others to become organ donors as a simple way to give back and help others.

"It doesn't cost anything extra to become an organ donor," James said. "It helps extend someone's life and hopefully gives them new joy and a fresh perspective."



Becoming an organ donor only takes a few minutes when you sign up online at [DonateLifeFlorida.org](https://donatelife.org). One organ donor can provide organs for up to eight people.

According to LifeQuest Organ Recovery Services, 242 donors provided 566 people with the gift of life last year through UF Health Jacksonville, UF Health Shands Hospital and other hospitals across northern Florida. In 2022, LifeQuest provided organs to 65 transplant centers.

Donate Life America notes that every nine minutes, someone is added to the national transplant waiting list, which already includes more than 100,000 people waiting for lifesaving organ transplants. The demand for organ, eye and tissue donations continues to exceed the number of donors.

For more information on registering to become an organ donor in Florida, please visit LifeQuestFla.org.

Deep brain stimulation improves quality of life by reducing tremors.

Alan Clark enjoyed riding his motorcycle on breezy, Sunday afternoons down the uncrowded roads near his home. In early 2015, Clark noticed that his left arm would jerk a little while he was riding. Assuming it might be associated with his back problems, Clark made a visit to his primary care provider, where they ordered a CT scan and eventually diagnosed him with Parkinson's disease.

Clark was prescribed carbidopa and levodopa, a combination of medications used to treat Parkinson's. The medications initially worked, dramatically reducing the tremors on his left side. For the next few years, Clark was getting along fine, until the tremors worsened. This resulted in Clark taking more medications and experiencing anxiety as he found it more difficult to be around people.

"I was becoming more isolated," Clark said. "I didn't want to go out to restaurants or even be around my friends in church."

Clark tried other medications for Parkinson's, but they either didn't work or caused serious side effects. He remained on carbidopa and levodopa for several more years, dealing with his tremors and anxiety.

Clark eventually came to the tough decision to sell his motorcycle, since he was no longer confident that he could keep his balance while riding.

CALMING THE TREMORS

By Wesley Taff



Discovering DBS

In 2021, Clark was researching online and discovered deep brain stimulation, or DBS, a treatment that can help reduce the symptoms of epilepsy, Parkinson's and other movement disorders.

DBS is a surgery to implant a device that sends electrical signals to brain areas responsible for body movements. Electrodes are placed deep into the brain and are connected to a stimulator device. Similar to a heart pacemaker, a neurostimulator uses electric pulses to regulate brain activity.

Once surgery is complete, the DBS device is programmed in the outpatient clinic by a neurologist. Successful DBS allows people to potentially reduce their medications and improve their quality of life.

The DBS team at UF Health Jacksonville

With a recommendation from his doctor, Clark met with Daryoush Tavanaiepour, MD, chair of the Department of Neurosurgery and medical director of the Neuromodulation Program. After an extensive evaluation process with a multidisciplinary team of neurologists and neurosurgeons, Clark was considered a good candidate for DBS.

Tavanaiepour and his team performed two separate surgeries in late 2021. The first surgery was to place an electrode, which is a thin, insulated wire inserted through a small opening in the skull and implanted in a targeted area of the brain. Along with the electrode placement, another insulated wire extension was placed under the skin of the head, neck and shoulder, connecting the lead to the neurostimulator.

The second surgery was to implant an impulse generator battery in Clark's abdomen. Both surgeries went well.

DBS programming sessions

Several months after surgery, Clark underwent programming sessions with the DBS neurostimulator. This device is battery-operated and programmed to control symptoms, similar to a cardiac pacemaker.

The DBS neurostimulator is able to identify the stimulator settings that improve symptoms and those that cause side effects. To reduce the likelihood of side effects, settings are manually adjusted while the patient is moving their arms, talking, standing and walking.

Clark continues to have routine follow-up visits with Joseph Legacy, MD, a UF Health Jacksonville neurologist who specializes in movement disorders.

Reclaiming normal

Since having the DBS surgery, Clark has regained the ability to do many simple activities, such as twisting a nut onto a bolt, buttoning his shirt, eating cereal, combing his hair and brushing his teeth.

Clark's social anxiety is now gone. He enjoys visiting his favorite restaurants and meeting up with friends at church.

"My golf putting has gotten a lot better," Clark said. "My cat is happy that I'm back to normal. With the tremors, I couldn't even coordinate my hands enough to pet the cat."

Visit UFHealthJax.org/DBS or call 904.383.1022 to learn more about DBS, or ask your doctor for a referral to schedule an appointment.



top right: Daryoush Tavanaiepour, MD
left: Alan Clark

High-quality health care, patient trust, education and resources serve as key factors for safe, healthy pregnancies for minority women.

Infant and maternal mortality. Racial biases. Patient mistrust. All are challenges facing minority women as they embark on their journeys into motherhood. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 700 women die during pregnancy each year. Another 50,000 women have unexpected outcomes of labor and delivery, resulting in short- or long-term health consequences.

Recent studies have shown that Black women are three times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than white women. The preterm birth rate among Black women is 56% higher in Florida and 12% higher in Duval County as compared to other women. Factors such as underlying chronic conditions, racism, implicit bias within the medical community and reduced access to quality health care contribute to these outcomes. UF Health Jacksonville is committed to reducing maternal mortality among minority women.

LaRae C. Brown, MD, FACOG, medical director at UF Health Women's Specialists – North, specializes in obstetrics and gynecology. Brown highlights the organization's steps to ensure the best possible outcomes for minority women in pregnancy and delivery.

"Our organization has taken a comprehensive approach to this issue by working closely with I.D.E.A. (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access)," said Brown, who also serves on the group's executive board. "Formalized training on diversity, equity and inclusion is imperative, as it brings knowledge and awareness to some of the issues minority women face in their fertility, labor and delivery, and pregnancy journey. It also provides robust clinical leadership and review of these outcomes, and also maintains a constant improvement process to combat the trend."

Self-Advocacy and Improving Minority Maternal Health

Self-advocacy is more important than ever for minority women, to help ensure they receive adequate health care while they are pregnant. Take professional tennis player Serena Williams, for example. Considered among the greatest tennis players of all time, the 23-time Grand Slam Singles title winner is one of the most recognizable athletes of our time, both on and off the court.

But in January 2018, Williams shared her birthing experience with Vogue magazine four months after giving birth to her first child. As with thousands of Black mothers in the United States, Williams' pregnancy was traumatic and high-risk. Ultimately, she had to be her own advocate after delivery in order to save her life.

"Serena's story explicitly underlies some of the challenges minority women face," Brown said. "Serena is famous. She's rich. Yet, she is a minority woman with predisposing health conditions, and still, with all of her positives, felt like her voice was not being heard."

Women must know how to advocate for themselves before, during and after childbirth. But how? An article published on the health and wellness website VeryWellFamily.com suggests that women should ask questions about their treatment and care, get second opinions if curious about alternative options, and maintain sound support systems.

Board-certified physicians and trained staff members at UF Health Women's Specialists – North conduct safety checks that help bolster relationships between patients and their providers. Brown says she encourages her patients to speak up — if something doesn't seem right, say something. Bring up your concerns to your provider right away.

"Building trust between the patient and the provider is paramount. As much as the physician can give the patient time and information, the patient is also responsible for returning that information to the provider. It's a healthy and productive balance of both perspectives," said Brown.

Essential Education and Resources

UF Health Jacksonville offers high-level expertise, education, programs and resources for minority patients, designed to improve access to quality health care and pregnancy outcomes.

"We have a robust, high-risk labor and delivery division, maternal and fetal medicine department, and a diverse workforce of providers, nurses and staff that our patients interact with," Brown said.

Little Miracles, Healthy Start and the Nurse-Family Partnership are community and evidence-based programs to increase prenatal and infant care in Jacksonville and throughout the First Coast. Little Miracles provides pregnancy tests, prenatal and infant care assistance, and maternity and childbirth education. Healthy Start is a nurse-led, prenatal case management program for high-risk women, which provides childbirth, breastfeeding and parenting classes, and assistance through Medicare enrollment. The Nurse-Family Partnership program provides nurse-led prenatal case management, infant health care and home visitation from birth to two years.

"The safety net of our organization and its reach into community programs and assistance is a strength of being associated with an extensive university system," Brown said. "From a medical standpoint, patients can access many specialists within the same hospital system, which is a plus. We also have access to expert-level medical care, and new and upcoming technologies available throughout our various locations."

"I'm proud of our organization, specifically our labor and delivery department at UF Health North, with its allegiance to maintaining the quality of care for all patients. We recognize problems early. We listen to our patients. Minority women will have as safe and healthy an experience as possible under our care."

Keys to Improving Minority Maternity Care

By Stephanie W. Dunlap

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EDITOR

Sarah Le

DESIGN & LAYOUT

Darcy Ladd

PHOTOGRAPHY

Cole Brown
Nelson Keefer
Deremer Studios LLC

CONTRIBUTORS

Stephanie Dunlap
Sarah Le
Alex Linton
Wesley Taff

The logo for UFHealth Jacksonville, featuring the text "UFHealth" in a serif font with an orange arc above the "F", and "JACKSONVILLE" in a smaller, sans-serif font below it.

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