The Florida Hospital Association (FHA) is proud to release its 2020 Community Benefit Report, highlighting our member hospitals’ incredible efforts to improve the health and well-being of their communities beyond direct hospital care. In 2019, FHA member hospitals contributed $4.9 billion in benefits to their communities, which represents 13.7 percent of operating expenses, including:

• $3.9 billion in free care for low-income patients
• $390.5 million on health professional education, workforce development, and research
• $642.1 million on community health improvement and community building activities.

These data are from 2019, but the report also includes examples of community benefit in action in 2020 as Florida’s hospitals responded to an unprecedented public health crisis, coming together in extraordinary ways to prepare and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our hospitals stood up COVID-19 testing sites, developed innovative programs to support physical and mental wellness, and worked to ensure students were prepared to return to school.

Every day, hospital caregivers and teams across the state are working around the clock, caring for their patients. Their dedication to serve extends beyond the walls of their hospitals to care and support their communities. This report is a snapshot of the incredible work of Florida’s hospitals. Here are a few examples from the many highlighted projects and programs described within:

Baptist Health Care Pensacola partnered with the University of West Florida to manufacture face shield kits for first responders and health care providers.

Lifestream Behavioral Center developed a community partnership with local health care partners and law enforcement agencies to help those with opioid and substance use disorders.

West Kendall Baptist Hospital started a "friendship line" to connect with at-risk elderly community members who felt lonely or were isolated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

UF Health Jacksonville provided free neighborhood-based, walk-up and door-to-door COVID-19 testing in urban areas to help vulnerable members of their community with limited access to transportation.

Our hospitals continue to adapt, respond, and care for their patients, their employees, and their communities. The 2020 Community Benefit Report truly demonstrates our hospitals’ leadership, vision and commitment to care as they work to meet the diverse needs of their communities. We are delighted to shine a bright light on this important and deeply inspiring work.

Sincerely,

Mary C. Mayhew
President & CEO, Florida Hospital Association
Ascension Florida and Gulf Coast, a health system including Ascension Sacred Heart based in Pensacola and Ascension St. Vincent’s based in Jacksonville, always recognizes the importance of collaboration and partnership in service to the individuals and communities it serves, especially during unprecedented times like the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the primary post-acute care partnerships for the health system across Florida was a collaboration with fellow health care organizations to advocate for public masking initiatives in alignment with clinical support and guidance from infection prevention experts. In Jacksonville, Ascension St. Vincent’s partnered with health care organizations and the Mayor of Jacksonville to encourage the public to wear masks, especially in circumstances in which one cannot remain at least six feet away from others. Ascension Florida and Gulf Coast President and CEO Tom VanOsdol also authored a thought leadership op-ed to encourage the public to listen to officials and take precautions, including wearing masks. He also co-signed a statewide op-ed that echoed the same key messages, along with Florida Blue and dozens of other organizations within and beyond the health care space. In Pensacola and across the Gulf Coast, Ascension Sacred Heart also advocated for similar initiatives in an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

The health system and its medical group also partnered with government officials and local long-term care facilities and nursing homes to provide residents with COVID-19 testing when needed. Through these partnerships, the health system helped ensure these facilities knew the COVID-19 status of their residents in instances when assistance was needed.

Ascension St. Vincent’s also partnered with local nonprofit Rethreaded and multiple area credit unions to create and provide masks for caregivers.

The health system provided the material, two-ply spun polypropylene that keeps out water, bacteria, and about 99.9 percent of particulates. The high-quality material is typically used to keep instruments sterile before surgeries and procedures and would otherwise be discarded after its initial use. The staff of Rethreaded, who are also survivors of human trafficking, took the sterile material, sewed the masks together, and sent them to Ascension St. Vincent’s for potential use.

“We continue to look for creative solutions to employ should we need them,” said Ascension Florida and Gulf Coast President and CEO Tom VanOsdol at the time the partnership was announced. “This is a prime example of local innovation and collaboration in action.”

Due to the success of this partnership, it has since expanded to include other organizations.

Ascension Florida and Gulf Coast Develops Masking Initiatives and Testing Partnerships at Post-Acute Care Facilities
During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, AdventHealth Sebring and AdventHealth Lake Placid were flooded with COVID-19 patients. The beds in these facilities designated for these patients were filling up quickly. Many of the patients were no longer infectious but still needed to be re-habilitated back to good health before they could return home.

Dr. Donald Geldart, M.D., the medical director of Lake Placid Health and Rehabilitation Center, and a primary care physician and emergency medicine practitioner with AdventHealth, noticed there was a need. It was his idea to create a COVID-19 unit in the skilled nursing facility at Lake Placid Health and Rehabilitation Center to take on some of the patients that fit this profile.

The nursing facility was reluctant at first, because they wanted to ensure their current patients would be protected. The Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) reviewed guidelines with Dr. Geldart and the team to ensure they would be able to admit those COVID-19 patients into the skilled nursing facility safely, while protecting those patients already housed there. Dr. Geldart worked with the administrative director of Lake Placid Health and Rehabilitation Center, AdventHealth’s Case Management team, and other team members at AdventHealth Lake Placid and Sebring, to determine how best to go about tackling this undertaking.

With a lot of teamwork, collaboration, and innovation, they were able to create an entirely separate unit within the rehabilitation facility to house the patients admitted from these hospitals.

Nancy Christensen, Vice President of AdventHealth Medical Group in Sebring, stated, “Everyone played a small part in creating a big outcome. There was collaboration from many people to think outside the box and figure out what would work best in their environment.”

Dr. Geldart and team were extremely efficient in getting the unit up and running quickly and reached out to AdventHealth immediately to let them know they were ready to accept patients. On the first day the new unit opened, they accepted nine patients. On the first day the new unit opened, they accepted nine patients. Dr. Geldart and the Case Management team worked closely with the administrative director of AdventHealth Lake Placid and Sebring to determine how best to go about tackling this undertaking.

This partnership helped pave the way for similar collaborations across the state.

This was conducted during the peak of COVID-19 for the AdventHealth Lake Placid and AdventHealth Sebring hospitals. It was a time when they really needed to turn the beds over quickly and needed the staff at the hospitals even more. When dealing with COVID patients, typically there is about a one-to-one or one-to-two ratio between staff and patient, because these patients need more attention and care. Not only did this help solve the issue with not having enough beds for these patients, but it also helped to resolve the burden of not having enough staff to attend to them as well.

BayCare Collaborates with Partners to Create Alternative Skilled Nursing Facilities

BayCare Health System’s population health focus has never been more evident than during the novel coronavirus pandemic. From the very onset of COVID-19, the leading not-for-profit provider for West Central Florida moved beyond its primary role as an operator of 14 acute care hospitals to assist patients and operators of post-acute facilities.

“We knew to serve our community, we’d need to be creative and find strong partners,” said BayCare CEO Tommy Inzina. “Time and again, we’ve found a way to make a difference.”

BayCare’s Ambulatory Services Division has long worked with skilled nursing facilities (SNF) across its core four-county region (Hillsborough, Pinellas, Polk and Pasco) to serve patients before and during placement to reduce additional hospital stays. By March, those relationships provided early warning that more would be required as COVID-19 gained ground in the Tampa Bay region.

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BayCare worked with local hospitals to establish county-specific ad hoc groups. Those teams, meeting by phone weekly and sometimes daily, worked collaboratively to focus resources on those long-term facilities with hot spots.

BayCare and other providers worked with local emergency medical services to triage the admissions of positive patients who needed hospitalization to ensure that no single hospital became overwhelmed, provided access to testing for SNF residents and staff and offered training for SNF teams on infection control and appropriate use of personal protective equipment.

Sometimes, the effort meant sharing PPE supplies, as many SNFs’ demand far exceeded their normal purchasing patterns — and suppliers were using those patterns to parse out slim supplies.

More collaboration was required as SNF patients recovered enough from COVID-19 to leave the hospital — but it wasn’t safe for many of them to return to their original facilities, either due to infection concerns or a lack of appropriate medical oversight.

BayCare and other healthcare providers worked better but also more closely with all kinds of partners,” Inzina said. “That makes our community stronger and healthier today but also in the future.”
Baptist Health, located in northeast Florida, is a non-profit, community health system with four adult and one children’s hospital. It also includes over 50 primary care offices in the five-county area. Baptist Physician Partners (BPP) is Baptist Health’s Clinically Integrated Network and Accountable Care Organization, inclusive of over 1,000 physicians.

When the COVID-19 pandemic was declared a public health emergency back in March, predictive models forecasted a surge of inpatients, which would undoubtedly overwhelm Baptist Health hospitals. This looming threat shifted efforts toward the development and implementation of a home-based model of care targeting patients with COVID-19.

Leveraging BPP’s clinical transformation governance structure, an interdisciplinary team of clinical and administrative subject matter experts developed consensus-based clinical guidelines for COVID-19 that expand across the health care continuum. As new data emerged, the guidelines evolved to address the home health care setting, thus the Enhanced Home Support Model (EHSM) was created. The Clinical Transformation Workgroup (CTW) collaborated with Baptist Home Health Care and the Baptist Health Post-Acute Preferred Provider Network (PPN), including a home health PPN and a skilled nursing facility (SNF) PPN.

Baptist’s partnership with home health and SNF PPNs allowed for COVID-19 guideline and EHSM refinement as guidance from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and peer-reviewed literature evolved. Ongoing data monitoring allowed for key areas of clinical and operational success:

• Dedicated beds/units for patients with COVID-19 in SNF PPNs to facilitate timely hospital transitions from Baptist Beaches
• Virtual visits conducted by home health PPNs
• Partnership with community DME companies and home health PPNs to ensure timely delivery of oxygen supplies to patients at home.
• Telescope Health, a virtual visit platform operated by emergency physicians, was utilized to mitigate ED Utilization
• Baptist Health Home Care provided N95 fit tests for and a PPN SNF located in close proximity to Baptist Beaches Medical Center, expedite the opening of an onsite COVID 19 unit.

Baptist Home Health Care, along with five other home health agencies in the preferred provider network, implemented the EHSM, with a total of 487 patients being cared for as of September 21, 2020.

The EHSM continues to be refined as we learn more about caring for patients with COVID-19 in their home. The program focuses on providing home-based skilled services to patients with COVID-19 and patients under investigation to inpatient COVID-19 volume, care for patients in a comfortable environment, minimize the spread of disease. Baptist Health plans to expand this model to provide patients with other chronic medical conditions.

Baptist Beaches Creates Local Partnership to Make Home Health Possible

Lynsey Schlotzer, MD, a Baptist Primary Care physician, kept in touch with Debbie via virtual visits.

Latoya Roberson, RN, of Baptist Home Health Care performs an in-home assessment on COVID-19 patient Meghan Debbie.
Employee Wellness

To promote well-being among staff members at AdventHealth Zephyrhills & AdventHealth Dade City, our Wellness Director, Nicasio Jones, and his team launched a new series of "Love Me" activities that took place throughout the months of May, July and August. These activities embodied the AdventHealth service standards and provided ways of relieving stress and providing a moment of calmness during these uncertain times. While participation varied by activities, all 1,300 employees at AdventHealth Zephyrhills & AdventHealth Dade City were engaged throughout the series of events. All activities were conducted during normal working hours. The Love Me activities centered around four focus areas:

1. Team building: Fun, simple activities employees can do to encourage positive interaction between coworkers. These activities included:
   - Window art – Color glass windows to create beautiful art
   - Cards FOR Humanity – Write a letter of encouragement to one of your colleagues
   - Sidewalk art – Use sidewalk chalk to create artwork around the hospital
   - Joke of the day – Share light-hearted jokes by email
   - Spirit day – Decorate workstations

2. Appreciation: Develop ways to show how much we appreciate the sacrifices our employees make every day and provide opportunities for staff to share and encourage each other.
   - Smoothie day – Free smoothies in the cafe for staff
   - Ice cream day – Build your own ice cream sundae

3. Olympic Games/Minute to Win it: Quick, 1-minute games where staff can earn points for their departments. Games included:
   - Basketball Throw – A 3-point shot competition
   - Penny stack – How many pennies can you stack in one minute?
   - Defy gravity – How long can you keep three balloons up in the air? More time = more points.
   - Makin’ Moves – Move M&M’s from one plate to another using a straw
   - Ping pong bounce – How fast can you bounce ping pong balls into 6 cups?

4. Make it easy: Find creative ways to support and assist our employees inside and outside of the hospital.
   - Grocery shopping – Local Walmart and Publix open early for AdventHealth employees
   - Discounted daily boxed lunch – boxed lunch available in cafe for $3.25 daily
   - Dollar general discount – all health care staff receive a 10% discount
   - Family meals online ordering – provided by local catering company

These activities helped provide employees with a chance to break away from the stress they were facing at work and reconnect with their teammates. AdventHealth staff were also able to connect with staff from other departments and foster new, supportive relationships. The staff at AdventHealth Zephyrhills & AdventHealth Dade City are working to come together as an organization and to reaffirm the reason why our work is so important. By taking the time to take care of our ourselves and one another, we are better able to care for our patients, and live out our mission of extending the healing ministry of Christ.
Health First Commits to Supporting Associates’ Physical, Emotional, Financial, and Family Wellness

One initiative that covered all four parts of the wellness program was child care at no cost for associates. As local schools and day care centers began to close, Health First immediately surveyed associates and learned 514 associates needed care for 880 children. That’s about four times the number of children who are normally enrolled in on-site child care. Since Health First’s community fitness centers were also closing at the same time, the newly unoccupied space at those facilities made it possible to expand child care from one location to four very quickly. A dedicated project team worked around the clock to procure cribs, toys, furniture, room dividers and other supplies, as well as arrange for temperature checks, security, food delivery, housekeeping and registration. Led by Health First’s experienced child development teachers, many of the fitness center staff and other associates with reduced work hours were thrilled to have the opportunity to redeploy and support these new classrooms. Health First provided this child care at no cost to their employees until June, when families were able to return to their normal summer routines.

Another Health First program that supports associates’ financial and family wellness is the Associate Relief Fund. The fund is financed through donations from the community, associates and medical staffs at Health First’s four hospitals, and is managed by the Health First Foundation and Human Resources in order to provide financial assistance to staff in need. Normally, associates must be employed for one year before they qualify for aid—that requirement was suspended to increase the support available during the COVID-19 pandemic. So far this year, the fund has dispersed $206,000 to 133 associates. That includes $179,000 to 115 associates with expenses directly related to COVID-19 and $27,000 to 18 associates to help with situations not related to COVID-19. By comparison, 14 associates received $40,900 in 2019.

Health First also implemented several programs to support associates’ overall wellness. For example, with nearly 25% of associates now working at home, a “Making Remote Work – Work” campaign has guided staff and leaders through setting up an ergonomically safe workspace, learning new tools for virtual meetings and maintaining a sense of camaraderie with their teammates. Child care students have also lifted spirits with heartfelt drawings and encouraging notes for patients and employees throughout the hospitals. New intranet content and ongoing emails have also increased visibility for services, such as Groceries-to-Go and Meals-to-Go from the hospital cafeterias, a new COVID-19 stress support hotline, free Employee Assistance Program (EAP) counseling resources, 401(k) consultations, support from United Way, free COVID-19 testing, Pastoral Care and more. These communications channels have also made it easier to keep up with rapidly changing guidelines surrounding personal protective equipment (PPE), visitors, facility preparations, etc.

Recognizing COVID-19 and all that comes with it will be a part of our everyday lives for the foreseeable future, therefore, Health First is expanding associate wellness programs to promote resilience. An internal “Stronger. Better. Together.” campaign encourages staff to not only tend to their patients, but themselves as well. These resources include “Wellness Wednesday” messages with tips about focusing on what we can control, compassion fatigue, financial resources and suggestions associates have sent in to share with their co-workers. The Pastoral Care team also makes rounds with a “Tea for the Soul” cart with tea and treats for associates and cheerful signs inspiring them to “Be strong,” “Be safe,” “Be amazing” and “Be courageous.”

Mayo Clinic Florida: “Appreciate You” Campaign Delivers Essential Needs to Staff

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the Florida Well-Being Coalition at Mayo Clinic Florida (MCF) felt compelled to ignite action and identify ways to support employees. The Coalition quickly realized they were not alone, as an outsourcing of gratitude and appreciation both internally and externally to MCF was displayed. Employees wanted to show appreciation to fellow employees. Patients wanted to express their appreciation for the dedication of Mayo Clinic employees, and multiple organizations from the local community wanted to express their gratitude for the commitment and sacrifices being made by so many at Mayo Clinic.

The Appreciate You Campaign was launched as a way to coordinate and communicate the expressions of gratitude and provide direct support to the brave first-line responders and those working tirelessly behind the scenes. To better understand the needs of staff and to help address any gaps, the Well-Being Coalition surveyed representatives across the organization to find out what their colleagues needed most.

The top three needs were:
1. Quick access to food during shifts
2. Access to other essential goods on campus
3. A one-stop, consolidated COVID-19 resource toolkit

After collecting the information, the Florida Well-Being Coalition took steps to update various service offerings. For staff working on campus, an Essentials Pop-Up Food Market was created in partnership with the Food Services team. Items in the market included ready-made meals for staff to take home and full-sized grocery staples like milk, eggs, bread, and other produce.

To address the need to access other essential goods, a novel on-campus Kiosk was opened. The Kiosk housed items such as snacks, toilet paper, soap, and sanitizing wipes. At the time, these items were difficult to find in grocery stores and were requested by staff as the most needed. Kiosk items were comprised of goods donated by community members as well as those purchased with internal Well-Being funds.

One challenge that the Kiosk team faced was how to allow staff to request and pick up food safely. Social distancing recommendations meant that staff couldn’t gather or shop for the items themselves. The team came up with an innovative digital ordering system on SharePoint that allowed staff to place orders from their phones and computers. Staff would receive an email when their order was ready and pick up their items during kiosk hours of operation. The Kiosk was open three days a week, accommodating for the day, night, and weekend shifts. The Kiosk was staffed by generous Mayo Clinic staff who donated their time. A total of 576 kiosk orders were fulfilled for unique staff members.

To further increase clinical staff’s quick access to food on shifts, the Coalition partnered with community affairs to coordinate donations from many local businesses and individuals within the community. The campaign was able to coordinate meal donations of items like sandwiches, smoothies, cookies, and more, and has had over 10,000 donations to date.

Lastly, to help staff connect with resources they needed most, the Coalition created a consolidated guide, COVID-19 tool kit, on a landing page outside of the Mayo Clinic’s firewall. This allowed staff to access all Mayo Clinic resources when they were on or off-campus. The toolkit included links to discounts offered to health care workers for financial wellness, as well as, internal resources, such as the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), novel free stress consults with a mind/body counselor, and other well-being resources.

Most recently, the Appreciate You Campaign delivered gratitude bags with essential items to 5,000 staff members both on and off-campus. The bags included masks, hand sanitizers, and messages of gratitude from the community.

The primary objective of the Appreciate You Campaign is to let staff know their hard work is appreciated and to create a sense of community during a difficult time. The Florida Well-Being Coalition will continue to work tirelessly to support our employees and assure that they know how much our organization, patients, and community care about their well-being before, during, and after this pandemic.
AdventHealth Carrollwood, along with our entire AdventHealth system, has made it a priority to be the health care partner to our communities who not only cares for the patients in our hospital, but who lives out our mission of Extending the Healing Ministry of Christ throughout our community, especially during these unprecedented, difficult times. That's why AdventHealth Carrollwood partnered with Bayshore Christian School in Tampa to provide an extensive safety strategy to help the school safely reopen for the 2020-2021 school year.

“We are taking extra steps in our hospital and in our communities to ensure everyone is safe as we navigate COVID-19,” said Erika Skula, President and CEO, AdventHealth Carrollwood. “By partnering with Bayshore Christian School we can provide these students, teachers and staff with best practices to create the safest environment possible as they return to class.”

AdventHealth Carrollwood clinicians assisted the school with a plan that would allow for teachers, faculty and all 220 students to safely return to the classroom. Some of the key strategies implemented include:

- Enhanced student drop-off and pick up
- Required temperature screenings
- Enhanced prepackaged lunches
- Enhanced cleaning and sanitization protocols

“As Head of School at Bayshore Christian School, I am grateful to have the opportunity to work hand in hand with AdventHealth as a community partner,” said Melanie Humenansky, Head of School, Bayshore Christian School. “This relationship validates the decision-making of the school’s administration in confirming we are taking the right steps in keeping our students safe. The recommendations were openly received, and we have purchased the suggested additional items and look forward to implementing the processes for the opening of the school year.”
AdventHealth Connerton Sponsors Back-to-School Drive for Students in Need

In August 2020, AdventHealth Connerton, launched a back-to-school supply drive for students by sponsoring donations to Moon Lake Elementary School, Moon Lake Elementary School in New Port Richey, Florida, serves more than 566 students and 50 teachers. Approximately 80.8 percent of Moon Lake Elementary students are economically disadvantaged and 72.9 percent of the students receive free lunch, while 7.9 percent receive reduced lunch. A large portion of these families are at or below the poverty level. The donated supplies catered to students in the Kindergarten to 5th grade age group. Our employees were encouraged to participate in this community initiative and, our hospital was then kind enough to match the donations made by employees. Overall, we estimate that more than 150 employees participated in this event. Once the supplies were donated, employees then volunteered their time to personally deliver the supplies to the elementary school and show their support for the students. The showcase of support from our employees was overwhelming. The employees took the initiative to plan the logistics of this school drive and did an excellent job of spreading the word to others throughout the facility. The idea of this school drive was propelled by the current crisis that we are all facing. Hearing the concerns of the community, AdventHealth recognized that for many parents, buying school supplies was not an option, as many are struggling with basic life necessities. Principal Landahl of Moon Lake Elementary recognized our efforts, saying, “We are once again so very thankful for AdventHealth’s donation of school supplies to the students at Moon Lake Elementary School. We certainly appreciate your willingness to assist our students. Your contributions help to offset the purchase of these items that we can have on hand here in the school as the need arises. Thank you again for your ongoing support and we look forward to working with you in the future.”

Our vision at AdventHealth is to make our communities stronger and healthier because we are in them. We believe community benefit is essential in doing this. Our efforts helped to minimize the burden on the 80.8 percent of families that are economically disadvantaged and are even more challenged with the economic impacts of COVID-19.

Nemours Children’s Hospital Prepares Schools and Students with a Safe Return to the Classroom

In the midst of these unique times, Nemours Children’s Health remains committed in ensuring a successful return to the classroom for all students across Florida. Our health system partnered with local school districts and community organizations in the lead up to the 2020-2021 school year, including multiple initiatives to better serve the pediatric population:

- **Infectious Disease Team Offering School Reopening Recommendations to Four Florida School Districts:** Nemours’ Infectious Disease Team—Dr. Ken Alexander and Dr. Adriana Cadilla—jointly collaborated with Central Florida superintendents of schools to offer medical advice and presentations on ways the schools could reopen safely during the pandemic. Our recommendations were rooted in science, providing options for schools to safely return students into the classroom while adhering to CDC and public health guidelines. Dr. Alexander and Dr. Cadilla presented on COVID-19 and school reopening recommendations to Osceola, Polk and Seminole County Public Schools. Our Infectious Disease physicians continue to serve on task forces for school districts in Orange and Osceola and monitor community infection rates, as the school year gets underway.

- **Back to School Physicals/Shepherd’s Hope:** For the past six years, Nemours has partnered with Shepherd’s Hope, a free and charitable medical clinic in Central Florida that provides care to our community’s uninsured population. The annual back-to-school physicals for children in need across our local communities ensures that children receive top care by Nemours providers. This year we served over 200 children with their physicals which included vision and hearing screenings. Parents also received valuable information that identifies additional resources for children in need across our local communities ensures that children receive top care by Nemours providers.

- **Nemours Florida School Health Conference:** Each year, Nemours experts develop and present at the Nemours Florida School Health Conference to give continuing education credit for school nurses. NDH hosts this annual conference dedicated to school nurses and other school health professionals from across Florida. The conference is typically a hands-on training for pediatric care in a school setting, such as management of injuries, allergies, asthma, diabetes, substance abuse, mental health and response to medical emergencies. In 2020, Nemours was able to convert the program to virtual for the first time and gave Nemours the opportunity to expand the conference and provide free registration to over 400 attendees from all over Florida. Topics covered during the conference were COVID-19 and schools, human trafficking, allergies, vaping and social/emotional health. Nemours was proud to have representation from over 50 Florida school districts at this year’s conference.

Like many other regions across the country and even the world, a shortage of face shields for health care workers and first responders became an obstacle while battling against COVID-19. During the spring of 2020, Baptist Health Care collaborated with the University of West Florida (UWF) Haas Center to manufacture and provide face shield kits to health care providers and first responders throughout northwest Florida. The teamwork between both groups made the operation and assembly more efficient.

"During the pandemic when PPE became scarce, the UWF Haas Center had the idea to create face shield kits that would be a service to the essential workers in the community," said Stephen Overton, Print Shop Manager. "They used their 3D printing equipment to make the headbands used in the face shield kits, and Baptist supplied the clear polyester lens that could snap onto the plastic headbands in order to make it a protective shield."

Once printing and packaging took place, UWF prepared the kits for distribution from their Sea3D lab, located inside the Museum of Commerce in Pensacola. Health care providers and first responders requested the kits by first completing an online form. Priority was given to local nonprofit health care providers serving at-risk populations including the elderly, low income and the homeless.

"This was a wonderful partnership between UWF and Baptist, all to support our community," said Nicole Gislason, Executive Director of the Haas Center at UWF. "Through this partnership, more than 7,000 face shield kits were printed and donated to those who needed them most throughout the region."

This PPE shortage and new printing and assembly solution was created by UWF innovators from multiple departments at the University, including nursing, engineering, art and business. This project partnership began in April 2020 and continues today to ensure that no shortage of PPE will occur again. The teams at UWF and Baptist display their resilience every day through these efforts. At Baptist, we continue to live out our Mission of helping people throughout life’s journey and are incredibly grateful to be working alongside UWF for the betterment of our community.
Lee Health Telemedicine: Technology Takes the Next Step to Safely Serve the Community

**Inpatient Telemicine**

Lee Health uses inpatient telemedicine technology in a variety of ways. To ensure safety during COVID-19, patients use telemedicine to connect with their loved ones right from the comfort of their beds. Doctors can even make “digital rounds,” popping in and out of rooms without worrying about spreading the virus.

COVID-19 has changed a lot about our lives over the past six months, from the way we interact with friends and family to how we conduct business on a daily basis. Health care systems across the country faced these challenges head-on in a number of ways, with an eye on safety as well as stellar service. At Lee Health, we pushed forward by implementing comprehensive telemedicine options to provide exceptional care.

Before COVID-19, Lee Health had a small telemedicine footprint, connecting roughly 10 patients a day to medical professionals. Fortunately, our team anticipated the surge and replaced our entire technology infrastructure in 48 hours, and we continue to roll out functionality to various departments.

As we increased our virtual ambulatory TeleHealth visits from one percent to 80 percent over a few weeks, our team recognized that many of our patients were still struggling; the platform and style of interaction was new to many of them.

Team members at Lee Health combined efforts to create an integrated campaign. This included training videos, tip sheets, web pages, internal communications, marketing materials and joining forces with community leaders.

We spent countless hours helping patients configure their computers, download apps, perform test visits, and make sure they were comfortable connecting to their provider. By helping our patients focus on health and recovery, the challenges of new technology gradually lessened.

Additionally, recognizing that English is not the preferred language for many of our patients, we quickly worked with our vendor, Cloudbreak, to integrate real-time language interpretation services during telehealth visits.

During the initial outbreak, people were scared and looking for answers. For example, many community members called our emergency rooms to get COVID-19 testing. To better encourage telemedicine as a clinical and educational resource, Lee Health eliminated the cost of our 24/7 Lee TeleHealth platform. We provided more than 7,200 virtual visits at no cost—a $350,000 community benefit value in just a few months. We extended this platform to our friends at NCH Healthcare System and Lee County EMS to maximize community impact.

At our acute care facilities, we expanded the number of telemedicine carts and providers utilizing the technology with the help of a tech partner, Ironbow. Using digital stethoscopes and remote cameras, healthcare workers could treat patients while conserving PPE.

Another partner, Caregility, helped us tackle reduced visitation by inviting to family members to connect through an email or text. In the NICU, we deployed tablets in every NICU room so family members could share the thrill of virtually seeing, hearing and talking to newborns.

By connecting our tech partners with a national nonprofit, CovidTechConnect, Lee Health has helped the reach of the app installation spanning over 10,000 tablets across 700 health systems nationwide.

The telemedicine teams are already anticipating the next steps, willing to do whatever it takes to tackle challenges. It’s all a part of our mission to be caring people, inspiring health.

Memorial Healthcare Increases Telehealth and Finds New Technologies to Keep Patients Connected

Memorial Healthcare System’s Community and Youth Services Department (CYS)

“Family needs have been magnified over the past 6 months”, said Tim Curtin, Executive Director of Memorial Community and Youth Services.

“Memorial has been doing everything possible to keep the staff, children, families and seniors protected from the spread of COVID-19. We have a responsibility during this time to increase support for them as they now face additional challenges with businesses and school closures, work disruptions, potential illness and health concerns. Our community-based team of counselors and case managers are connecting with each one of our families to make sure they have the supports they need.”

CYS has delivered over 700 hours of case management since March. The team has successfully linked families to employment opportunities, financial assistance, benefits, child care, and all other needs determined by the Life Coaches and case managers.

“Our creative team working with older adults has assisted them in learning how to use a smart phone for Zoom, Teams, What’s App and other platforms to stay connected with their peers socially, emotionally and spiritually over the past six months,” Curtin continued. “The ALLIES (Adults Living Independent, Educated and Safe) program staff have made over 500 Front Porch Supports since COVID-19 closed our Senior Partners centers.”

Anxiety, depression, feeling trapped and helpless, substance abuse, family conflict and communication have been the topics of many of our counseling and therapy sessions over the past 26 weeks. During this time, Memorial Healthcare System’s Community and Youth Services Department (CYS) has provided over 2,800 hours of clinical therapy, counseling and maternal-child supportive services through telehealth platforms. CYS has also made over 1,250 property visits, aptly named “Front Porch Supports,” to families in need throughout the pandemic.

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“Memorial has been doing everything possible to keep the staff, children, families and seniors protected from the spread of COVID-19. We have a responsibility during this time to increase support for them as they now face additional challenges with businesses and school closures, work disruptions, potential illness and health concerns. Our community-based team of counselors and case managers are connecting with each one of our families to make sure they have the supports they need.”

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Florida State University (FSU) and Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare (TMH) teamed up to create a temporary testing laboratory that provides COVID-19 results in 24 hours or less.

FSU recognized the importance of getting their students and employees tested quickly as well as the need to receive test results quickly. The ability to identify and quarantine individuals testing positive for COVID-19 helps to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Due to national and world-wide shortages of testing supplies and long wait times for test results, Jonathan Dennis, an associate professor in the Department of Biological Science at FSU, developed a new testing procedure that could be used to diagnose COVID-19. This procedure slightly alters the method used by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization and allows the lab to use different materials than are typically used.

After samples are collected, the test measures whether it is possible to make copies of the collected viral genome using a technique called polymerase chain reaction (qPCR). If the procedure is able to copy a viral genome, the patient is positive. If not, the patient is negative. This is considered the gold standard for COVID-19 testing.

Historically, the FSU research laboratory has never had a need to have a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) certificate which is required to test human specimens and provide patient-specific results to diagnose, treat or prevent disease. The Department of Health and Human Services’ current pandemic policies presented an opportunity for a partnership. To provide coronavirus testing, the FSU Office of Research recognized it would need a CLIA certificate and contacted TMH to inquire about partnering to establish a temporary site for coronavirus testing under the hospital’s CLIA certificate, and TMH agreed.

With Dr. Dennis’ proprietary recipe and TMH’s license and clinical team, the partnership was born.

“As a leading research university, FSU brings resources to the table that will allow us at TMH to overcome supply limitations and provide for accurate and timely COVID-19 testing on a much larger scale,” said Mark O’Bryant, President and CEO of Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare. “The initial goal of this partnership was to match FSU’s intellectual and technological assets with our commercial and regulatory expertise.

We are now working with other community businesses to make testing more readily available."

The initial joint goal was to run 1,000 tests each day. The capacity of the lab should increase over time as the laboratory team develops efficiencies within their workflows.

Interestingly, when the designers submitted their procedure to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for emergency use authorization, they gave it the name “Observation of SARS COVID-2 Evidence by Objective Laboratory Analysis (OSCEOLA).” The name is the FSU research community’s tribute to the 19th-century Seminole leader, linking his leadership and unconquered spirit to this contribution to the ongoing struggle to contain the virus.

“Not only have we accomplished this, we’ve set up a model for how other people can accomplish this,” Dennis said. “We have thought at every juncture ‘What are we doing here and is this appropriate to relieve the testing problem that the nation has?’ And I think we have built something that can do that.”

This laboratory has since expanded to run tests for other businesses and governmental entities in our community.
**Northwest Florida Community Hospital Adds On-Site Lab to Provide Timely COVID-19 Results to Patients**

Northwest Florida Community Hospital (NFCH) is a 59-bed healthcare facility that includes a 25-bed Critical Access hospital, a 24-bed Long Term Care Facility and several Health Clinics located in Washington County, in the panhandle community of Chipley. Our mission, is to provide safe, innovative, accessible, compassionate and comprehensive health care close to home.

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, NFCH opened a COVID-19 drive-thru testing site. The site offered testing to anyone regardless of symptoms, and it served people from multiple counties. When the site first opened, NFCH sent their samples to outside laboratories to be processed. The turnaround time was a minimum of 7 to 10 days. Many individuals being tested were sent home from school/work to quarantine, waiting and uncertain. At NFCH, we were able to get COVID testing done without any wait or hassle. The molecular tests done were processed in their hospital lab with prompt, same day results that could be accessed on their patient portal. This accurate and efficient service provided the peace of mind our family needed!

Washington County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Ted Everett said, “Since the Northwest Florida Community Hospital attained and has been using the Thermo Fisher Scientific 7500 for rapid testing for COVID-19, and results are now able to given to those that have tested within 24 hours or less. This is very advantageous to those tested. Before the NFCH procured the testing abilities of the Thermo Fisher Scientific 7500, results typically took 7 to 10 days. The ability to test rapidly and receive testing accuracies at a high level is certainly a game changer for Washington County and the region.”

This new technology allows Northwest Florida Community Hospital to truly meet its mission. Our patients know their results almost immediately, helping stop the spread of COVID-19.

One patient Jennifer Cumbie commented, “My daughter and I can’t say enough good things about NFCH, in Chipley. After being exposed to COVID, we were sent home from school/work to quarantine, waiting and uncertain. At NFCH, we were able to get COVID testing done without any wait or hassle. The molecular tests done were processed in their hospital lab with prompt, same day results that could be accessed on their patient portal. This accurate and efficient service provided the peace of mind our family needed!”

No one wants to be told they tested positive for COVID-19. However, thanks to the new technology, Northwest Florida Community Hospital has reduced the time it takes to get the results.

**Testing continues to be one of the most important aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic. At Lakeland Regional Health, we are committed to strengthening the health of our community as well as advancing the future of healthcare. Those missions became unwavering guideposts as COVID-19 began to spread in our community and testing kits and capabilities were in short supply.**

Our executive leaders, along with our exceptional Laboratory team, grew tremendously concerned with the lengthy turnaround times for COVID-19 test results as well as the lack of testing sites.

Over the last six months, Lakeland Regional Health worked diligently to begin processing our own tests.

Lakeland Regional Health now uses 5 options for in-house rapid PCR COVID-19 testing and one in-house antigen platform.

Feeling confident in its testing capabilities, Lakeland Regional Health opened a Respiratory Care Center from April to October, two Drive-Thru Testing Centers and a Pediatric Testing Center, in addition to the testing performed in its Emergency Department and required testing for surgical patients. We also leveraged a reference lab for our Drive-Thru test kits to help with over flow.

“Lakeland Regional Health is pleased to offer safe, convenient, quick and accurate COVID-19 testing options for our community. We know that the sooner you find out you are infected with COVID-19, the better we can care for you and your symptoms, the sooner we can help you keep your loved ones and neighbors safe, and the more quickly we can provide you with peace of mind,” said Ana Kalman, MBA, CHCIO, Lakeland Regional Health Vice President/Chief Information Officer and Chief Applications Officer/Medical Center Chief Operating Officer.

“All of this in mind, our talented and dedicated Lab team remains steadfast in its motivation to meet the testing and diagnostic needs of our community.”

Facing these challenges, in-house COVID-19 testing allowed us to:

- Leverage technology to establish a convenient and safe way for community members to receive a doctor’s order for COVID-19 testing.
- Create COVID-19 testing protocols for patients undergoing emergency surgeries and non-emergency surgeries and procedures and communicate those to physicians.
- Efficiently and quickly test children in a family-friendly environment
- Expand testing options to our primary, pediatric and urgent care practices
Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Cleveland Clinic in Florida has focused on the health and well-being of the communities it serves. That focus is not only on the patients in our hospitals and clinics, but also residents of those communities as a whole. That includes students as they prepared to return to school, residents of long-term care facilities, and the public at large as we provided COVID testing as well as education and best practices to community stakeholders.

Cleveland Clinic in Florida was the first to provide COVID-19 drive-thru testing in Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin, and Broward counties, and was one of the earliest testing providers in Palm Beach County. Communication and collaboration were key in each of those efforts. We have administered over 41,000 tests at our drive-thru testing sites from mid-March through Sept. 25 with no out-of-pocket costs for patients. Opportunities for community testing continue at Indian River Hospital and at Martin Health locations in Stuart and Port St. Lucie. We are working diligently to keep residents out of the hospitals and to provide peace of mind.

Cleveland Clinic also worked with stakeholders to reach out directly to communities for testing. For example, the drive-thru testing location in Palm Beach County was located at a civic center in a portion of the community that needed access to testing at the height of the pandemic. Cleveland Clinic Weston Hospital staffed the testing site, which was a partnership with the Florida Department of Emergency Management, the Florida National Guard, and county administration.

In addition to traditional COVID-19 drive-thru testing sites and pop up testing sites, Martin Health also partnered with the Department of Health to develop a “COVID-19 Strike Team” that could rapidly respond to long-term care facilities with potential COVID-19 clusters. The strike team at Cleveland Clinic Martin Health provided rapid testing of all residents and caregivers at a facility in an effort to minimize further spread.

The strike team was an example of how multiple organizations working together can reduce exposure to COVID-19 for this particularly vulnerable segment of our community. By going on-site to these facilities and conducting rapid testing at these locations we were able to greatly mitigate risk to residents and employees.
When the COVID-19 pandemic began to more directly impact the state of Florida, Ascension Florida and Gulf Coast, a health system including Ascension Sacred Heart based in Pensacola and Ascension St. Vincent’s based in Jacksonville, quickly moved to set up and operate drive-thru community COVID-19 testing sites.

Ascension Medical Group teams worked over a weekend to get the testing sites operational. This work included procuring necessary equipment, including COVID-19 tests and personal protective equipment, creating staffing plans and the proper safety protocols in alignment with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other agencies, and ensuring laboratory capabilities for analyzing the tests.

The first testing site opened in Pensacola on March 16 and the Jacksonville site opened on March 17. So far, the health system has provided more than 43,000 tests at these drive-thru testing sites for Floridians across the state. This work would not have been possible without the support from many other internal departments and teams, including the laboratory teams who worked hard to ensure the health system had the necessary staffing and equipment to provide test results as efficiently as possible.

The sites were so immediately successful, that other health care organizations and government officials met with Ascension Medical Group leaders and toured the drive-thru sites to study the process ahead of opening their own locations. Throughout the pandemic, the health system has recognized the importance of collaboration over competition, in service to the communities they serve.

The respiratory clinic teams were able to take patients’ vital signs, including monitoring oxygen saturation levels and listening to breathing sounds, and conduct medical decision-making. More than 3,000 patients have been treated at these respiratory clinics since the end of March.

This unique chapter in our lives requires us to be flexible and learn at a rapid pace,” said Ascension Florida and Gulf Coast President and CEO Tom VanOsdel. “It’s also providing important new perspectives for us all. I am immensely proud of how our team has risen to these challenges.”

In Jacksonville, as circumstances evolved, the health system transitioned from one central drive-thru testing site to multiple sites located in neighborhoods across Northeast Florida, which increased convenience for many patients. Most recently, as drive-thru testing volumes declined due to overall declining community positivity rates, the Jacksonville drive-thru testing transitioned to a more urgent care-based model.

The health system continues to monitor community needs and adjust its offerings to ensure it is providing safe, compassionate, high-quality care.

For more than 80 years, Broward Health has been a leader in providing high-quality care for residents of the northern two-thirds of Broward County. As one of Florida’s two safety-net hospital systems, Broward Health works to meet the needs of all residents, regardless of their ability to pay. That mission has been particularly crucial to the South Florida community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“As COVID-19 swept through South Florida in early spring, Broward Health was there, ready to serve the community, setting up one of the first testing sites through a network of community partners,” said Gino Santorio, President and CEO of Broward Health. “As South Florida reached a pandemic peak in mid-July, seeing COVID-19 infections skyrocket and residents suffer, Broward Health persevered and pivoted with walk-up test sites, ensuring residents could access COVID-19 testing in a safe environment, close to home, and receive needed care at its clinics and hospitals safely.”

Broward Health opened the first COVID-19 testing site in Broward County at Festival Marketplace in Pompano Beach on March 19. As the pandemic progressed and various areas of the county experienced increased concentrations of infection, Broward Health’s Ambulatory Division identified County hot spots and set up testing sites throughout the northern part of Broward County. Testing sites included:

- Festival Marketplace: A true community collaboration, working with private businesses and local elected officials to ensure a safe and secure COVID-19 test site could be opened as the virus emerged in Broward County.
- Central Broward Park and Broward County Stadium: The opening of this site was a direct response to COVID-19 hot spots growing in central Broward neighborhoods, showing the fluidity by which Broward Health responded to testing needs.
- Broward College, North Campus: As testing volume decreased at the Festival Flea Market location, Broward Health pivoted to provide testing at another location within the county where COVID-19 infection rates were spiking.
- Annie L. Weaver Health Center: As residents of color and low-income communities experienced high levels of COVID-19 infection, testing moved to one of Broward Health’s nine community health centers, to best reach the affected population. Annie L. Weaver Health center was also the first Broward Health site to formally offer pediatric COVID-19 testing.

Broward Health put forth all available resources to ensure testing sites were safe for community members and staff, all sites were run professionally and efficiently, with all testing and safety protocols strictly adhered to. Broward Health ensured sites were open on days and during time periods that would be convenient to not only the newly-formed stay-at-home workforce, but also to the essential workers who often work day and night to serve the Broward community. The great effort put forth by Broward Health administration, caregivers and staff made a lasting impact within the community.

“As an organization, Broward Health is extremely grateful to our many community partners as we work together to strengthen the health and well-being of Broward County,” said Santorio. “We will continue providing access to quality care to Broward residents, regardless of their ability to pay, throughout this pandemic and into the future.”

Broward Health's nine community health centers have responded to expanded needs of all residents, regardless of their ability to pay, throughout this pandemic and into the future. Broward Health's nine community health centers have responded to expanded needs of all residents, regardless of their ability to pay, throughout this pandemic and into the future.
Testing Sites & Workflow

Before the recent health and economic crisis, nearly 20 percent of Jacksonville residents were without health insurance. When the pandemic hit our city, we immediately recognized the significant impact it would have across the community and to our organization. While the Florida Department of Health, other area hospitals and health care providers were quickly deploying drive-up testing sites, none addressed two important segments of our community: (1) residents without transportation and (2) residents with limited or no mobility beyond their immediate communities.

We realized that as Northeast Florida’s safety-net hospital, it was our duty and privilege to step in and provide COVID-19 testing for some of our most vulnerable residents. We embraced this responsibility by offering free walk-up and door-to-door testing in urban areas. Our effort was novel and quickly earned recognition as a best-practice model to emulate.

UF Health Jacksonville and the UF College of Medicine – Jacksonville launched its free neighborhood-based, walk-up and door-to-door COVID-19 testing program residents on April 8. Collaboratively with the Florida Department of Health, the City of Jacksonville, the Jacksonville Housing Authority and in-kind support from the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office, we were able to test nearly 2,000 vulnerable members of the community.

Jacksonville Housing Authority, or JHA, communities were the primary testing sites, with additional sites at nonprofit organizations such as the Johnson YMCA, AGAPE and the City Rescue Mission. In total, there were 20 testing sites. JHA was a critical component of the strategy because its communities offered access to the most vulnerable members of the community who were home bound.

The Florida Department of Health provided additional testing supplies to augment the in-house inventory. This coordinated effort provided COVID-19 testing for symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals across Health Zone 1, classified by the Florida Department of Health as communities with the greatest health disparities in the city.

The opportunity to provide this service to the community not only aligned with our mission, but was also fulfilling for our team. Though bringing a mix of health professionals together from around the organization is challenging from the standpoint of matching skills and competencies, our colleagues quickly mobilized to ensure as many residents as possible were safely tested, while reducing the risk of exposure of COVID-19 to everyone on site. The testing program not only met a critical need for residents, it gave our employees an opportunity to see how meaningful their work is to the community.

UF Health Jacksonville Staff Meets Patients Where They Live, Ensuring Vulnerable Communities Receive Access to COVID-19 Testing

UF Health team members testing local residents for COVID-19.

A Team of UFHLTHJAX employees reviewing screening questions to prepare next round of citizens for testing.
Specially Fit Foundation is an organization that exists to inspire lifelong learning, provide socialization opportunities and amplify knowledge of health and fitness to individuals with developmental disabilities. Funding from Tampa General Hospital has provided Special Olympic sporting opportunities, nutrition coaching and mentorship to over 400 individuals with disabilities.

Through this support, the Foundation was able to host the first ever cash paid special needs fitness competition which had over 1,000 people in attendance and aired on a local news station. The unique aspect of this event was that for the first time, this community was provided with cash prizes, which allows athletes with developmental delays to have the same ability to generate an income from their participation in events like athletes in other sports. Historically, events for developmentally delayed individuals have only provided ribbons or trophies.

The partnership with Tampa General Hospital also helped the Foundation give out 100 gym memberships to the YMCA. This allowed individuals in the program workout at the YMCA, participate in weekly workouts and get body fat measurements—all free of cost.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, program participants were unable to meet in person for workouts and events. Through donors, the Foundation launched a virtual workout platform to continue to provide support and interaction to the developmentally disabled community.

As a result of their participation in the Specialty Fit Program, athletes experienced improvements in socialization, reduction in aggressive behaviors and reduction in the 85 percent rate of obesity among individuals with down syndrome and autism.

Through this partnership with Tampa General Hospital and Specialty Fit Foundation, the Tampa Bay community now has access to a lifestyle that this population did not previously have access to.
Before COVID-19 became a regular part of our vocabulary, loneliness might have been considered the epidemic of our time. The negative impacts of loneliness, and its prevalence, are astounding. According to data from AARP, 43 percent of seniors report feeling lonely regularly, and one in twenty say this is a “major problem” for them. Current research shows that the effects of isolation can be as harmful as smoking 15 cigarettes a day and as dangerous as obesity. Other research has found that those who are socially isolated were more likely to have depression, have difficulty performing one or more activities of daily living and have five or more chronic illnesses. A strong social network can play a role as vital to one’s health as exercise and nutrition (Flowers, et al. 2017).

As we all began to face additional challenges with loneliness due to the coronavirus, the opportunity to engage our compassionate and devoted hospital volunteers with an outreach program to isolated seniors became clear. The Friendly Caller Program was born. The first phase of the program began in April 2020 with a roster of 120 referrals from Baptist AgeWell of individuals identified with a high risk for isolation and loneliness. Baptist AgeWell is a special part of the Baptist Health Care System dedicated to senior health. It offers a unique type of primary care in Jacksonville for people 65 years and older who want to be proactive with their health to live their best life. Their model includes longer appointments and a specialized care team under one roof providing complete, comprehensive assessments. After significant training and education, volunteers began making calls in early June, and the feedback has been terrific. These calls are not clinical; the volunteers don’t ask for any medical information or offer any clinical assistance. It’s a call from a compassionate person to remind them that they are not alone, and this person and the organization that the person represents is thinking about them as a person – an individual. Even though the program was primarily designed to support isolated senior patients, many of these volunteers are experiencing similar feelings of loneliness and isolation and these calls offer the residual benefit of bringing purpose and worth to our volunteers. The overwhelming majority of volunteers have told us that they are making sincere connections with their phone pals and feel themselves being recharged and rewarded by the program as well.

One volunteer said, “Because of the Baptist Health Friendly Caller Program, at 81 years old and with COVID-19 going on, my five Phone Pals have given me a new purpose in life. Calling them every week makes me feel I can still contribute in a way that benefits not only someone else but me as well.”

To date, we have 52 volunteers across the health system in this program. They have made connections to 102 community members, totaling over 600 phone calls. As this program begins to grow, the phases of referrals will come from Baptist physician practices. We are thrilled with the progress thus far and excited to see the new connections it will bring.

Citations:
Halifax Health Addresses COVID-19 Concerns at First Step Shelter

In December 2019, Halifax Health partnered with the City of Daytona Beach and other community organizations to address homelessness in the Daytona Beach area through the new First Step Shelter for homeless adults. Halifax Health staffs the shelter’s Health Services function which currently provides nurse case management six days per week to assist with intake and health management.

Located on a 10-acre property on the west side of Daytona Beach, the 15,820 sq. ft. facility is centrally located within the county of Volusia and operates across the street from regional mental health and substance abuse treatment sites. By integrating community service partnerships, the shelter provides:

- Basic food, clothing and shelter in a clean safe environment
- Case Management support
- Health services
- Behavioral health services
- Linkage to addiction services and on-site group meetings
- Computer lab for job searches and job readiness training
- Transportation to interviews, employment and healthcare-related activities
- Homeless support services with transition to housing assistance

In February, when COVID-19 required the local community to respond, there were 43 individuals in residence. When a shelter employee became quarantined due to direct exposure to the virus, Halifax Health nursing staff arranged the testing of residents and staff members. All were negative.

Within the shelter’s first six months of operation, a total of 83 homeless individuals received 5,466 health services from the dedicated Health Services team. Over 1,000 of these were directly related to services provided in response to COVID-19.

Halifax Health estimates that local hospitals provide several million dollars of medical care annually to homeless individuals and have historically been forced to place homeless patients in motels upon hospital discharge to conduct safe, follow-up care. The new shelter provides a more comprehensive service environment that goes beyond meeting basic health needs for this population.

John Guthrie, vice president of Communications at Halifax Health said, “Many homeless patients cannot be safely released back onto the street and recover. Their needs are far more complex than our health system can address alone. It requires a broad range of coordinated services and providers across the community to effectively assist the local homeless population. All of these services are available to residents at First Step Shelter.”

Many entities have stepped up to advance the shelter effort. Funding for shelter operations includes support from the City of Daytona Beach, the County of Volusia, surrounding east Volusia cities, businesses, private donors and grants. Local service providers are also contributing staff and services to the site.

In addition to health services provided, by June 2020, 23 residents entered into housing, 38 were placed into jobs, 40 referrals had been accepted from Law Enforcement, 19 Hospital discharges were received and 145 mental health/substance abuse services were provided.

The First Step Shelter has become a model for community collaboration with stakeholders putting together for the sole purpose of transitioning the local single adult homeless population into housing. Halifax Health is honored to be one of many organizations supporting this initiative and we appreciate all the committed partners that have helped bring the shelter into being,” added Guthrie.

Halifax Health has committed to fund the health services function for three years and obtained an additional commitment of funding from the Florida Blue Foundation and its community service partner, AdvantHealth, to help share these costs.

LifeStream Behavioral Center Develops Community Partnership to Help those with Opioid and Substance Abuse

Even before the pandemic, opioid abuse was prevalent in our community. The COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing economic recession have negatively impacted many people’s behavioral health. Fortunately, opioid abusers are getting help through a program called LifeStream Community Substance Abuse Response Team (CSART), guided by LifeStream Behavioral Center and AdventHealth Waterman. This partnership is leading to positive outcomes in the community.

This innovative program started in 2019 as a result of funding received from the Florida Blue Foundation. The goal of the program is to build a bridge between those who misuse substances and available treatment opportunities, as well as build capacity in the community to identify early warning signs and provide intervention and linkage to services.

Opioid-involved deaths comprise the majority of fatal drug overdoses. Nationally, drug overdose deaths due to synthetic opioids other than methadone have increased. Our community has experienced an increase in the rate of death due to fentanyl.

“We know that addiction is an epidemic and we know that it knows no social boundaries,” says Susan Chavis, RN and Director of Inpatient Nursing at Waterman.

The main objectives of the CSART program are to reduce the number of opioid and other drug-related deaths; reduce the number of individuals with substance use disorders who require costly interventions such as jail, emergency rooms and hospitals; and end the revolving door in the ER by connecting patients to recovery support services.

To date, the program has served over 436 individuals with only two confirmed subsequent overdoses. The results from the partnership have been successful, with over 90 percent of individuals leaving the hospital emergency room and going straight into treatment. The CSART team includes peer recovery specialists and Master’s level clinicians who provide counseling, resource navigation and peer support. The team identifies immediate and long-term resources and motivates patients to seek treatment and follow through on recovery. The peer recovery specialists have personal experience with substance abuse that helps them establish a rapport with patients.

Hospital Emergency Room staff acts as a catalyst by calling in the LifeStream team. Lake County EMS also contacts LifeStream when it receives an overdose call, saving time so a team member can get to the hospital before the patient has been treated and released. The peers use an evidence-based approach to determine the severity of the substance use disorder and type of treatment needed. Team members also meet with the patient and friends or family to assist in identifying appropriate services, actively engage and motivate them to continue services and provide care navigation.

If a patient does not agree to voluntarily go to treatment, the peer will leave contact information and will provide phone or in-person support for a minimum of 30 days. Once a patient is medically stable and released from the emergency room, they often go to LifeStream’s inpatient detox facility. If they are at moderate risk, they may be referred into medication assisted treatment and prescribed Vivitrol or Suboxone. Through care coordination and patient centered treatment, they will also receive treatment and oversee services to meet their needs such as integrated primary care, psychiatric medication management, case management and housing support.

The CSART program is also making a difference in our community by providing education on opioid abuse and training community partners on Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT). SBIRT is a protocol designed to assist professionals at various skill levels in effectively identifying individuals with substance misuse disorders, referring those individuals to the appropriate levels of care, while increasing consumer engagement in the process through use of motivational interviewing techniques. Community partners include the Department of Health, primary care clinics, OB/GYN and HIV clinics, Lake EMS and local law enforcement agencies. Through education and community partnership, this innovative program has helped to save lives.
Orlando Health Business Ready Initiative Helps Businesses Reopen Safely

Under the leadership of Orlando Health president David Strong, the Employer Relations Committee was formed. With input and guidance from Orlando Health infectious disease experts and hospital leadership, the committee launched its Business Ready program and resource website on May 1, 2020. The site provided Central Florida communities with a central location to easily access the right information and resources to aid in reopening safely. Much of the content was created in direct response to specific concerns raised by local businesses and their customers who were unsure about how to best follow proper hygiene practices and social distancing guidelines. Free downloadable guides, PowerPoint presentations and videos were created to answer these questions and made available in several languages including: English, Spanish, Haitian-Creole and Vietnamese.

“As a healthcare leader in our community, we have a responsibility to do our part in educating the public on how to stay healthy and safe,” said Thibaut van Marcke, senior vice president, Orlando Health South East Region and president, Orlando Health Dr. P. Phillips Hospital. “As businesses began to reach out with questions about how to resume operations, it became clear that there was a significant need for reliable and accurate information. We recognized it was our duty to be a part of the solution and wanted to make sure that anyone who needed this information could access it.”

In addition to guides on how to perform self-screening, businesses also had access to customized advisory services and were able to contact Orlando Health for guidance and input when creating their plans for reopening. Hospital infectious disease experts reviewed a number of these plans and provided recommendations by taking best practices that were applied in the clinical environment and translating them to work in commercial settings.

In-person workplace visits by Orlando Health developmental experts were also provided. These assessments included an evaluation of physical spaces and layouts to help businesses adjust occupancy limits and traffic flow. Paired with guidance on where to place hand sanitization stations and signs educating patrons on hygiene guidelines, these visits helped create solutions that made sense for individual operational needs.

“Our main goal is to make the knowledge and lessons that we’ve learned as a health care system during this pandemic available to the businesses in our community,” said Don Plumley, MD, director of pediatric trauma and chief quality officer at Orlando Health Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children. “The approaches and recommendations that we’re sharing are the same measures we’re taking in our facilities to keep our patients, their families and our team members safe.”

To date, the Orlando Health Business Ready website has received a total of 11,862 page views and more than 1,600 resource downloads. Orlando Health has led 10 community webinars with city chambers and business associations to educate on how to stay healthy, conducted nearly 500 support interactions through email, over the phone and in-person and engaged with more than 100 different local businesses, including Visit Orlando, The Orange County Convention Center and SeaWorld Orlando.

The Friendship Line: Reaching At-Risk Elderly Population

When 79-year-old Elena Demas, who lives alone, was feeling a bit out-of-sorts recently, she took a chance and dialed the Healthy West Kendall Friendship Line. Soon, she found herself chatting with a “phone champion,” a trained volunteer who provided a personal connection and eased some of the loneliness Ms. Demas was experiencing.

Ms. Demas is one of thousands of elderly people who live in social isolation, a growing problem across the nation and in South Florida. A recent community health needs study showed that residents of West Kendall now place mental wellbeing at the top of their health concerns. Loneliness can be a precursor of mental health, and although loneliness and isolation do not exclusively seek out the elderly, studies show they are at greater risk. To make matters more urgent, the COVID-19 pandemic, with its mandatory quarantine and social distancing, is aggravating the situation for this vulnerable population.

The volunteer leadership at West Kendall Baptist Hospital created the Friendship Line to reach elderly community members who could benefit from friendly conversation and, perhaps, more. They began by obtaining a dedicated phone line and seeking out volunteers with a diverse range in age, languages and religions (in the event a caller would like to pray).

The Friendship Line was advertised through emails, flyers and word of mouth in late March 2020. When a call to the Friendship Line is received, callers are asked some basic questions to best identify their preferences in terms of language, time availability and religion, if any. They are then matched to the most appropriate volunteer who calls them back between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. Volunteers received training and followed a script to begin the conversation, practicing with employees before being placed on the “on-call” list.

Also known as phone champions, the volunteers educate callers on how to access a free virtual visit with a doctor through Baptist Health Care On Demand and assist with downloading the app and establish a profile. They offer suggestions on staying active and healthy by promoting Baptist Health Virtual Community classes and other ideas, such as daily exercise, starting a project, reading a book, building a puzzle or sending a card to someone they haven’t talked to in a while. Most importantly, they listen and are attentive to what their caller is saying. In addition, they know about resources they can offer callers if further intervention is needed, such as the Mental Health Crisis Line.

“I was greeted so warmly and asked questions about how I was feeling and my daily habits,” Ms. Demas said. “The volunteer even recommended that I purchase some puzzles, which I did. I only called once, but it was nice knowing there was a friendly voice available if I needed to talk.”

Although Ms. Demas enjoyed having a nice conversation, others have had more significant needs. For example, one caller had food insecurities. As a result of COVID-19, many Floridians have been economically impacted or lost their jobs. Some methods of transportation — bus, for example — have been unsafe, particularly for the elderly during the pandemic. The Friendship Line, the Healthy West Kendall Coalition and the
Florida Hospitals Contribute to their Communities

Improving the health of their communities is a key area of focus for hospitals across Florida. Every three years, hospitals undertake an elaborate assessment process to determine the health needs of their community. This process, known as a Community Health Needs Assessment, helps hospitals use local data to identify the types of programs and initiatives that are most needed in their areas. In addition, each hospital maintains financial assistance policies to help patients who are uninsured or do not have the means to pay for their care despite having healthcare coverage. Annually, hospitals report the results of their community activities and support to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and to their local communities through publicly available annual reports.

The Florida Hospital Association (FHA) surveyed over 200 member hospitals and health systems to capture the most current value of community benefits provided by hospitals in the state. The following data comprises FHA members only.

In 2019, FHA member hospitals contributed $4.9 billion in benefits to their communities, which represented 13.7 percent of hospital operating expenses. The IRS strictly defines what counts as community benefit. Hospitals must report their spending annually using the IRS Form 990 Schedule H. These reports include data on financial assistance for uninsured or low-income individuals, underpayments from Medicaid and other means-tested government programs, activities to improve community, health professional education, medical research, subsidizing high cost essential services and improving community and population health. Additional information on each category follows.

Financial Assistance and Means-Tested Government Programs
All Florida hospitals are required to have financial assistance policies that outline the criteria for those who are unable to pay the full cost of their care. Hospitals must report costs associated with care for individuals who meet the hospital’s financial assistance criteria and are unable to pay for all, or a portion, of the care provided. This category does not include bad debt, only those uncollectible costs for patients meeting the hospital’s published financial assistance policies.

The means-tested programs include Medicaid, Florida Healthy Kids and other local government programs for which individuals qualify based on their income levels. These programs typically pay less than cost for services. In Florida, Medicaid, the largest payer with means-tested criteria, pays on average 69 percent of costs.

With 2.75 million uninsured Floridians and another 3 million Floridians covered by Medicaid, hospitals absorb a large portion of costs associated with caring for these populations. FHA member hospitals provided $3.9 billion in free care for low-income patients in 2019. This represents 80 percent of the total community benefits provided and accounts for almost 11 percent of hospital operating costs.

Health Professional Education, Workforce Development and Research
Ensuring Florida has enough physicians, nurses and other health professionals to care for an aging population is critical. Health professional education includes educational programs that result in a degree, certificate or training necessary to be licensed to practice as a health professional in the state. While hospitals receive state and federal dollars to pay for medical education, the cost of providing education typically exceeds payment.

Workforce development includes collaboration with educational institutions to train or recruit physicians and health professionals needed in a community, medical shortage area or other areas designated as underserved. Research includes any study or investigation to increase the general public’s knowledge. This includes clinical trials and studies of clinical protocols, laboratory-based studies, studies related to health, care delivery or prevention and other activities designed to better understand a healthcare issue.

FHA member hospitals absorbed $390.5 million in costs associated with health professional education, workforce development and research.

Community Health Improvement and Community Building Activities
Activities or programs created for the purpose of improving community health are classified as “community health improvement activities.” These include conducting a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three years and developing initiatives to address gaps or opportunities identified in the CHNA. Community health improvement activities include subsidized programs broadly offered to service the public and low-income individuals; programs focused on reducing geographic, financial and cultural barriers to accessing care; and programs that address federal, state or local public health priorities such as eliminating disparities. It also includes strengthening community health resilience by improving a community’s ability to withstand and recover from public health emergencies that otherwise would become the responsibility of government or another tax-exempt organization.

Community building activities include the provision, or rehabilitation, of housing for vulnerable populations, neighborhood improvement or revitalization projects, housing for vulnerable patients upon discharge from an inpatient facility, housing for low-income seniors and development or maintenance of parks and playgrounds to promote physical activity. It also can include economic development, environmental improvements, mentoring programs for vulnerable populations, violence prevention programs, disaster readiness and public health emergency activities.

FHA member hospitals spent $642.1 million on community health improvement and community building activities in 2019.

About This Report
The FHA collected data about the community benefit provided by member hospital in October 2020. The data reflects the hospitals’ community benefit provided in 2018-2019.

Thirty-four Florida health systems provided data that aligns with the IRS for this statewide community benefit report, representing a total of 18 individual hospitals. FHA supplemented the survey data about charity care, training and research from the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) Florida Uniform Reporting System (FHURS). FHURS data was accessed for seven (7) individual hospitals.

Combined, this report represents 128 individual hospitals or 59 percent of all 218 acute care hospitals in Florida.

Schedule H Data
The majority of the data in this report was compiled from Schedule H forms submitted to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) by Florida hospitals. The IRS revised the Form 990, including Schedule H, in 2019 to enable more effective monitoring of all types of tax-exempt organizations. While the form does not capture all hospital community benefits, it is the best source for consistent data on costs incurred by hospitals to support their communities.

Not-for-Profit community hospitals are required to complete the Schedule H, which is intended to provide a comprehensive, structured overview of hospitals’ community benefit and related activities. Schedule H is organized into six parts:

Part I: Charity care and Certain Other Community Benefits
Part II: Community Building Activities
Part III: Bad Debt, Medicare, and Collection Practices
Part IV: Management Companies and Joint Ventures
Part V: Facility Information
Part VI: Supplemental Information

Public hospitals are not required to submit community benefit information to the IRS. However, they typically track details on their activities to support community health initiatives. FHA public hospital members provided this information through the FHA survey.
Hospitals Included in this Report

- AdventHealth Altamonte Springs
- AdventHealth Apopka
- AdventHealth Carrollwood
- AdventHealth Celebration
- AdventHealth Connerton
- AdventHealth Dade City
- AdventHealth Daytona Beach
- AdventHealth DeLand
- AdventHealth East Orlando
- AdventHealth Fish Memorial
- AdventHealth Heart of Florida
- AdventHealth Kissimmee
- AdventHealth Lake Placid
- AdventHealth Lake Wales
- AdventHealth New Smyrna Beach
- AdventHealth North Pinellas
- AdventHealth Ocala
- AdventHealth Orlando
- AdventHealth Palm Coast
- AdventHealth Sebring
- AdventHealth Tampa
- AdventHealth Waterman
- AdventHealth Wauchula
- AdventHealth Wesley Chapel
- AdventHealth Winter Park
- AdventHealth Zephyrhills
- Ascension Sacred Heart Bay
- Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast
- Ascension Sacred Heart Pensacola
- Ascension St. Vincent’s Clay County
- Ascension St. Vincent’s Riverside
- Ascension St. Vincent’s Southside
- Aspire Health Partners, Inc.
- Baptist Hospital of Miami, Inc.
- Baptist Hospital, Inc.
- Baptist Medical Center Beaches
- Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville
- Baptist Medical Center Nassau
- Baptist Medical Center South
- Bartow Regional Medical Center
- BayCare Alliant Hospital
- Bayfront Health St. Petersburg
- Bethesda Hospital East
- Bethesda Hospital West
- Boca Raton Regional Hospital
- Broward Health Coral Springs
- Broward Health Imperial Point
- Broward Health Medical Center
- Broward Health North
- Calhoun-Liberty Hospital Association, Inc.
- Cape Coral Hospital
- Cleveland Clinic Florida - Weston
- Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital
- Cleveland Clinic Martin North Hospital
- Cleveland Clinic Martin South Hospital
- Cleveland Clinic Tradition Hospital
- DeSoto Memorial Hospital
- Doctors’ Memorial Hospital, Inc.
- Doctors Memorial Hospital - Sarasota
- Fishermen’s Community Hospital
- George E. Weems Memorial Hospital
- Gulf Breeze Hospital
- Gulf Coast Medical Center
- H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute
- Halifax Health / UF Health Medical Center of Deltona
- Halifax Health Medical Center of Port Orange
- Halifax Psychiatric Center - North
- Health First Cape Canaveral Hospital
- Health First Holmes Regional Medical Center
- Health First Palm Bay Hospital
- Health First Viera Hospital
- HealthPark Medical Center
- Hendry Regional Medical Center
- Homestead Hospital
- Jackson Hospital
- Jay Hospital
- Lakeland Regional Health Medical Center
- Lee Memorial Hospital
- Madison County Memorial Hospital
- Mariniers Hospital
- Mayo Clinic Hospital in Florida
- Mease Countryside Hospital
- Mease Dunedin Hospital
- Memorial Hospital Miramar
- Memorial Hospital Pembroke
- Memorial Hospital West
- Memorial Regional Hospital
- Memorial Regional Hospital South
- Morton Plant Hospital
- Morton Plant North Bay Hospital
- Morton Plant North Bay Hospital - Recovery Center
- Mount Sinai Medical Center
- NCH Baker Hospital
- NCH North Naples Hospital
- Nemours Children’s Hospital
- Nicklaus Children’s Hospital
- Orlando Health - Health Central
- Orlando Health Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children
- Orlando Health Dr. P. Phillips Hospital
- Orlando Health Orlando Regional Medical Center
- Orlando Health South Lake Hospital
- Orlando Health South Seminole Hospital
- Orlando Health St. Cloud Hospital
- Orlando Health Winnie Palmer Hospital for Women & Babies
- Sarasota Memorial Health Care System
- South Florida Baptist Hospital
- South Miami Hospital
- St. Anthony’s Hospital
- St. Joseph’s Hospital Behavioral Health Center
- St. Joseph’s Hospital, Inc.
- St. Joseph’s Hospital-North
- Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare
- Tampa General Hospital
- UF Health Leesburg Hospital
- UF Health Leesburg Senior Behavioral Health Center
- UF Health Shands Hospital
- UF Health Shands Psychiatric Hospital
- UF Health The Villages Hospital
- UMMC-Bascom Palmer Eye Institute
- UMMC-Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center
- UMMC-University Hospital
- West Kendall Baptist Hospital
- Winter Haven Hospital, Inc.
- Winter Haven Women’s Hospital
- Wolfson Children’s Hospital

Florida Hospitals Contribute to their Communities

- Hospitals included in this report: 43
- Hospitals contributed $4.9 billion in benefits to their communities, which represented 13.7 percent of hospital operating expenses
- Hospitals spent $642.1 million on community health improvement and community building activities in 2019
- Hospitals absorbed $390.5 million in costs associated with health professional education, workforce development and research
- Over 200 FHA member hospitals and health systems surveyed
- Hospitals provided $3.9 billion in free care for low-income patients

The FHA collected data about the community benefit provided by member hospitals and health systems in 2019.