



TRANSFORMING MEDICINE

together

USA HEALTH
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA





IMPACT

by the numbers

OCTOBER 2024 - SEPTEMBER 2025

\$19,846,486

raised to support clinical programs,
research, access to care, and education



3,183 number
of gifts



1,732 number
of donors

755 new
donors



Dear Friends and Supporters,

My name is Natalie Fox, and I am a University of South Alabama Jaguar through and through. It is my honor to serve as the new CEO of USA Health, the very institution that shaped me. My journey here began more than 20 years ago as a nursing student and, as a three-time graduate of the University of South Alabama, my commitment to our mission is deeply personal.

Growing up in rural Alabama with both of my parents working in healthcare, I felt a calling to serve from a young age. That calling brought me to Mobile, where I learned from the very best and saw firsthand what true, compassionate care looks like. That foundational experience instilled in me a profound sense of purpose that continues to guide me today.

My vision for USA Health is to build upon that legacy. We will innovate fearlessly, care for the whole person, and extend our focus beyond the walls of our hospitals into the communities we serve. We are dedicated to fulfilling our core mission: helping people lead longer, better lives.

The incredible growth and nationally recognized care provided across our health system have been made possible by your continued generosity. As we step into a new era to shape the future of healthcare for our region, your belief in our work and your continued partnership and support are more critical than ever.

Sincerely,

Natalie Fox, D.N.P.
Chief Executive Officer
USA Health
University of South Alabama

The Whiddon College of Medicine is more than 50% complete, a milestone celebrated at a beam-signing event held September 4. The new 295,000-square-foot medical education and research building is on target to be completed in early 2027.

For room-naming opportunities throughout the new Whiddon College of Medicine, please contact the Development team at 251-460-7032 or at development@southalabama.edu.



*Take a
virtual tour!*

Meeting the Region's Needs



Community outreach to rural areas is central to our mission as an academic health system. We're keeping people healthy, training compassionate healers, and serving the entire region, not just the big city. USA Health always has outreach projects underway. Here are the latest ways we're caring beyond hospital walls.

When emergencies strike, minutes and expertise matter. Imagine this: in rural Monroe County, a 10-year-old boy is thrown from his four-wheeler at a hunting camp. His father rushes him to the closest ER, but doctors know he needs more specialized care. That's when the Cub Crew is called.

From Mobile, a team of pediatric specialists speeds to his side in a specially equipped transport vehicle, a true ICU on wheels. This is not your average ambulance. It's staffed and outfitted to deliver pediatric-specific care that most emergency transports can't provide. On the road back to Children's & Women's Hospital, they keep him alive with advanced tools like a ventilator, delivering the same level of care he'll receive once he arrives at the hospital.

An interview with Brooke Olson, Nurse Manager for the Critical Care Transport team

What is the Cub Crew? The Cub Crew is a critical care transport team for babies and children who are too sick for their local hospital to treat. When that happens, we bring the ICU to them, either in a custom-built ambulance or a helicopter. Onboard are a paramedic, a respiratory

therapist, and a nurse, all trained in pediatric and neonatal care. Their job is to keep each child stable until they arrive at Children's & Women's Hospital, home to intensive care units just for kids and newborns.

Why is air transport such a game changer? The Cub Crew serves patients within 165 miles of Mobile. In emergencies, minutes matter. A helicopter can cut transport times by two to three times, getting kids to lifesaving care faster.

How many patients benefit? Last year, 761 children were transferred to Children's & Women's Hospital for the specialized care only we provide.

What makes this program unique? We are the region's only hospital with both a Level 3 Neonatal ICU and a Pediatric ICU. That means children in even the most rural areas can quickly reach advanced care.

What does it mean to you to be able to provide this kind of care to the kids of our community? Every child deserves a chance. As a young transport nurse, I once responded to a call from a rural hospital 90 minutes away. Tragically, we didn't arrive in time. I still remember that baby's chubby cheeks, his curls, and the heartbreak on his mother's face when we told her he wouldn't be going home. I'll never know if air transport could have changed the outcome - but I do know that every child, no matter where they live, deserves access to the best possible care.

Healthcare hits the road

Specially designed vans are expanding USA Health's ability to treat patients in rural areas. These vans will support a wide range of services, including pediatrics, OB/GYN care, prostate cancer screenings and physicals. The mobile health units meet patients where they are, so they don't have to travel long distances to receive necessary care. The Mitchell Cancer Institute has successfully deployed the vans for cancer screenings in Alabama communities Grove Hill and Chatom. As more medical specialties begin using the units, we anticipate the need for additional equipment tailored to each department, such as an ultrasound machine for obstetrics care, to ensure we're equipped to deliver high-quality care on the road.



A Lifeline on the Gulf Coast



This fall, USA Health launches a new Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) program, marking an important advancement in treating patients with life-threatening heart and lung conditions. The program won't just help patients here; it will also serve people across the Gulf Coast who need this life-saving support.

What is ECMO? ECMO is an advanced form of life support for patients whose hearts and lungs can't function on their own.

Acting like an artificial heart and lung, it gives the body time to heal, recover, or prepare for a transplant. Doctors turn to ECMO when no other treatment is working.

Who might need it? Patients with severe conditions such as a heart attack, trauma, respiratory disease, sepsis, or flu may need ECMO to survive.

Why does it matter here? Previously, patients often had to be transferred long distances for this specialized care. Now families can stay close to home while receiving the highest level of treatment.

HOME & GARDEN SHOW

ANTIQUES · DESIGN · INSPIRED LIVING

The Home & Garden Show, March 19–22, benefits the ECMO program at USA Health Providence Hospital. This curated event showcases antiques, design, and inspired living, featuring top designers, artisans, and lifestyle experts.

Learn more by visiting homeandgardenshow.info



Less Invasive, More Precise

A new Interventional Radiology (IR) suite is coming to Children's & Women's Hospital. Using advanced imaging like X-rays and ultrasound to guide specialized tools, IR specialists are able to diagnose and treat conditions like blocked blood vessels and cancers without major surgery. These minimally invasive procedures mean less pain, faster healing, and shorter hospital stays.

The new suite will feature distraction therapy in a calming, kid-friendly space for pediatric patients, while labor & delivery and gynecologic patients gain access to more treatment options with state-of-the-art equipment and precision medicine.

Shelia's Legacy

Every 40 seconds, someone in the U.S. has a stroke; it's the fifth leading cause of death and a major cause of disability. Strokes happen when blood flow to the brain is blocked or a vessel bursts, cutting off oxygen. Brain cells begin dying within minutes, making fast treatment critical.

At USA Health, stroke care is a cornerstone of our mission as the region's only Level I trauma center. Much of that legacy comes from Shelia Ross, D.N.P., longtime director of the Comprehensive Stroke Program, who guided it to national recognition before her passing in 2024.

In her memory, family and friends established the Shelia Ross Memorial Endowment to support stroke prevention, education and care, funding health fairs, screenings, training, and cutting-edge research. This support ensures stroke patients have the best chance possible.

Your support can save lives. Give today at usahealthsystem.com/givenow

From Research to Real Life

At USA Health, research isn't abstract; it's personal. It benefits real patients. It's the bridge between what's possible in a lab and what's lifesaving in a hospital. Every biomedical research project that begins at USA Health aims to improve patient care in our region and beyond.

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Translational research develops new and better ways to diagnose and treat disease — and the goal is always to move those advances into patient care as quickly as possible.”

– Dr. Christopher Davies,
Associate Dean for Research

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The medical research happening at USA Health and the Whiddon College of Medicine can be categorized by three fundamental types of biomedical research: basic, clinical, and translational. Basic science seeks to understand how the natural world works, like cell cultures, bacteria, and chemical reactions. Clinical research involves human participants and aims to test new ways to prevent, diagnose, or treat illnesses through clinical trials. And translational research bridges the lab to the clinic. These scientists connect a scientific discovery to a usable product.

“Translational research, by definition, changes clinical practice,” said Dr. Christopher Davies, Associate



Dean for Research. “It develops new and better ways to diagnose and treat disease — and the goal is always to move those advances into patient care as quickly as possible.”

USA Health currently conducts research across multiple high-need areas: cancer, sickle cell disease, inflammation, lung disease, and infectious disease, among others. The Whiddon College of Medicine receives approximately \$23 million in external research funding each year. This support helps accelerate discoveries and launch bold ideas.

One such breakthrough came from Dr. Simon Grelet. His lab at the Mitchell Cancer Institute discovered that aggressive cancer cells “steal” mitochondria from nearby neurons to fuel growth. The study, published in *Nature*, highlights the caliber of research happening right here on the Gulf Coast.

While research happens all over USA's campus and around USA Health, one key research hub is at the Whiddon College of Medicine. The next chapter of discovery will take place in a state-of-the-art College of Medicine building that is now under construction. Built to support teamwork and new ideas, the building will have space for about 45 research groups. The expansion of the College of Medicine “isn't just about more space,” Dr. Davies added. “It's about attracting world-class researchers, supporting discovery, and training the next generation of physician-scientists.”

To bring this vision to life, philanthropic support is essential. You can support one of the many established research endowments and transform the way we understand medicine — and practice it.



Courage, Resilience, and Survival

Everybody loves a good story with a surprise ending or an unexpected twist. But for the team at USA Health Mitchell Cancer Institute, the best stories are often the most straightforward ones. They are the stories with a clear, happy ending; the kind that concludes with a cancer doctor's declaration of "no evidence of disease." This is one of those stories.

When Kristen Sayles, a 44-year-old elementary school counselor, discovered a lump during a self-exam in late 2023, she acted quickly — her family's history of breast cancer left no room for hesitation. Within weeks, Kristen received a diagnosis that would change her life: triple-negative breast cancer, one of the most aggressive forms of the disease.

"I was driving when I got the call," Kristen said. "I cried the entire time. But in that moment, because of my faith, God just told me to do nothing. I wanted to call my husband, call my mom, and just everyone on my way home and he said 'no, talk to me.'"

Kristen was referred to USA Health Mitchell Cancer Institute (MCI) for treatment, the same facility that treated her grandmother during her own breast cancer battle.

Her care team compassionately walked with her through 16 rounds of chemotherapy and a double mastectomy. The treatment pushed her body to its limits, but Kristen's spirit always remained positive.

"There was a period of time when I couldn't be around anyone because of my immune system being compromised. That was hard," Kristen shared. "And, losing my hair

and breasts was emotional. I didn't feel like myself. But I reminded myself, this was a step toward healing."

Kristen credits her recovery not only to her medical team and treatments but also to the support services available at MCI. From meeting other cancer patients and participating in art therapy during her chemo sessions, to a resource room stocked with wigs, bras, lashes, and everything a patient could need when going through treatment, MCI helped meet both her physical and emotional needs.

"The Mitchell Cancer Institute helped me see the light at the end of the tunnel," she said. "They led me in the direction that I needed to go to fight this fight with cancer. If it had not been for MCI and their team, I don't know if I could've made it."

Today, Kristen is cancer-free and proudly calls herself a survivor. She rang the bell to mark the end of her treatment on August 27, 2024. When asked what survivorship means to her, she said, "I made it. That's what it means to me."

Kristen Sayles is a survivor, a mother, a counselor — and a testament that with faith, family, and community, even the toughest battles can be won.



We believe great things begin by sharing gratitude.

To learn more about honoring a care team member, go to usahealthsystem.com/grateful



USA Health Children's & Women's Hospital is a proud Children's Miracle Network partner hospital. Every dollar raised through local CMN partner campaigns - whether by rounding up at the register, during a donation drive, or joining a fundraising event - stays here to help kids in our community.

2025 is on track to be the biggest CMN fundraising year yet, with an estimated \$850,000 benefiting Children's & Women's Hospital.

DeVyn, Our Brave Little Fighter

When doctors told us our precious daughter, DeVyn, had T-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia in March 2024, our world stopped. In that moment of fear and uncertainty, we could not have imagined the journey ahead. But God led us to a place called The Hope, the pediatric infusion center at USA Health Children's & Women's Hospital. It is more than a hospital. It is where love wraps the soul, where families carry one another, and where faith is renewed daily.

Since her diagnosis, DeVyn has endured countless rounds of chemotherapy, spinal taps, and hospital stays. Yet she continues to shine. In The Hope, we have spent more hours than we can count. But what we can count on every single time is the unwavering compassion of the

nurses, the encouragement of child life specialists, and the precise brilliance of the medical team. We have heard laughter ring out in infusion chairs that should only know pain. We have seen my daughter smile after chemo because someone here made her feel like more than a patient. They made her feel like she was still a child. That is holy work.

Even in her hardest days, she sings to her family, prays over her friends in the infusion chairs beside her, and makes her care team laugh. She reminds me — and everyone she meets — that joy is possible even in the hardest moments.

That is why she was chosen as the hospital's 2025 Children's Miracle Network Champion. CMN Champions tell the stories of kids like ours, raising

awareness and support so that every dollar given through campaigns at Publix, Walmart, Sam's Club, Dairy Queen, and other partners goes to support Children's & Women's Hospital. She spent the past year visiting each store, personally thanking the teams for their support.

We know that hope is complicated. It doesn't erase the suffering or the setbacks. But what we've learned is that even when hope wavers, faith carries us. DeVyn is proof of that — our little warrior with the biggest heart. If her story does anything, we pray it reminds others that even in the darkest valleys, you are not alone.

*- Brittany and Du Coker
Parents to the bravest girl we know*

Impacting Healthcare Along the Gulf Coast

\$432,065

Raised from events to support USA Health
OCTOBER 2024 - SEPTEMBER 2025



A NIGHT HONORING HEALERS

November 7, 2024

\$144,502

net proceeds for USA Health

Providence Foundation Clay Shoot

January 17, 2025

\$36,741

net proceeds for Providence
Hospital Pulmonary Care

MCI Golf Tournament

June 12, 2025

\$17,444

net proceeds for the
Mitchell Cancer Institute



May 4, 2025

\$106,361

net proceeds for Interventional
Radiology program



MCI GO Run

September 27, 2025

\$65,000

estimated net proceeds for
gynecologic oncology research



January 30, 2025

\$40,017

net proceeds for research and
critical clinical needs across
USA Health

PROVIDENCE FOUNDATION CHARITY GOLF CLASSIC

August 21, 2025

\$22,000

net proceeds for Camp Bluebird
and Providence ECMO program

Save the Date

A Night Honoring Healers

NOVEMBER 18, 2025

Charity Clay Shoot

JANUARY 16, 2026

Doc Rock

JANUARY 29, 2026

Home & Garden Show

MARCH 19-22, 2026

Local Goodness

MAY 3, 2026

Questions? Contact the University of South Alabama
Office of Medical Affairs Development at 251-460-7032

Make a gift online: usahealthsystem.com/givenow