

Tragedy to triumph

Steve Hysell fought his way back to health after a boating accident

ClassAct celebrates 35 years

Meet our pet therapy animals



Snow blankets the campus of USA Health Providence Hospital on the morning of Jan. 22, 2025. See more photos from the historic snowfall at USA Health hospitals and emergency departments on pages 36-37. *Photo by Bill Starling*

Table of Contents

Welcome4
News5
Prevention.....12

FEATURES

Good boys & girls14
Meet the team of therapy animals who bring joy and comfort to patients.

Tragedy to triumph20
Steve Hysell fought his way back to health after a boating accident.

Back on the court24
Burn patient Kayson Metcalf can play his favorite sport again.

A shared calling.....28
The Fouty family shares a passion for medicine and life.

ClassAct32
Education program celebrates 35 years of serving hospitalized children.

Snow Days36
By the Numbers38
Research39
Spotlight 40
Events42
USA Happenings.....46



Top: Pet therapy dog Emmie visits a patient at Children’s & Women’s Hospital.

Doc Rock, a battle-of-the-bands event, raises funds for USA Health.

Young burn survivor Kayson Metcalf, with mom Rachel Rieben, is grateful for the care he received.

Brian Fouty, M.D., and Christine Fouty, M.D., and their daughters Anna and Carolene are all part of USA Health and the Whiddon College of Medicine.

Cover photo by Mike Kittrell





Dear Friends:
In this issue, you will learn about the unwavering dedication and extraordinary efforts of our employees who, during the historic January snowstorm, demonstrated resilience and true compassion for our patients. Hundreds of our staff members stayed at our hospitals – and away from their own families – for several days to ensure continuity of care. These selfless acts reflect the best of who we are as a team.

Among those who cared for patients within our hospitals were graduates of the Frederick P. Whiddon College of Medicine. And as construction continues on the new \$200 million facility, we are grateful for generous community support from those who recognize the immense value in training the next generation of physicians and scientists. Among them are local businessman Elliot B. Maisel, who recently committed \$5 million to the project that will allow the University to graduate more physicians and enhance research and innovation.

Also in this issue, you will find stories about patients who received lifesaving care and leading-edge treatments, including burn patient Kayson Metcalf, who is now able to play basketball again, thanks to leading-edge laser therapy.

You will also meet a few of our four-legged volunteers who visit patients and staff weekly as part of our pet therapy program. These lovable animals and their handlers give of their time to bring joy to all they meet.

We hope you enjoy this issue of USA Health magazine.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Owen Bailey".

Owen Bailey, MSHA, FACHE
Chief Executive Officer &
Senior Associate Vice President
for Medical Affairs

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John V. Marymont".

John V. Marymont, M.D., MBA
Vice President for Medical Affairs
Dean, Frederick P. Whiddon
College of Medicine at the
University of South Alabama

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NEWS



To honor a local family's devotion to the advancement of academic medicine and wellness initiatives, a new bronze sculpture was unveiled in December at the USA Health Mapp Family Campus in Fairhope. Artist Casey Downing Jr. was commissioned to create the piece that depicts philanthropist Louis Mapp and Cullen Potter, a patient Mapp met while volunteering to rock newborns in the neonatal intensive care unit at Children's & Women's Hospital.

New sculpture brightens hospital landscape



FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF PATIENTS, families and staff, Children's & Women's Hospital formally dedicated in November a new art sculpture called "Bed of Flowers." The sculpture was created by internationally renowned artist Gay Outlaw, a Mobile native who lives in San Francisco.

The piece features 120 cast aluminum flowers, in various shades of pink, connected to a network of cast bronze stems.

The flowers fill an oval-shaped concrete median in front of the hospital's pediatric emergency center.

The sculpture was commissioned by Arlene Mitchell, chair pro tempore of the USA Board of Trustees and a longtime philanthropist and volunteer at the hospital. Mitchell said it has been her dream for years to have a piece of artwork from Outlaw at the hospital.

Precision medicine: USA Health offers customized spine surgery implants

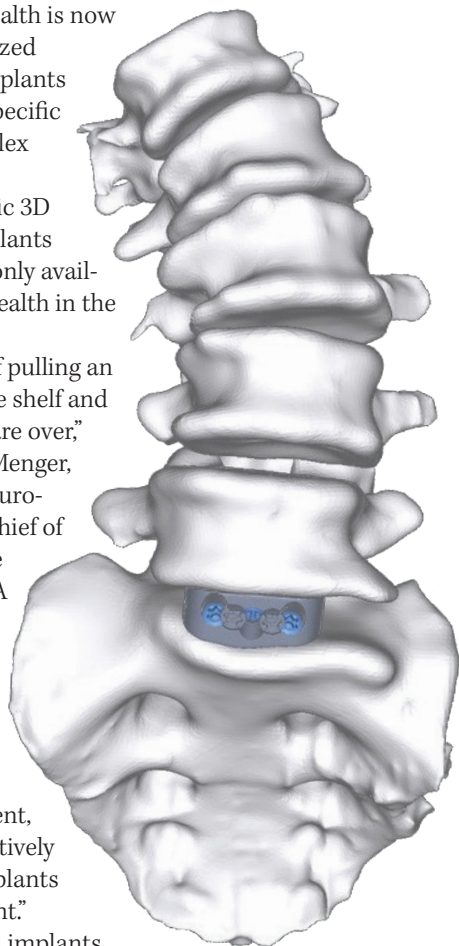
To offer patients more options for a better quality of life, USA Health is now using customized 3D-printed implants and patient-specific rods for complex spine surgery. Patient-specific 3D interbody implants are currently only available at USA Health in the Mobile area.

“The days of pulling an implant off the shelf and hoping it fits are over,” said Richard Menger, M.D., MPA, neurosurgeon and chief of complex spine surgery at USA Health. “Now we are able to simulate our surgery plan, measure the patient’s alignment, and pre-operatively design the implants for each patient.”

Customized implants reconstruct the spine bones, while patient-specific rods create alignment of the spine. “We can create the exact rod or implant that fits in their vertebrae like a puzzle piece, giving our patients long-term relief and decreasing the need for repeat surgeries,” Menger said.

A spinal deformity is an abnormal alignment or curve in the spine’s vertebral column, and can be caused by trauma, aging, birth defects or disease. Spinal deformities can be present in up to 68% of elderly populations and in up to 4% of children, according to the Journal of Spine Surgery. The most common deformities are kyphosis (bending forward) or scoliosis (bending sideways).

The 3D-printed procedure is offered at no additional cost to the patient.



Providence performs pulsed field ablation on first patient in Mobile

Last fall, a patient at USA Health Providence Hospital was successfully treated with a new pulsed field ablation (PFA) system – a breakthrough technology that uses pulsed electric fields to treat atrial fibrillation (AF). It was the first time this procedure has been performed in Mobile.

Recently approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), this system can effectively, efficiently and safely treat AF in patients who experience it periodically or persistently.

A progressive condition, AF impacts more than 59 million people worldwide, according to the Journal of the American College of Cardiology. Without early intervention, AF can progress and become more sustained over time. The progression of AF is associated with a higher rate of cardiovascular admissions, heart failure, and mortality, along with a reduced quality of life.

Considered a breakthrough, PFA works by delivering pulsed electric fields through an ablation catheter designed specifically to interrupt electrical pathways in the heart that trigger AF. Other ablation technologies rely on thermal effects to target cardiac tissue and risk damage to collateral structures in the heart. Because the mechanism of cell death in PFA is non-thermal, the risk of collateral structure damage is potentially lower.



A Safe Haven for babies

Women in crisis in our community now have a safe and anonymous option to give their newborns a second chance at life.

USA Health Children's & Women's Hospital held a dedication ceremony last September to mark the opening of the first Safe Haven Baby Box in the Mobile area. The box is located on the north side of the hospital's ambulance entry behind the Pediatric Emergency Center.

"As a children's and women's hospital, part of our mission is to protect life and help our patients thrive," said Debbie Browning, MSN, RN, CEO of USA Health Children's & Women's Hospital. "We feel incredibly honored to have been selected as a spot for a Safe Haven Baby Box."

Alabama expanded its Safe Haven Law in 2023 to include baby boxes installed on the exterior walls of hospitals and fire stations that have emergency personnel on site at all times. When an infant is placed inside a baby box, an alarm alerts staff members at the hospital. Once a baby is surrendered at the hospital, an examination will be performed, and the Alabama Department of Human Resources will be notified.

USA Health operates the region's only pediatric emergency center at Children's & Women's Hospital, staffed 24 hours a day, every day with a multidisciplinary team of academic healthcare providers.

The mission of Safe Haven Baby Boxes is to prevent the illegal abandonment of newborns through education, awareness of the Safe Haven Law, and offering an anonymous option to safely surrender a child. The Safe Haven Baby Box also staffs the National Safe Haven crisis hotline (1-866-99BABY1) for parents in crisis.

"As a children's and women's hospital, part of our mission is to protect life and help our patients thrive."

Debbie Browning, MSN, RN
CEO, Children's & Women's Hospital

Kidney Stone Center offers timely treatment

To provide rapid treatment options for people suffering from painful kidney stones, USA Health opened the Kidney Stone Center at University Hospital

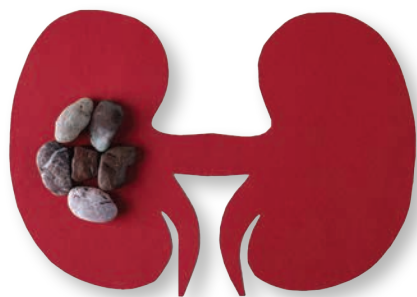
Located on the hospital's second floor, the new center provides consultations within 24 hours, rapid diagnostic imaging, less invasive procedures for faster recovery, and medical management to prevent kidney stones.

"Our goal is to fast-track treatment for patients suffering from a kidney stone," said Christopher Keel, D.O., a urologist at USA Health and chair of the department of urology at the Whiddon College of Medicine. "That's why we are available 24/7 with immediate access to imaging and care. In most cases, we can schedule a procedure to take place within 24 hours of a patient's call."

Keel said people who reside in the Southeast – often called the "Stone Belt" – have a greater likelihood of developing kidney stones. Studies point to the region's higher temperatures and precipitation, as well as a rich diet, as contributing factors.

USA Health urologists, including a pediatric urology specialist, are skilled in kidney stone treatments such as shock wave lithotripsy, laser lithotripsy, minimally invasive surgery and ureteroscopy.

To make an appointment at the Kidney Stone Center, call 251-660-5930.



Robert Kobelja, M.D., cares for a patient at the Kelly Butler ALS Center.

ALS center provides multidisciplinary care

After Kelly Butler was diagnosed with ALS, he devoted his efforts to raising awareness of the disease and removing barriers to care. He believed patients along the Gulf Coast should not have to take on the added burden of traveling a long distance to receive treatment.

Last December – about one month after his passing – Butler's dream became a reality with the opening of the USA Health Kelly Butler ALS Center, a multidisciplinary clinic that is the first of its kind along the upper Gulf Coast.

Butler served as Gov. Kay Ivey's long-time state finance director. He retired in 2021 as a result of ALS but took up the cause of advocating for greater access to care as he fought his own battle with the progressive disease.

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, is a progressive neurological disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord. Its gradual decline is marked by symptoms such as muscle weakness and difficulty speaking and swallowing.

While there is no cure for ALS,

symptoms can be managed through medications; physical, occupational, speech, respiratory, and nutritional therapies; assistive devices, such as braces and wheelchairs; and exercise, all of which are now offered through the center, thanks to Butler's advocacy.

The renovated clinic, located inside the Strada Patient Care Center, features five exam rooms and a multidisciplinary team consisting of a nurse, neurologist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, speech-language pathologist, respiratory therapist, social worker, and dietitian. During one visit, ALS patients can be treated by each member, eliminating the need for them to make multiple appointments.

Robert Kobelja, M.D., a board-certified neurologist and the medical director of the Kelly Butler ALS Center, said he and his team are dedicated to carrying out Butler's vision.

"While I was truly sorry to hear that Mr. Butler lost his battle with ALS recently, my team and I will work to carry forward his goals and legacy with this clinic," he said.

With your generous gift, we can advance the mission of the Kelly Butler ALS Center.





An aerial view shows progress on the new Whiddon College of Medicine building on Feb. 17.

Maisel gives \$5 million to Whiddon College of Medicine

As construction of the University of South Alabama's new Frederick P. Whiddon College of Medicine building continues, the project has received its largest gift from an individual. Native Mobilian and local businessman Elliot B. Maisel has committed \$5 million to the \$200 million facility that will allow the University to graduate more physicians and enhance research and innovation. In recognition of Maisel's generosity, a large gathering area in the building will be named the Maisel Family Forum.

"We are truly grateful for the transformational gift from Elliot Maisel; its impact will be felt not only in our local community but also statewide," said USA President Jo Bonner. "Medical students at the Whiddon College of Medicine perform at the highest levels, outscoring their contemporaries at many of the most prestigious medical schools in the United States, and this new building will enhance learning opportunities in so many ways."

One of the unique design features of the 250,000-square-foot facility is a ground-level collaboration space that encourages

impromptu encounters that lead to exchanges of ideas among researchers, educators and students. It is this space that will be named after the Maisel family.

"Our medical and graduate students, as well as our faculty, deserve an environment that fosters interactive learning and best practices; Elliot Maisel's gift is an investment in the future of healthcare," said John Marymont, M.D., MBA, dean of the Whiddon College of Medicine and vice president for medical affairs. "We will have the ability to grow the class size for medical students, which will have a positive and profound impact on the shortage of primary care physicians practicing in the state, particularly in rural and underserved Alabama."

Completion is expected in December 2026, with classes in the new facility starting in January 2027. The building will allow for expansion of the class size from a maximum of 80 students per class to 100, with the ability to eventually grow to 125 students.

Center for Healthy Communities awarded nearly \$1 million for STEMM program



Elliot B. Maisel

A large gathering space will be named the Maisel Family Forum.

Classes are scheduled to start in the new facility in January 2027.

THE USA HEALTH CENTER FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES received an award of nearly \$1 million from the Gulf Research Program of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to provide high school students with opportunities to learn and apply STEMM in the examination of environmental hazards and their effects on the health and resilience of communities in the Gulf of Mexico region. STEMM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Math and Medicine.

The STEMM Scholars for Environmental Justice Program will include both classroom-based learning activities and mentored projects for students who are part of the Mobile County Public School System, the Alabama School of Mathematics and Science, and Accel Academy. Community-based organizations and industry partners will also offer support to the program.

“We know that our environment greatly affects our health outcomes, so implementing the STEMM Scholars program allows us to play a role in building our future of healthcare and allied health workforce,” said Ashley Williams Hogue, M.D., director of the Center for Healthy Communities. “It also challenges us to think about ways to create an environment that minimizes health disparities and promotes positive health outcomes.”

Williams Hogue, a trauma surgeon and assistant professor of surgery at the Whiddon College of Medicine, along with Steven Scyphers, Ph.D., an associate professor of marine and environmental sciences at USA’s Stokes School of Marine and Environmental Sciences and director of the Center for Socio-Environmental Resiliency, will lead the effort.

The STEMM Scholars program allows the center to build on one of its longest standing educational programs, STARS & STRIPES, which provides an on-campus experience for rising high school juniors and seniors, exposing them to the allied health professions and college-level courses.

5 *desk-friendly yoga poses*

By Michelle Ryan-Day

Practicing yoga at your desk can be a great way to improve focus, reduce stress, increase blood flow, and prevent physical discomfort from long hours of sitting.

Michelle Ryan-Day, an E-RYT 200 yoga teacher and fitness instructor, works as a marketing specialist for USA Health. She offers some simple desk-friendly yoga poses to help enhance concentration and mental clarity.

Seated forward fold

Sit on the edge of your chair with your feet flat on the floor. Inhale to lengthen your spine, then exhale and fold forward, bringing your chest toward your thighs. Let your head and neck relax



Neck and shoulder rolls

Sit up tall and slowly drop your ear toward one shoulder. Gently roll your neck forward in a circular motion, then reverse the direction. You can also roll your shoulders forward and backward to release tension.



Seated leg extensions

Sit tall in your chair, engage your core, and extend one leg straight out in front of you. Hold for a few breaths, then lower your leg and repeat with the other leg. You can add ankle circles to improve flexibility.



Seated spinal twist

Sit with your feet flat on the floor and your spine straight. Place your left hand on the outside of your right knee and your right hand on the back of the chair. Inhale to lengthen your spine, and exhale to gently twist your torso to the right. Hold for a few breaths, then repeat on the other side.



Seated side stretch

Sit with your feet flat on the floor and your spine tall. Inhale, raise your right arm overhead, and exhale as you lean to the left, stretching through the right side of your body. Hold for a few breaths, then repeat on the other side.

Any greens and beans



Robert Israel, M.D., an internal medicine physician with USA Mobile Diagnostic Center and director of USA Health's Integrative Health and Wellness Program, believes that good health starts in the kitchen. He shares a recipe that's as healthy, nutritious and delicious as it is easy to make.

This recipe is as it says – any combo that you have in the fridge and pantry. It is one I often go to as a cornerstone of any plant-forward diet. I usually try to save leftovers, so I can have a serving on toast with hummus or a soft egg the next morning. Eating greens and beans every day requires a plan!

Ingredients:

¼-½ cup or more extra-virgin olive oil	1 can garbanzo or other beans, rinsed
1 small onion, or ½ large onion	Salt, pepper
1 tsp fresh thyme, chopped (optional)	Red pepper flakes (optional, to taste)
10 ounces more or less of spinach, chard or other greens	

Preparation:

1. In a large heavy pot, pour olive oil and place over medium heat. Add chopped or julienned onion and thyme, if using. Saute until onion becomes translucent, about 5 minutes.
2. Add red pepper flakes, salt and black pepper. Then add greens in bunches, turning frequently and adding more as wilting takes place. Once all greens are wilted, add the rinsed beans and turn, cooking 5–10 minutes depending on the greens. Heavier greens (kale, collards, turnip greens) take longer, while lighter greens (spinach, chard) take less time.
3. Taste for salt and pepper, add a splash of vinegar or lemon juice if you desire, and enjoy.

Tips: This is great as a leftover, and it can be added to other greens after they have cooked. It is also good with whole grains such as farro, brown rice and whole-grain pasta.

Also, with this skeleton of a recipe, you can change any ingredient to taste. Any allium can substitute for the yellow onion. Red onions add a little tang. Garlic adds sweetness, and scallions and/or leeks are a great choice as well. Each of those changes the flavor just enough to keep it interesting.

GOOD BOYS & GIRLS



On a weekday afternoon, you might spot Karl the cat wearing a harness while confidently trotting down the hall of University Hospital, or Emmie the golden retriever excitedly wagging her tail in the elevator at Children's & Women's Hospital. They're on their way to visit patients as part of USA Health's pet therapy program.

In order to volunteer, the animals and their handlers go through special education and training with Pet Partners. Once registered, the teams are deployed in the hospitals, where they bring joy, comfort and unconditional love to patients of all ages.

BY LINDSAY HUGHES
PHOTOS BY BILL STARLING







Emmie

Breed: Golden Retriever

Birthdate: Nov. 3, 2022

Superpower: The ability to brighten anyone's day with just one pet!

Favorite treat: Little Kongs stuffed with frozen pumpkin or frozen custard

Handler: Bob Saxon



Karl

Breed: Flame Point Siamese

Birthdate: Aug. 8, 2019

Favorites: Loves people, cats and dogs; scratches under the chin; sleeping under the bird feeder; salmon treats

Fun fact: Was the "library cat" for six months

Handler: Kristin Babington



Wheezy

Breed: Smithfield Collie

Birthdate: April 23, 2019

Favorite activities: Meeting new people, playing fetch, cooling off in a swimming pool

Favorite movie: "Benji"

Favorite book: "Clifford, the Big Red Dog"

Favorite phrase: "Let's go to the park!"

Handler: Jim Sherman



Sophie

Breed: Lab/Retriever mix

Birthdate: March 27, 2017

Claim to fame: Earned the bronze medal in the swim sprint at the Pirates Cove Dog Olympics

Favorite treat: Anything peanut butter

Handler: Debra Robinson





Chloe

Breed: Pembroke Welsh Corgi

Birthdate: Nov. 2, 2014

Biggest accomplishment: American Kennel Club (AKC) champion before age 2

Favorite treat: Salmon biscuits

Handler: Sharrie Dickinson

Millie

Breed: Labrador Retriever

Birthdate: March 27, 2016

Favorite activities: Swimming, exploring and looking for new adventures

Fun fact: When Millie arrives at the emergency department for duty, staff make an overhead announcement – unofficially called a “Millie alert.”

Touching moments: Millie has provided comfort to patients and their families in end-of-life situations and other traumatic events.

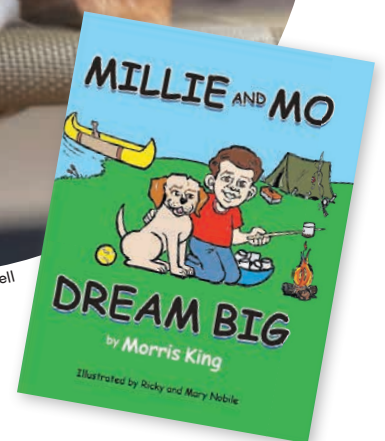
Book: “Millie and Mo Dream Big”

Handler: Morris King

Millie officially retired as a therapy pet on Feb. 28.



Photo by Mike Kittrell



Tragedy



On an afternoon at Ocean Springs Harbor, Steve Hysell reflects on the boating accident that changed his life.

to triumph

Critically injured in a boating accident, Steve Hysell fought his way back to health at University Hospital

By Carol McPhail

What began as a short run to test a new fuel filter in his boat ended in a traumatic, life-threatening accident for a father and son in Ocean Springs, Mississippi.

Steve Hysell and his son Addison, 20, had jumped into the 24-foot center console boat on a Sunday morning in June 2023. They had planned to take it for a quick spin before returning to the dock near his house to grab an inflatable tube and a cooler and head out for a morning on the water.

As they made a wide circle at the I-10 bridge to start back home, Hysell saw a bass boat speeding toward them. He also noticed pilings in the water nearby and corrected his heading to avoid them.

Unfortunately, the smaller boat maneuvered in the same direction.

Within seconds, the bass boat smashed into the starboard side of Hysell's boat, leaping over the hull and breaking off the center console. Addison was hit and thrown overboard, and Hysell was pinned between the broken console and the seat.

"I remember calling out Addison's name and realizing he's in the water and his legs are cut really bad, and he's in a panic," said Hysell, a Citronelle native who had spent six years in the U.S. Navy as a search-and-rescue swimmer. "All I could do was get my shirt off and roll it up and throw it to him and pull him to the side of the boat."

From a nearby house, another father and son had witnessed the accident. They quickly arrived by boat to ferry the injured to their dock, called for an ambulance, and administered tourniquets to Addison's legs.

When the first responders arrived, they saw that Hysell was doubled over and starting to show signs of jaundice. That indicated injuries to his liver and pancreas.

"They said, 'Hey, y'all have to get another ambulance over here quick,'" Hysell recalled.

“
We knew it would
be a marathon and
not a sprint.

– Ashley Williams Hogue, M.D.

”

He and Addison were taken to separate local hospitals. It became clear, though, that they required more specialized care. The two were life-flighted to USA Health University Hospital, home to the region's only Level I trauma center.

When Hysell arrived at the emergency department, he was already intubated and on a ventilator. He also had a temporary closure device affixed to his abdomen from where surgeons had performed the initial surgery to stop the bleeding and stem the spillage of intestinal contents into his abdominal cavity.

Upon further evaluation, the trauma team at University Hospital found that in addition to his abdominal injuries, Hysell had sustained multiple left-sided rib fractures and a stable lumbar spine puncture.

He was treated for shock, admitted to the trauma ICU and scheduled for surgery the following day.

"In these cases, a trauma team, hepatobiliary surgeon, surgical ICU team, hospital dietitian, wound care team, and inpatient rehab team are all essential to provide the care needed for this complex patient," said Nathan Polite, D.O., the trauma surgeon on duty when Hysell arrived. "This compilation of resources is often limited to a Level I trauma center."

The next day, fellow trauma surgeon Ashley Williams Hogue, M.D., performed Steve's first operation at USA Health. "He had several very complex injuries affecting several organs including his duodenum, pancreas and large intestine," she said. "We fixed each issue, but understanding the difficulty of healing some of these injuries, we immediately placed a feeding tube past the major site of injury. This would allow us to feed him with minimal pressure on our repairs."

Hysell remained in the ICU on life support to help him breathe and keep his blood pressure at a normal level. "It is very difficult for our bodies to heal after this level of injury, and despite giving him support and IV nutrition, he required additional surgeries and radiologic procedures to stabilize him," Williams Hogue said. "We knew it would be a marathon and not a sprint."

Weeks passed before Hysell was alert enough to ask questions and try to make sense of what had happened. He was told that doctors had had to surgically

reconstruct his duodenum, the part of the small intestine that connects to the stomach.

He was also assured that his middle son was alive and recovering in the ICU. “For a long time, I thought he didn’t make it and that they just weren’t telling me because of the stress,” he said. “My oldest son was like, ‘Dad, he’s fine.’ And a few days later, they wheeled him over in a wheelchair.”

Addison was able to go home after five weeks, where he received home health care and physical therapy to regain his strength. Hysell, however, remained in the hospital for a total of three months. By fall, the exercise buff who had once weighed 225 pounds was down to 163 pounds.

“Mr. Hysell had very complex injuries that innately brought about a complicated course toward healing,” Williams Hogue said. “Despite the challenges, he beat the odds.”

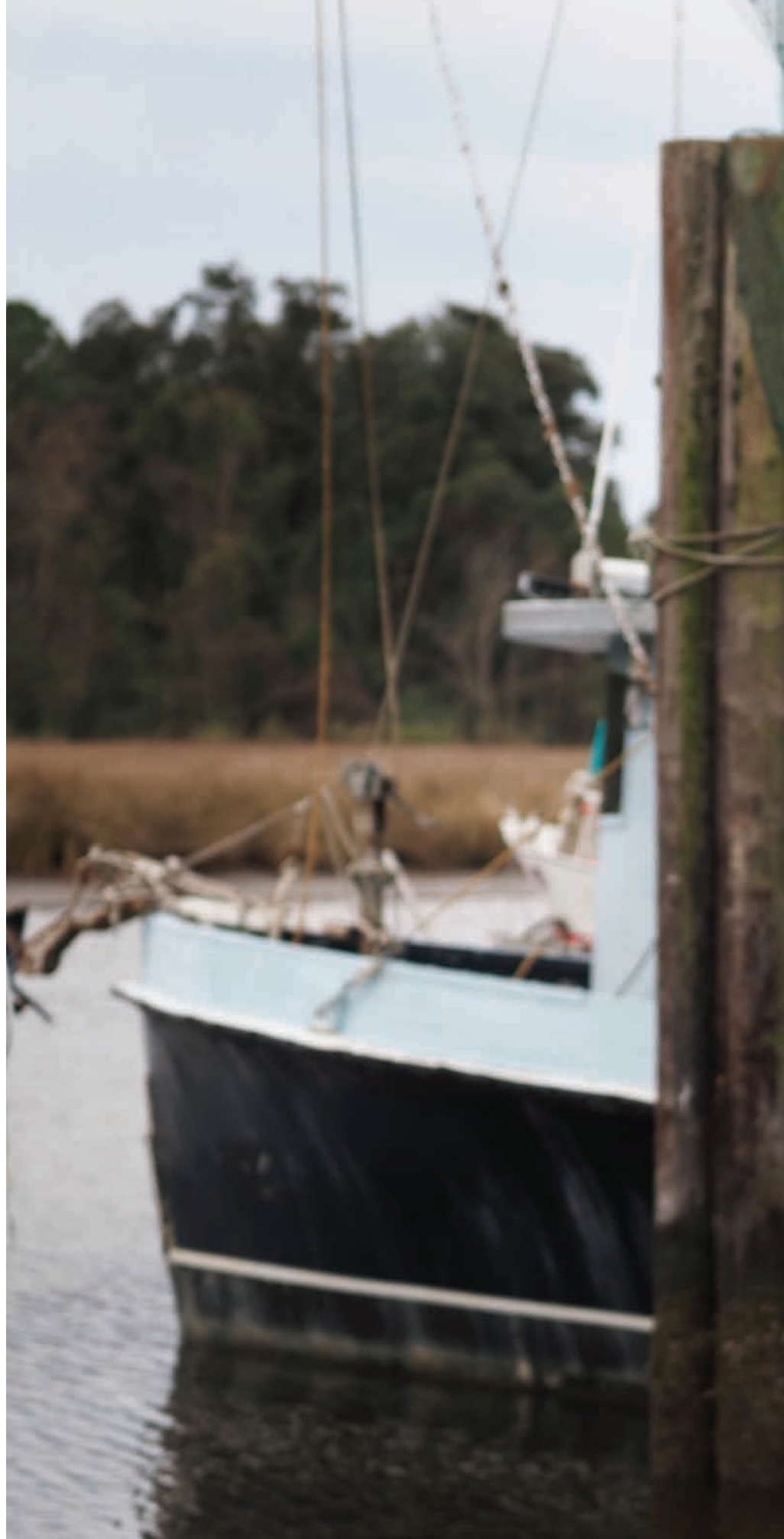
This past fall, more than a year after the accident, Hysell returned to the hospital for an elective hernia repair, a procedure often needed in patients who have had multiple abdominal surgeries. It was performed by another USA Health trauma surgeon, Maryann Mbaka, M.D., MBA.

Today, Hysell is back at work as a maintenance and engineering manager for steel mill equipment at AM/NS Calvert in south Alabama.

He remains grateful for the doctors, nurses and other staff who cared for him, and now considers them family. “As a matter of fact, my mom turned 80 while I was in the ICU, and the staff threw her a birthday party,” he said. “On days when I was having a bad day, they knew it, and they knew what to say to make me feel better.”

Hysell expressed that gratitude when he shared his story before an audience of dozens of hospital supervisors and department heads at their monthly managers’ meeting. He also visits the ICU regularly, taking a platter of Chick-n-Minis or doughnuts for the day shift and barbecue or pizza for the night shift.

“When I come up and visit, it’s not a handshake and ‘How have you been?’ It’s hugs and tears and, ‘Man, we’re just so thankful,’” he said.







Rachel Rieben hugs her son
Kayson Metcalf during a visit
to the park in Bay Minette.

Back on the court

Innovative laser treatment helps young burn survivor get back to his favorite game

BY MICHELLE RYAN-DAY

Kayson Metcalf just wanted to be able to move his hand and knee so he could play basketball again. Burns on his hand, arm and the back of his leg from a gasoline fire when he was 8 restricted his range of motion to the point he no longer could.

But thanks to an innovative burn scar revision laser treatment performed in the outpatient setting – first offered on the Gulf Coast by USA Health – Kayson’s range of motion was restored, as well as his ability to play his favorite sport.

“Basketball is his favorite thing in the world,” said his mom, Rachel Rieben, who fostered him since he was two days old and adopted him with her then-husband Steven Metcalf when Kayson was 1 year old.

Scar revision treatments, which were once only treatable by surgery, and were costly, painful and often stressful for patients, are now more tolerable and accessible to burn survivors, like Kayson, in the Southeast region, thanks to the collaborative efforts of two USA Health physicians.

Andrew Bright, D.O., medical director of USA Health’s burn unit and an assistant professor of surgery at the Frederick P. Whiddon College of Medicine, and Kimberly Donnellan, M.D., a facial plastic and reconstructive surgeon, found that laser treatments in the outpatient setting can

dramatically address burn patients’ range of motion, chronic pain or itching — some of their most common complaints — caused by their healed wounds. Kayson’s is just one of their many success stories.

What started as a slower-paced day on Dec. 20, 2021, the first day of their holiday break, Rieben and her 10 children — seven boys and three girls she’s adopted — ended with a life-changing trip to University Hospital, the region’s only Level I trauma center.

“We slept in and had this great sleepy morning,” she said. Plans included a jog at a nearby park, making lunch, and possibly seeing a movie to celebrate four of her kids’ adoption anniversary. While Rieben was picking up one of her sons from his friend’s house, some of the children started clearing out trash and burning boxes on their large plot of land.

She was close to the house when her oldest son, DJ, called her. She answered but couldn’t hear clearly. “I’m almost home,” she told him. “Hold on, I’m almost there.”

When Rieben arrived, DJ – who now works with Orange Beach 911 dispatch – ran to her with Kayson in his arms, saying they needed to get to the hospital immediately.

She frantically called 911, but instead of waiting, she made the quick drive to the hospital in Bay Minette, less than two miles away. From there, Kayson was airlifted to University Hospital, where he was treated at the Arnold Luteran Regional Burn Center, the only one of its kind along the Gulf Coast.

While struggling to get the fire started, one of the children had poured gasoline on the pile of boxes. “The best that we can tell,” Rieben said, “is that the gasoline splashed on Kayson, who was just the bystander, and the fire lit at the same time.”

Kayson sustained burns to his face, right hand and left leg — 14% of his total body surface area. He was released from the hospital just before Christmas, so the family celebrated together. But what followed was a grueling round of surgeries, wound debridement and skin grafts.

“The only time Kayson really gets upset is when something’s out of order or out of line,” Rieben said. “Being in the hospital and him being too little to understand, all of that just flared up, and it was really hard for him and for me.”

As his physical scars began to heal, doctors were concerned that they were forming puffy, round protrusions called keloids, which can be itchy, tender or painful. They tried custom-made compression sleeves, a treatment that is intended to help flatten the scars.

“There’s little things he can’t do,” his mom said, “and a lot of that came up during all of this

because it was painful and uncomfortable, and everything was out of schedule and routine.”

Scars like Kayson’s can restrict movement when they form over a joint, and left him unable to run.

A referral to Donnellan in July 2022 would give Kayson new hope — but not without new challenges. The lasers caused a burnt flesh smell, which brought back some traumatic memories.

“At first it was really scary, not just for Kayson, but for me too,” Rieben said. “By the time we were done, he was used to it and also thankful because it was very obvious the difference that those treatments made.”

Kayson required 10 treatments over the course of a year. “Our goals were to decrease scarring, increase range of motion in the right hand, and eliminate itching,” Donnellan said. “Thankfully, we were able to achieve all of these goals.”

Typically, standard methods still require patients to undergo general anesthesia due to the pain associated with the procedure in the hospital, an already stressful environment for a burn survivor. Faced with this as an option, some patients simply learn to live with their physical limitations instead.

The DEKA Cartessa Smartxide Tetra CO2 refractory laser system used in Kayson’s treatment works by perforating dense scars and creating tiny channels in the tissue that improve tissue motion and stimulate regeneration. In the outpatient setting, pharmacy-compounded topical anesthetics are used instead of general anesthesia.

Using lasers helps reduce the trauma of treatment, yet they retain their effectiveness. Especially effective on scars from wounds that have abnormally healed, they work by breaking down scar tissue to reveal softer, smoother skin, which helps increase range of motion, restore the skin’s function, reduce pain, and improve cosmetic appearance.

“Patients regain confidence as the cosmetic benefits are dramatic, and they can return to their pre-accident routines by performing simple tasks, like writing, gripping objects, or in Kayson’s case, playing basketball,” Donnellan said. “I am so thankful to be able to be a part of their rehabilitation and to be associated with our regional burn center. These patients become part of our family, and we are fortunate to be able to make their lives better.”

Rieben appreciated that Donnellan and the care team took time to explain the process, showing Kayson pictures and doing everything they could to make him comfortable.

“Dr. Donnellan and her team were absolutely amazing to work with and helped Kayson so very much,” Rieben said. “We are eternally grateful for her and her staff because they really gave Kayson his life back. He wanted to be able to move his hand and knee to play basketball, and he does now!”

Today, the 11-year-old sixth grader at Bay Minette Elementary has been playing in the city basketball league for the past two seasons. “He’s just a regular little boy,” his mom said. He goes fishing with his brothers, jumps on the trampoline, and plays video games.

Despite the return to normalcy, Rieben still remembers how much can change from one day to the next.

“The day before, Kayson had ridden to Atmore with me and a friend, and we went to a Christmas store and coffee shop,” she said. “The next day, that happened, and I almost lost him. Life changes so quickly.”





Opposite, top: Kayson Metcalf was treated at the Arnold Luterman Regional Burn Center at University Hospital.

Kimberly Donnellan, M.D., used a laser treatment on Kayson's scars to increase range of motion, reduce pain, and improve cosmetic appearance.

HOW IT WORKS

The laser system used in Kayson's treatment works by perforating dense scars and creating tiny channels in the tissue that improve tissue motion and stimulate regeneration.

In the outpatient setting, pharmacy-compounded topical anesthetics are used instead of general anesthesia.

To see if you're a candidate for laser therapy, call 251-341-4094.



Brian Fouty, M.D., and
Christine Fouty, M.D., with
daughters Carolene, top left,
and Anna, top right.

A shared calling

By Lindsay Hughes

Husband-and-wife physicians Brian Fouty, M.D., and Christine Fouty, M.D., share a deep sense of purpose in caring for patients, teaching, research and service.

Their paths first crossed at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center in Denver, where Brian was a pulmonary fellow and Christine was an internal medicine resident. After 26 years of marriage, their connection continues to deepen, with both of them practicing at USA Health, and their two daughters, Anna and Carolene, in medical school at the Frederick P. Whiddon College of Medicine.

"USA has been a warm and welcoming place for all of us," Christine said. "We feel connected to so many people in the healthcare system and in the Whiddon COM and are excited about the growth USA Health and the College of Medicine are undergoing. It's great to be part of the USA Health family."

Brian joined the University of South Alabama in 2004 with dual faculty appointments in pharmacology and internal medicine. Troy Stevens, Ph.D., who had worked with Brian at the University of Colorado, recruited him to conduct research at the USA Center for Lung Biology. Brian set up a lab with Victor Solodushko, Ph.D., and they have worked together for the past 21 years. Their research has ranged from examining factors that lead to pulmonary hypertension to developing novel methods for delivering genes and making mRNA vaccines.

In addition to research, he leads the pulmonary/critical care division and directs the fellowship program at USA Health. When he is on service at the hospital, he takes care of patients and performs

procedures in the intensive care unit. His varied roles allow him to teach medical students, residents and fellows.

Christine joined USA Health in 2018 as a hospitalist with the newly formed Jag Hospitalist group at University Hospital. She was pleased to be working in an academic environment, where she has the opportunity to attend grand rounds and interact with residents and fellows. She was also drawn to USA Health's mission, particularly its focus on caring for the underserved.

"USA Health is a vital resource to the communities on the Gulf Coast, and it has been exciting to watch its growth and see the positive impact it has made," she said.

In 2020, she was appointed chief medical information officer of inpatient services to optimize patient electronic health records. In this leadership position, she serves as a liaison between the health system's information technology department and its care providers. "This has been a great experience and has allowed me to work with a wider group of people in the information technology department and administration," she said.

A highlight in the Foutys' professional lives has been watching their two daughters, Anna and Carolene, chart their own courses in the field. While they never pressured their daughters to pursue the profession, they are supportive and encouraging of their endeavors.

"When I see them in the hospital or on the campus and see how mature and competent they are, it is humbling," Christine said, "and I am so thankful to be part of this experience with them."

Christine said she loves running into Anna at the hospital, grabbing a quick cup of coffee with her, and learning about her clinical experiences. Likewise, she enjoys seeing Carolene on campus and hearing about her classes and standardized patients. "It is wonderful!" she said. "It has been so great to watch both of them reach the next milestones, and it brings back great memories of my medical school years."

Brian, too, savors the time he spends with his daughters at home or on the job. "It's fun having both around after having them gone for four years when they were in college," he said. "I get to teach them the respiratory physiology module during second year, which is nice, and I also see them at the hospital during their third and fourth years."

While the Foutys' daughters are pursuing medicine, their son, Andrew, is blazing a different – and equally impressive – trail. He is currently a senior at Columbia University in New York, where he is studying environmental engineering and continuing his swimming career. He is also in the process of applying to Ph.D. programs.

Sisters in medicine and life

Raised by physician-scientists, sisters Anna and Carolene have always been inspired by the example set by their parents – both as professionals and as human beings.

“It has been special to get the opportunity to get to see my parents do what they love,” Anna said.

Throughout their school years, both Anna and Carolene excelled in academics, sports and extracurriculars. Anna graduated from McGill-Toolen Catholic High School in 2017, followed by Carolene in 2019. While they chose different paths for college – Anna earning a degree in biomedical sciences and nutrition science at Auburn University, and Carolene studying Spanish at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. – their bond remained as strong as ever.

Now, the sisters are on parallel journeys to becoming doctors at the Whiddon College of Medicine. Anna is in her final year of medical school, preparing for a career in internal medicine, while Carolene is finishing her first year and exploring all options, with a current interest in anesthesia.

Their decision to attend the Whiddon COM was motivated by a combination of academic excellence, a supportive learning environment that was close to home, and their unique familial connections. Their father, Brian, shared info about the high level of residency programs fourth-year students have been accepted into as well as feedback from medical students he has taught over the years. With this insight, Anna and Carolene both chose the Whiddon College of Medicine.

Though their time will only overlap for one year, the sisters have found it invaluable to lean on each other during the ups and downs of medical school. With long days of studying or working in the hospital, they make sure to prioritize their mental and physical well-being. Carolene swims laps at the USA Rec Center every morning, and the two of them often go for a walk or run together in the afternoon.

“It’s been very exciting to have my younger sister in medical school with me for a year. We have been able to bond over shared experiences and rigors of medical school,” Anna said. Carolene agreed: “It’s nice to have someone to look to for advice and to talk to about life as a medical student.”

Living life to the fullest

When not immersed in their demanding careers and studies, the Fouty family treasures their time together. Brian reflected on memories of when his brother, who has Down syndrome, lived with the family for three years when the children were younger. “They all were great with him,” he said, “taking him to Starbucks for coffee, to Blakeley State Park to walk, and to the Exceptional Foundation where he spent time during the day when we were at work and school.”

One of their favorite traditions is spending Thanksgiving with extended family in Seattle. The family of national park enthusiasts also fondly recall a camping trip through Colorado, Utah and Wyoming. “We have so many wonderful trips to look back on, but that one stands out,” Christine said.

The Foutys are clearly ambitious and accomplished, but the qualities that shine through the most are their genuine love and affection for one another. When asked to describe their family, each member chimed in with adjectives like “fun, adventurous, caring and passionate.” These descriptors capture the spirit of a close-knit family that works hard and plays hard, living each moment to the fullest.

Sisters Anna, left, and Carolene Fouty bond over their shared experiences in medical school.



“It’s been wonderful to watch both Anna and Carolene thrive, and seeing them mature and grow into competent future doctors is humbling.”

– Christine Fouty, M.D.



ClassAct

Education program celebrates 35 years of serving hospitalized children

By Casandra Andrews

ON A RECENT WINTER MORNING, a patient wearing pajamas stood at the door of ClassAct at USA Health Children's & Women's Hospital, eager to start the school day. The child was scheduled for surgery later in the afternoon but wanted to make sure her schoolwork was finished first.

Teachers at ClassAct, a school embedded in the hospital, say it's not unusual for patients to show up early for class, excited to tackle everything from math worksheets to reading assignments.

After all, it's hard to underestimate the normalcy that classroom work brings to what can be a stressful experience. For hospitalized children and teenagers, the familiar routine of attending school can offer refuge from the pain of needles, the fear of swallowing pills, and the lost autonomy that comes from enduring numerous procedures they have no control over.

In fact, aside from education, one of the main goals of ClassAct – which is marking 35 years of serving students – is to give children a sense of control over some part of their lives, which in turn offers them a way to better cope with illness and injury.

It's the only such hospital school in the region where a staff of six certified public-school teachers serves the educational needs of up to 1,200 students each year.

"We focus on the whole child, which includes any physical issues, but also their educational and psychological needs, which are addressed daily by a multidisciplinary team that includes a highly skilled academic medical staff and certified teachers, child life therapists, counselors and social workers, among others," said Debbie Browning, MSN, RN, chief executive officer at Children's & Women's Hospital. "Having ClassAct here helps our patients thrive and ensures they don't fall behind just because they can't attend their regular school."





1,200+

patients receive
instruction
annually

35-year

partnership with
Mobile County Public
School System

6

ClassAct
certified
educators

“I walk out of here every day not deflated, but invigorated, because I have been with a group of precious angels who are hard workers and eager to learn.”

– Anne Vella, Ph.D.

How it started

More than three decades ago in the late 1980s, a determined young teacher – Anne Vella – and several like-minded volunteers with the group Helping Hands for Children implored the local school board to make sure children hospitalized at Children’s & Women’s Hospital had access to learning opportunities when they were unable to attend their regular schools.

They backed up their request by presenting national research that clearly demonstrated better outcomes for sick and injured children whose hospital stays included an educational component.

Nearly 35 years later, Vella has watched the program grow from one small room with a single teacher – her – to a nationally recognized program that includes five teachers, an administrator and continuous support from a talented team of child life specialists and recreational therapists within the Mapp Child & Family Life Program at the hospital.

“It is just the best teaching job in the world,” said Vella, who has earned two doctoral degrees, one in education and another in community counseling, during her career. “Each day you have a chance to make a difference in a child’s life. But more importantly, each child makes a difference in my life. I walk out of here every day not deflated, but invigorated, because I have been with a group of precious angels who are hard workers and eager to learn.”

The ClassAct program, which is a combination of the words “class work” and “activities,” is a partnership between the hospital and the Mobile County Public School System, Alabama’s largest with more than 90 campuses and 50,000 students.

How it works

Teachers provide daily instruction for hospitalized students in grades K-12. Instruction is offered in the ClassAct classrooms for patients who are allowed to leave their rooms. Educators also visit individual patients at their bedside as needed.

The team of teachers and other child life staff meet each weekday morning before school to go over the patient census and the status of every hospitalized child who can receive instruction. This is also when any other needs are discussed, and plans created or reviewed to support the child and his or her family.

Services are not limited to public school students. Children who attend private and parochial schools can also receive instruction. “We contact all schools to get lesson plans,” Vella said.

Prizes for bravery

To help make learning more fun, the program also includes a reward system known as Champion Chain, which allows students to collect paper chain links for completing schoolwork and showing bravery for enduring IV sticks and other procedures.

When enough chain links are collected, the student can pick out a new toy or game from a large selection of donated items from generous community partners and national sponsors. Many of the patients proudly display their colorful paper chains like badges of honor, draping them from IV poles.

And just like at other schools, parties and celebrations are also incorporated into the curriculum. During Mardi Gras, the students join a parading society and roll through the hallways in wheelchairs and wagons as jazz music blares from a mobile speaker. On Halloween, patients and their siblings receive new costumes and take part in arts and crafts activities related to the holiday. Before Mother’s Day and Father’s Day, teachers help students create cards and other mementos for their parents.

Kristin Roberts Mostellar, a special education teacher with 29 years of experience (15 of those at the hospital), said parents are sometimes surprised to learn the hospital has teachers on staff who have experience working with children with disabilities and long-term illnesses.

“We want our students to understand they are valuable members of society who have not been forgotten because of an illness or condition,” Roberts Mostellar said. “Many times, children can develop a stronger sense of self-worth when they have a teacher who cares about them. My goal, personally, is to make sure that parents and caregivers know their child is important, valuable and seen.”



1990

The year teacher Anne Vella, Ph.D., applied for the first grant to establish ClassAct

3

Golden Apple Awards earned by ClassAct teachers in recent years

Therapy dog Sophie visits with a patient in the classroom.

Care never stops. Even in the

SNOW



The Gulf Coast experienced a record-breaking 7.5 inches of snowfall on Jan. 21, 2025. USA Health employees rose to the challenge, demonstrating resilience, teamwork and compassion in the face of crisis. Their tireless work ensured that University Hospital, Children's & Women's Hospital, Providence Hospital and the Freestanding Emergency Department remained safe and operational, and our patients continued to receive the high-quality care they needed.

Pediatric chair
Gul Dadlani, M.D., swept
snow off more than

60

employee
cars



Many employees of Children's & Women's Hospital, the Freestanding Emergency Department, University Hospital, and Providence Hospital stayed at work for days to ensure continuity of care. But they didn't miss the opportunity to have a little fun in the snow, even bringing some of it back to their patients.

Nearly

900

employees called USA Health
"home sweet home" for
51 hours straight



22

snowmen
built

Most creative
snowmen
accessories:

**bedpan hat
& syringe
arms**

more than

30

employees braved
the cold to keep
walkways clear
and safe



27

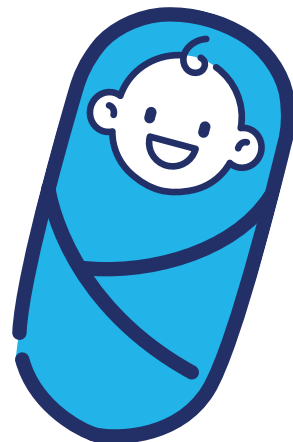
games of
BINGO played



Providence nurses Emily Cox, Taylor Cox and Emily Chapman brought a heartwarming surprise to a patient who had never seen snow – delivering a creative cup of winter magic right to their bedside.


26

snow babies born at
Children's & Women's
and Providence Hospitals



Fighting cancer *smarter*

At the **USA Health Mitchell Cancer Institute**, our mission is to discover, develop and deliver innovative solutions to improve cancer outcomes. Every breakthrough we make is built on an advancement of knowledge through science. As the region's leading research facility, MCI offers advanced cancer treatments in radiation, surgery and medical oncology.

•  **30,200+**
patient visits each year

12,200+ 
medical oncology treatments

550+
gynecologic
oncology
surgeries 

 **10,700+**
radiation oncology treatments

100+
outreach events annually,
connecting more than
10,000 community members
to USA Health 


1,300
surgical oncology treatments

Chakroborty awarded \$100,000 grant to further breast cancer research



Debanjan Chakroborty, Ph.D., right, and Chandrani Sarkar, Ph.D., work in the lab at the Mitchell Cancer Institute.

Debanjan Chakroborty, Ph.D., an assistant professor of pathology at the Whiddon College of Medicine and a cancer researcher at the Mitchell Cancer Institute, is the recipient of a \$100,000 grant from the Breast Cancer Research Foundation of Alabama.

The award provides seed funding for early-stage studies, allowing researchers to generate crucial data needed to attract major national grants.

Breast cancer is often identified with the presence of hardened mass or tissue, resulting from an overabundance of non-cellular components called extracellular matrix (ECM). The ECM imparts a gradual elastic force to the cancer cells, known as matrix stiffness, which alters the cancer cell behavior, promotes metastatic progression, and impacts therapeutic outcomes, Chakroborty explained.

"Manipulation of cancer tissue stiffness is envisioned as a major strategy for improvement in cancer therapeutics," he said. "However, the strategy is not yet successful due to the lack of appropriate targets."

Chakroborty's project will explore a novel axis in breast cancer progression. Specifically, the study will identify the role of lysine-deficient protein kinase 1 (WNK1) on matrix stiffness in breast cancer. WNK1 is a protein that is abundantly expressed in cancer-associated fibroblasts, the most prominent non-cancer cell population in breast cancer tumor microenvironment and the primary depositor of ECM.

The research will be conducted in collaboration with Dhananjay T. Tambe, Ph.D., associate professor of mechanical engineering/biomedical engineering at USA; and Elba A. Turbat-Herrera, M.D., professor of pathology and director of the USA Health Biobank.



Santanu Dasgupta, Ph.D., receives the award from Arlene Mitchell.

Dasgupta receives 2024 Mayer Mitchell Award

Santanu Dasgupta, Ph.D., was named the recipient of the 2024 Mayer Mitchell Award for Excellence in Cancer Research. He joined the USA Health Mitchell Cancer Institute and the Whiddon College of Medicine in 2020. He is head of the Mitochondrial Research Laboratory and a member of the Cancer Biology Program at the Mitchell Cancer Institute, and an assistant professor of pathology and director of research in pathology at the Whiddon College of Medicine.

Dasgupta is principal investigator on multiple projects funded by the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Department of Defense, and the Breast Cancer Research Foundation of Alabama. The aim of his research is to develop biomarker tools for early cancer detection, monitoring, risk assessment and therapeutic guidance – ultimately improving the overall survival of cancer patients.

Dasgupta earned a doctorate in cancer biology from the Chittaranjan National Cancer Institute in West Bengal, India. He went on to complete a postdoctoral fellowship in the Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore.

The \$10,000 award is presented annually to a promising scientist at the Mitchell Cancer Institute upon the recommendation of a faculty committee. The award was established in 2009 by University of South Alabama Trustee Arlene Mitchell in memory of her late husband, Mayer Mitchell, a Mobile businessman, longtime USA trustee and formative figure in the establishment of the MCI.

USA Health leaders named to Becker's Hospital lists



Becker's Hospital Review named Children's & Women's chief nursing officer, Vicki Curtis, MSN, RN, to its list of CNOs to Know for 2024.

With more than two decades of experience in women's healthcare, Curtis has driven key initiatives at USA Health, including a partnership with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement to reduce perinatal and maternal morbidity.

Under her leadership, the hospital was one of only five sites nationwide chosen for IHI's program targeting postpartum care inequities for Black mothers. Curtis also spearheaded new initiatives like the AdaptX data collection program and an at-home blood pressure monitoring system for new mothers at risk for pre-eclampsia. The innovative "I Gave Birth" medical bracelet program, designed to improve postpartum care, has also been launched as a statewide pilot in Alabama following its implementation at Children's & Women's Hospital.

Michael Chang, M.D., system chief medical officer at USA Health and associate vice president for medical affairs, was selected for the Becker's Hospital Review 2025 list of Chief Medical Officers to Know.

Chang leads clinical, quality and safety initiatives for the 7,700-employee academic health system. Since joining USA Health in 2018, he has spearheaded efforts to improve care access, safety and efficiency, notably establishing a surgical quality program modeled after the American College of Surgeons' best practices.

Under Chang's guidance, USA Health reduced its serious safety event rate by more than 70%, earning the HX Achievement Award for Serious Safety Event Rate Reduction. He also played a key role in USA Health's 2023 acquisition of Providence Hospital, managing medical staff and ensuring a smooth transition. During the COVID pandemic, Chang served as USA Health's chief adviser and public health spokesperson, providing regular updates and leadership.

Mobile Bay's 40 Under 40 includes USA Health standouts

Each year, Mobile Bay Magazine highlights 40 residents under the age of 40 who demonstrate leadership, professional excellence and a commitment to the community.

This year's honorees from USA Health and the Whiddon College of Medicine include:



Casey L. Daniel, Ph.D., MPH

Director of Epidemiology and Public Health
Associate Professor of Family Medicine

Maryann Mbaka, M.D.,

Trauma/Emergency General Surgeon
Assistant Professor of Surgery

Josh Snow, MSHA

Chief Executive Officer
USA Health University Hospital



Brewer



Flowers



Kirby



Metzger



Tudor

Brewer appointed chair of orthopaedic surgery

Jeffrey L. Brewer, M.D., was named chair of orthopaedic surgery at USA Health. A board-certified orthopaedic surgeon, he is also an associate professor of orthopaedic surgery at the Whiddon College of Medicine.

Flowers promoted to chief culture and experience officer

Kerry Flowers was appointed chief culture and experience officer at USA Health, a move aimed at enhancing patient and employee engagement within the academic health system.

Kirby leads expansion of rural healthcare initiatives

USA Health named Liz Kirby, MSHA, MBA, its executive director for virtual care and rural initiatives. She most recently served as CEO of Monroe County Hospital.

Metzger named CEO of Providence Hospital

Rick Metzger, MMHC, BSN, was named CEO of Providence Hospital. Since joining Providence Hospital in 2016, he has held a variety of positions including chief operating officer, vice president of operations and surgical services and assistant administrator.

Tudor named CEO of Monroe County Hospital

Nathan Tudor, MSHA, MBA, was named chief executive officer of Monroe County Hospital. In 2021, USA Health and Monroe County Hospital entered into a management services agreement related to the hospital in Monroeville and its related ancillary operations.



Stay up to date with leadership changes on usahealthsystem.com/news.

Sternberg inducted as president of Medical Society of Mobile County



Michael L. Sternberg, M.D., an emergency medicine physician at USA Health and professor of emergency medicine at the Whiddon College of Medicine, was inducted as president of the Medical Society of Mobile County. He leads more than 1,000 physicians in the organization, which provides representation to the state's medical association and advocates for many public service programs.

Sternberg has been involved in multiple previous local and state leadership positions and is the immediate past chair of the board of directors for the Mobile County Health Department. He is a multiyear delegate and counselor to the Medical Association of the State of Alabama, as well as a board member and past president of the Alabama Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians.

As one of the longest-serving emergency medicine student clerkship directors in the country, Sternberg has earned more than 30 teaching awards.

A Night Honoring Healers



Almost 100 USA Health team members – from physicians, nurses and therapists to nutritionists and environmental services staff – were recognized for their compassionate, life-changing care during A Night Honoring Healers. Presented by the USA Foundation, the event was held at the Arthur R. Outlaw Mobile Convention Center on Nov. 7, 2024. The evening highlighted two patient stories: Timothy Carpenter of Mobile and Joie Hellmich of Pensacola.

Save the Date: Nov. 18, 2025

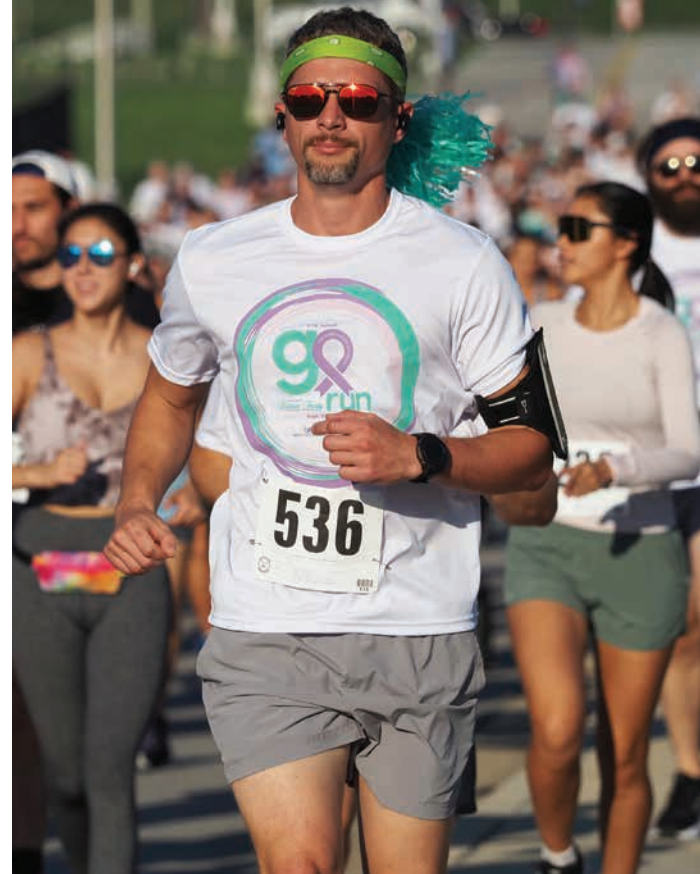
usahealthsystem.com/healers


A NIGHT HONORING
HEALERS

GO Run



SAVE THE DATE
Sept. 27, 2025



The USA Health Mitchell Cancer Institute hosted the 17th annual GO Run on Sept. 21, 2024, on the University of South Alabama campus. More than 700 runners and walkers participated in the 5K and 1-mile fun run to support the institute's ongoing gynecologic cancer research.



Breast cancer survivors and USA Health staff modeled the latest fashions on the runway at the 14th annual Think Pink Tea, hosted by the USA Health Mitchell Cancer Institute at the Arthur R. Outlaw Mobile Convention Center on Oct. 20, 2024. More than 450 guests attended the event as a commitment to patients, survivors, advocates, and the friends and family of those impacted by breast cancer.



Pull for Pulmonary Charity Clay Shoot



The Providence Foundation hosted its annual Pull for Pulmonary Charity Clay Shoot on Jan. 17, at Bushy Creek Clays and Events in Perdido, Alabama. Proceeds from the event benefited pulmonary patient care at Providence Hospital.



SAVE THE DATE

Sunday, May 4, 2025

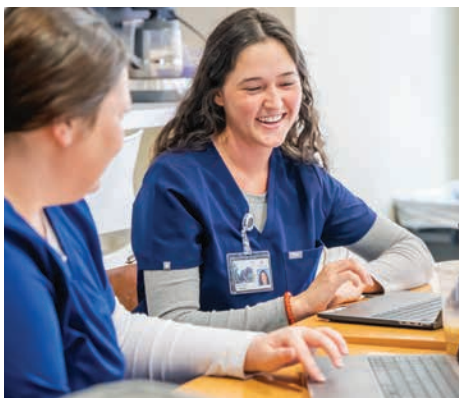
Local Goodness, a farm-to-table event, pays tribute to local cuisine, art and music while raising awareness and support for USA Health Children's & Women's Hospital.

usahealthsystem.com/localgoodness



Five bands competed at the 4th annual Doc Rock on Jan. 30, at Soul Kitchen in downtown Mobile. The “battle of the bands” style event – in which at least one member of each band has an affiliation with USA Health or the Whiddon College of Medicine – supports research and critical clinical needs at USA Health.

USA Happenings



Refer a future Jag

It's not too late to submit an application for undergraduate and graduate programs at South for fall 2025. There are many reasons why more students are choosing South each year, including our more than 115 degree programs and a warm and welcoming campus environment. Invite them to schedule a campus tour or meet with enrollment staff to learn more about all that South has to offer.

South named among best in U.S. News online programs ranking

Online bachelor's programs at the University of South Alabama, along with its online master's program in nursing, both ranked among the best nationally, according to U.S. News & World Report's 2025 Best Online Programs ranking. South's online programs are among more than 1,800 surveyed by U.S. News. Only accredited institutions whose programs are offered mostly or entirely online were evaluated.

South purchases Traditions apartment complex

Due to increased undergraduate enrollment over the past two years and substantial interest in housing from continuing students and incoming freshmen for fall 2025, the University of South Alabama has purchased the Traditions apartment complex at 6201 Old Shell Road. The complex – conveniently located across the street from the University's Recreation Center – will be transitioned this year to student housing only.



New vice president to lead research division

Allen Parrish, Ph.D., who leads one of the University of Alabama's signature research institutes, has been named vice president of research and economic development at the University of South Alabama. Parrish has served as the executive director of the Alabama Cyber Institute, a senior workforce development adviser for the Alabama Transportation Institute and a professor of computer science at the University of Alabama. He begins April 1.



Football season tickets now available

Fresh off back-to-back bowl victories, the Jaguars enter their second season led by Head Coach Major Applewhite. Football season tickets and parking are on sale now for this fall's slate of games at Hancock Whitney Stadium. To purchase or for more information, call 251-461-1USA or visit usajaguars.com.



You know those stories where the good guy wins? We write those stories.

Sometimes, there's a chapter in a child's life where there are bad guys.

Like cancer and heart problems and anything that threatens what should be the happy, magical years of life. That's why we've created a comprehensive blanket of kid-sized care, provided by some of the best pediatric specialists in the country. We're armed with the latest in innovation, skill and technology. And we make sure that no matter how hard the bad guys try, every child's story has a shot at a happy ending.

USA HEALTH | PEDIATRICS

Transforming medicine. And lives.

USAHEALTHSYSTEM.COM/KIDS

UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL • CHILDREN'S & WOMEN'S HOSPITAL
PROVIDENCE HOSPITAL • MITCHELL CANCER INSTITUTE • PHYSICIAN ENTERPRISE

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

Upcoming Events

Local Goodness
benefiting Children's
& Women's Hospital
May 4, 2025

Par 3 Golf Tournament
benefiting Mitchell
Cancer Institute
June 12, 2025

Charity Golf
Tournament benefiting
Providence Foundation
Aug. 21, 2025

Night Honoring
Healers benefiting
USA Health
Nov. 18, 2025



Children's & Women's Hospital dedicated a new art sculpture called "Bed of Flowers." Commissioned by Arlene Mitchell, fourth from left, the sculpture was created by internationally renowned artist Gay Outlaw, a Mobile native who lives in San Francisco.