



A Newsletter Published by Community Health of South Florida, Inc.

Hope and Healing: CHI's Mission to Restore Mental Wellness



Celia Mion, Interim Director of Behavioral Health (left), with Milton Stewart and Kathryn Schreiner from the Crisis Stabilization Unit at the Doris Ison Health Center, supporting those suffering with mental health crises.

There are moments in our lives—and in the lives of our friends and family—when mental health challenges or crises become overwhelming. In such times, it may feel like there is nowhere to turn, either out of fear or simply because people don't know where to seek help. CHI's Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) offers a vital lifeline to those in need.

"Our CSU at CHI is a place where individuals can receive stabilization services for severe mental health challenges, life stressors or addiction," said Celia Mion, Interim Director for Behavioral Health. "We provide detox care for alcohol and substance use in a compassionate and supportive environment."

The CSU is designed to meet the needs of those requiring immediate attention. Patients can stay for several days, receiving intensive inpatient care tailored to their unique situations. Sometimes, traditional outpatient therapy or a visit to a psychiatrist isn't enough for someone in crisis. The CSU bridges that gap, offering a safe space to regain stability and start the journey toward recovery.

“Our unit helps individuals reconnect with their sense of self and begin returning to a normal way of life,” Mion added.

After discharge, CSU staff work closely with patients to ensure they have access to ongoing support. They help individuals connect with resources, such as psychiatry or therapy sessions at CHI or services available in the broader community.

“Our team of dedicated professionals is empathetic, highly skilled and genuinely

invested in helping every person who walks through our doors,” said Mion. “We’re here to ensure they receive the care and guidance they need to heal and move forward.”

CHI’s Crisis Stabilization Unit is a beacon of hope, offering expert care and personalized support to those experiencing a mental health crisis. For those in need, it not only provides immediate relief, but a pathway to lasting recovery.

The CSU is designed for adults. Although it is a receiving facility for children, those kids must be transferred to another facility tailored specifically to them. That’s why CHI is currently building a Children’s Crisis Center next door. It is expected to open in 2025.

The CSU is open seven days a week and 24 hours each day at the Doris Ison Health Center. For more information, visit chisouthfl.org/services/behavioral-health-care

President & CEO Message

The holiday season is upon us, and I want to take a moment to reflect on the gratitude I feel for the incredible individuals who make our mission at CHI possible. From our dedicated staff to our valued community partners, thank you for being an important part of our journey.

To our patients, we are honored to serve as your medical home. Trusting CHI with your healthcare is an honor we take seriously, and we remain committed to delivering high-quality, compassionate care.

While the holidays bring joy and celebration for many, they can also be a time of difficulty for some. If you or someone you know is feeling alone, overwhelmed or in need of support, please know that help is available. Our skilled and compassionate team of psychiatrists, therapists and behavioral health professionals is here to guide you or your loved ones toward healing and hope.

As we close out 2024, I'm excited to share the progress on our Children's Crisis Center. The underground utilities are complete, the steel beams are rising, and soon the walls will take shape. Each step brings us closer to creating a transformative space where young hearts and minds can heal.

If you're looking for a meaningful way to give back this holiday season, consider purchasing a Brick of Hope. These personalized bricks will line the entrance of the Children's Crisis Center and serve as a lasting tribute to your generosity and commitment to helping children in



need. To learn more, visit chisouthfl.org/bricksofhope.

Additionally, I invite you to join us on December 3rd for our World AIDS Day Candlelight Memorial at the Doris Ison Health Center at 7:00 p.m. Together, we'll honor the lives lost to HIV and AIDS, stand in solidarity with those still fighting and celebrate the progress made. This special event will feature heartfelt stories from survivors and a chance to reflect on the impact we can continue to make.

As we approach the new year, I encourage you to prioritize your health, schedule your annual checkup and tell your loved ones to do the same. Let's start 2025 with a commitment to wellness and community.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Blake Hall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Blake Hall

CHI's Dr. Samuel James Makes His Mark in Pharmacy Services



Dr. Samuel James, Pharm-D, is one of Legacy Magazine's 2024 South Florida's Top Black Professionals.

When Dr. Samuel James learned he had been named one of South Florida's Top Black professionals by Legacy Magazine, he could not believe it.

"I was surprised. It feels good to be recognized," he said. "It's a big thing when someone recognizes you as a top healthcare professional."

As the Director of Pharmacy Services at CHI, Dr. James' journey has been defined by dedication and hard work. He joined CHI in 2013 and made his way up the ranks. Dr. James started as a staff pharmacist before taking on the role of Pharmacy Manager for seven years. His progression at CHI reflects his commitment to his patients, his team and his dreams.

Dr. James grew up in Florida and had known he wanted to become a pharmacist since his sophomore year of high school.

"A couple of my family members were healthcare professionals," he said. "So, they had a small influence on me, but I'll just say that growing up I wanted to be involved in healthcare, and I found a path."

Dr. James attended Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in Tallahassee, Florida and describes his time at the university as transformational, laying the foundation for the professional he is today.

"I had plenty of role models, people I would pattern myself after as far as teaching style," he said. "I had a professor at FAMU, Dr. Thompson, who was very influential in helping me and making sure I did good."

Through his professional experience working directly with patients and witnessing their needs, Dr. James learned the best practices and technologies to provide great care. His approach has always been patient-centered, striving to enhance outcomes while building a strong, collaborative team environment with staff.

When asked about what motivates him, Dr. James points out his desire to help patients and make a difference. He often still works directly with patients. He has known many for years, especially through programs like CHI's warfarin clinic that provides education and support for patients on anticoagulation medication.

"One of the best things about working at CHI are the patients. If you interview our patients, they will tell you that we care,"

he said. "That's one of the things that I emphasize to my staff. Always make sure that patients know you really care about them."

Looking ahead, Dr. James hopes to see the continued advancement of pharmacy technology at CHI. He is dedicated to keeping the organization's pharmacy systems innovative to better serve the community.

Being named one of South Florida's Top Black Professionals is a testament to Dr. James' hard work, compassion and leadership. His journey serves as an inspiration to others in healthcare, showing the power of perseverance, a patient-first mindset and a commitment to excellence.



Dr. Samuel James (far left) with his pharmacy staff at the Doris Ison Health Center

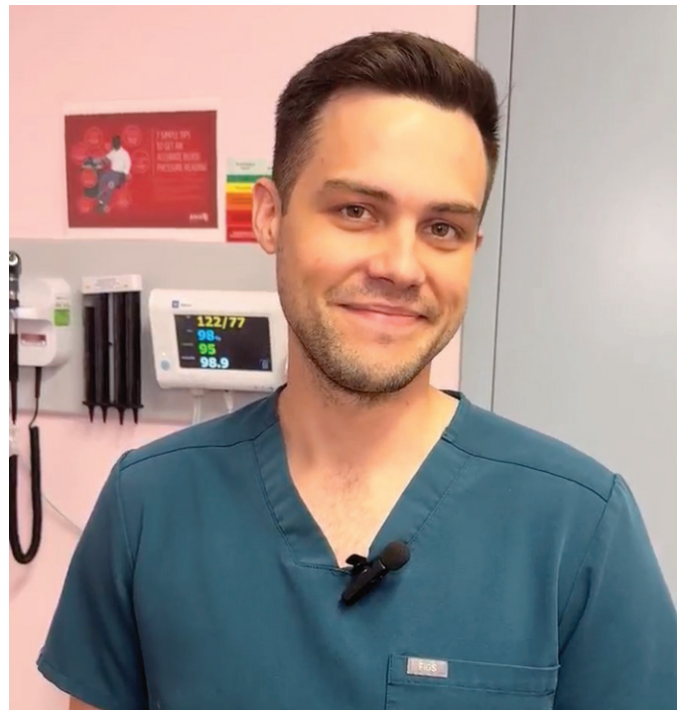
Our Compassionate Team Serving You

Hector Mateo, Patient Financial Services Specialist (PFSS) at Martin Luther King, Jr. Clinica Campesina Health Center, and Dr. Sandy Santiago of our Key West Health Center share their favorite parts about working at CHI. Click the links below to learn more.



Hector Mateo, PFSS

[CLICK HERE](#)



Dr. Sandy Santiago

[CLICK HERE](#)