



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

CHI CELEBRATES A WEEK OF CARE, COMMUNITY AND GIVING BACK



Event attendees taste the healthy food prepared by CHI during the live food demonstration..

For Lisa Luis Capers, healthy eating was not always something she enjoyed, or even wanted to try. Capers knew she had to make changes when she was diagnosed with pre-diabetes, but changing the way she ate was easier said than done.

"I would never eat anything that is green, honestly," said Capers. "I can't eat food that does not look appetizing or delicious."

That began to change when she attended a healthy food demonstration at Community Health of South Florida, Inc.'s (CHI) Doris Ison Health Center during National Health Center Week. The organization hosted a week's worth of festivities

for patients, staff and community partners.

Capers was among nearly 50 patients who attended the first event of its kind hosted by CHI for patients linked to chronic health conditions. The demonstration focused on raising awareness about diabetes and healthy eating while showing patients that nutritious meals can also be flavorful and enjoyable.

Seasoned Chef, Robbie Brinson III, from the EatWell Exchange prepared healthy dishes live, giving attendees the opportunity to see how simple ingredients can be transformed into meals they could recreate at home.

Capers was surprised by what she tasted.

"When I tried that pesto today, it was delicious," Capers said. "I'm going to show my husband, and we are going to change our diet and cook healthy now."

The event went beyond food preparation, giving attendees a closer look at how nutrition can affect both physical and emotional health. A dietitian explained how different food choices affect the body,



Chef Robbie Brinson III prepares a healthy and delicious pesto pasta paste while he and Ashley Carter, dietitian and Eat Well Exchange program director, answer questions from the audience.

including how certain foods can cause blood sugar levels to spike. A food psychologist also shared strategies for navigating the emotional challenges that can come with a diabetes diagnosis, from monitoring blood sugar with the support of family members to maintaining positive mental health.

For Capers, the experience helped challenge her perception that healthy food could not also taste good.

“Most times they say healthy foods aren’t delicious, but everything I ate here today was delicious,” she said. “Today taught me that those foods that are good for us, you can still cook them to be good and tasty.”

Now, Capers hopes to continue losing weight and making healthier choices to avoid becoming prediabetic again. More importantly, the event showed her that doing so does not have to mean giving up the foods she enjoys.

“I’m glad that people at CHI care enough about us to have these programs,” she said. “To teach us how to eat healthier and better in order to stay healthier and live healthier lives.”

The healthy food demonstration was one of several ways CHI celebrated National Health Center Week, held August 2–8. The nationwide observance recognizes the role community health centers play in providing accessible, affordable and high-quality care to millions of patients. At CHI, the week was an opportunity to celebrate the organization’s more than 55 years of service while highlighting the people and programs that make its mission possible.

CHI celebrated throughout the week with activities designed to recognize its employees, engage patients and give back to the South Florida community. Staff Appreciation Day brought a special celebration for CHI employees, including major giveaways such as a television, gift cards and other prizes as a thank-you for their dedication and hard work. School Physical Day helped families prepare for the new school year by providing children with access to affordable school and sports physicals, reinforcing CHI’s commitment to keeping children healthy and ready to learn.

CHI also recognized and supported the communities it serves through outreach efforts. During a Farm Share food distribution, families participated in a drive-through event where they received essential food items, including chicken, bread, milk and other groceries. The distribution provided families with additional resources to help put food on the table while giving CHI an opportunity to connect with patients and community members beyond the walls of its health centers. CHI also provided health and dental screenings and other services



CHI volunteers and staff help put food items together before the start of the FarmShare food distribution event.

for agricultural workers, reflecting its commitment to meeting people where they are and addressing the health and social needs that impact their well-being.

The week also included an opportunity for CHI to recognize the community leaders and partners who help make its work possible. During Partner Appreciation Day, CHI presented gifts of appreciation to community partners and leaders as a thank-you for their continued support and collaboration. These partnerships are essential to CHI's ability to expand access to care, connect patients with valuable resources and address the changing needs of the communities it serves. The recognition highlighted the shared commitment between CHI and its partners to create healthier and stronger communities throughout South Florida.



Children smile with their white coats during CHI's Back to School Physical Day.

National Health Center Week also provided an opportunity for CHI to look toward the future. President and CEO Blake Hall shared his vision for the organization, emphasizing the importance of continuing to expand access to care, strengthening community partnerships and investing in the next generation of health care providers. Through its Teaching Health Center program, CHI continues to train future physicians while giving them valuable experience caring for underserved communities.

From healthy cooking demonstrations and food distributions to employee celebrations, school health services and community partnerships, CHI's National Health Center Week activities reflected what community health care is about: caring for the whole person, supporting the community and making a lasting difference in the lives of those it serves.



Patient Financial Services Specialist, Gabriela de Leon, assists Dental Hygienist, Kaylia Watson, while she performs a dental cleaning on an agricultural worker.

President & CEO Message

As we move through another exciting season at Community Health of South Florida, Inc. (CHI), I am reminded of the incredible impact we can make when we invest in the health and well-being of our communities.

This season has been filled with meaningful milestones and exciting progress. One of the developments we are especially looking forward to is the reopening of our Coconut Grove Health Center on November 3rd. As we prepare to welcome patients back, we are proud to continue expanding access to quality healthcare and providing a space where individuals and families can receive the care they need. We look forward to sharing more updates as we get closer to reopening.

Another important milestone is the continued progress of our Children's Crisis Center. The walls and roof are now up, and the rooms are beginning to take shape as we map out the spaces that will serve children.

As we get closer to this exciting milestone, time is running out to purchase a Brick of Hope. These personalized bricks will line the walls of the Children's Crisis Center, creating a lasting tribute to the individuals, families, and organizations who believe in the importance of caring for our children. Whether you choose to honor a loved one, recognize a special person, or support our mission, your brick is an opportunity to leave your mark on a facility that will make a difference for generations to come. I encourage you to purchase your Brick for Hope today and become part of this legacy. Bricks of Hope - CHI

CHI's dental residency program is also hitting an incredible milestone as it just received Advanced Education in General Dentistry (AEGD) accreditation, expanding CHI's longstanding commitment to training the next generation of healthcare providers. I'm thrilled to see the wonderful future of the Brodes H. Hartley, Jr. Teaching Health Center as it continues to expand.

We are also looking forward to our upcoming golf tournament, an event that brings together friends, supporters, and community partners in support of CHI's mission. Beyond a day on the



course, this tournament is an opportunity to strengthen relationships, raise awareness, and help advance CHI's healthcare services and programs that make a difference throughout South Florida. We are grateful to everyone who continues to support CHI and the communities we serve.

As we look ahead, I want to thank our dedicated staff, patients, partners, and supporters for being an important part of the CHI family. Your continued commitment helps us move our mission forward and build a healthier future for the communities we proudly serve.

Together, we are building upon a dream and creating lasting opportunities for care, hope, and healing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Blake Hall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Blake" being more prominent.

Blake Hall

CHI RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE IN QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE

Community Health of South Florida, Inc. (CHI) is proud to have received multiple Community Health Quality Recognition (CHQR) and compliance badges over the past year, recognizing the organization's continued commitment to providing high-quality, safe and patient-centered care. The honors include:



Advancing HIT for
Quality, Health Center
Quality Leader



National Quality Leader
Diabetes Health



National Quality
Leader
Behavioral Health



Certification of
Compliance
Operational Site Visit



Patient-Centered
Medical Home (PCMH)

These recognitions highlight CHI's performance across several important areas of health care, including clinical quality, health outcomes, health information technology, behavioral health and patient-centered care. Health Resources and Services Administration's CHQR badges recognize health centers that showcase incredible achievements in access, quality, health outcomes and health information technology.

For CHI, earning these badges is more than recognition; it reflects the organization's ongoing commitment to excellence. Maintaining these achievements year after year requires continued attention to quality, accountability, compliance, and patient experience. Each recognition serves as a reminder that CHI must continually evaluate its practices, identify opportunities for

improvement, and strive to provide the very best care possible to the community.

"These recognitions reflect the dedication of our entire CHI team and our shared commitment to excellence," said Blake Hall, President and CEO of CHI. "We do not view quality as a destination, but as an ongoing responsibility. Every day, our goal is to create a safe, welcoming environment where our patients can receive the high-quality care they deserve."

As CHI continues to grow and expand access to care, these recognitions reinforce the organization's commitment to setting a high standard for community health care and ensuring patients receive compassionate, comprehensive and quality services at every point of care.

A RIDE TO CARE: HOW CHI TRANSPORTATION KEEPS PATIENTS CONNECTED



Dr. Martha Perez listens to Mary Johnson's heart rate during check-up appointment.

On a rainy Thursday morning, Mary Johnson waits for her family medicine appointment, grateful that a Community Health of South Florida, Inc. (CHI) transportation van was able to pick her up from her home despite the heavy rain.

“I used to catch the public bus to CHI, but I stopped because walking to the bus stop became too much for me after I hurt my foot,” Johnson said. “I have been using CHI’s van for three years now, and it is so easy. They pick me up right at my house.”

For Johnson, transportation is more than a ride. It is what helps her stay connected to the care she has received at CHI for more than 20 years.

The trip from her home to the Doris Ison Health Center takes about 30 minutes. Along the way, Johnson reflects on how much CHI has changed since she first became a patient. She remembers a time when the organization operated out of trailers in Goulds and has watched CHI grow into the comprehensive health care organization it is today.

“I’ve had a few doctors here at CHI over the years who have passed away,” Johnson said. “A friend recommended Dr. Perez to me, and I have been going to her for a long while.”

Transportation has been part of CHI’s commitment to removing barriers to care since the organization’s early years. The organization has always secured transport for patients to and from the health center. Today, CHI continues to provide free transportation for patients to their health care appointments.

The service is especially important for patients who may have difficulty driving, walking to a bus stop or relying on public transportation. By providing door-to-door transportation, CHI helps make it possible for patients to get to the appointments they need and remain connected to their health care team.

CHI’s transportation fleet has grown significantly over the years, including handicap-accessible vans and minibuses, serving patients across more than 240 square miles of South Miami-Dade County.

Vice President for Facilities and Logistics, Kenneth Gould, helps oversee the operations that keep CHI’s transportation services moving.

“Transportation plays an important role in making health care accessible to the communities we serve,” Gould said. “Our responsibility is to make sure our vehicles, drivers, and daily operations are prepared to serve our patients safely, reliably, and with care. When transportation is the difference between a patient missing an appointment and receiving the care they need, we know the work our team does has a meaningful impact on our community.”

Behind every trip is a team working to coordinate routes, maintain vehicles, and ensure patients can get where they need to go. Juan Lopez, CHI's Lead Driver, has been with the organization since 2014. For him, the role is an opportunity to give back by helping patients get to the appointments they need.

For Johnson, having reliable transportation has given her the freedom to focus on her health instead of worrying about how she will get to her appointments. Every three months, a CHI van arrives at her home and brings her to the Doris Ison Health Center, allowing her to maintain her routine visits with Dr. Perez.

Her story is a reminder that access to health care does not begin when a patient walks through the doors. Sometimes, it begins with making sure they have a way to get there.



Mary Johnson (right) stands with her longtime medical provider, Martha Perez.



Patients wait to board the CHI Transportation van after their appointments at the Doris Ison Health Center.



Community Health of South Florida, Inc. (CHI) mourns the passing of Dr. Kenia Martinez, a former CHI pediatrician who dedicated her time and heart to serving her community. Dr. Martinez loved caring for children and families and was deeply committed to providing the care they needed. Her loss is unimaginable, and we extend our deepest condolences to her family, friends, colleagues, and all who knew and loved her. May they find peace and comfort during this difficult time.

Our Compassionate Team Serving You



Dayanes Rodriguez

Marriage and Family Therapist, LMFT

Hammocks Health Center

[CLICK HERE](#)



Charles Garcia

C.A.R.E.S Manager

Doris Ison Health Center

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