Greetings, ACHE of South Florida members, supporters, and friends.

As we turn the page on 2021, I would like to thank you for the honor and the privilege of serving as your chapter president throughout a unique year. Despite dealing with the uncertainties of the pandemic, I am extremely proud of what we accomplished over these past twelve months. We worked hard to bring you new, unique ways to stay engaged and inspired (#EducateEngageInspire) as we adapted to a virtual world.

I am grateful for the dedication and participation from the 2021 Board of Directors, volunteers, and the hundreds of members that attended our events. I also wish to thank ACHE national for their ongoing support and guidance throughout the year, especially our chapter's Director of Regional Services, Stacey A. Kidd.

Please take a look at some of the major accomplishments from last year.
Congratulations to the 2022 Board of Directors, and the incoming chapter president, Oyinkansola "Bukky" Ogunrinde! I would like to thank Bukky in advance for her service and leadership, as well as for serving as the 2021 Nomination Committee Chairperson, and leading the chapter's recent and very successful Call for Volunteers. Please stay tuned for additional information from Bukky very soon.

As you may have read in my previous newsletters or in my LinkedIn posts, my theme for 2021 was for our chapter to be *mission-driven and member-focused*. I hope that you enjoyed celebrating our members, supporters, and friends as much as I did. I am looking forward to formally recognizing many members of our chapter at an upcoming awards and recognition event and I hope you'll join us.

Thank you again and I wish you and your loved ones a happy, healthy, safe 2022 and hope that you'll continue to stay engaged with our chapter and keep in touch with me. (#LetsConnect)

Please remember to bookmark our chapter's [website](#) and follow us on [LinkedIn](#)! 

---

### 2021: Chapter Highlights and Accomplishments

- Continued leading the chapter’s rebranding and communication efforts, including the new website, following the name change from the South Florida Healthcare Executive Forum to ACHE of South Florida in 2020
- Grew the chapter’s LinkedIn following from <900 to >2,200 in a year
- Created 108 LinkedIn posts mostly dedicated to celebrating our members and supporters
- Averaged over 25k impressions and 600 reactions per month on LinkedIn
- Provided 9 Virtual Face-to-Face education credits through 6 programs
- Held 4 in-person networking events throughout South Florida, in addition to 6 virtual networking sessions throughout the year
- Offered over $20k in scholarships and financial awards to students and members
- Welcomed 15 new Fellows (FACHE) and 1 new Life Fellow (LFACHE)

---

### 2021: An Innovative Year for ACHE of South Florida

- Held the first Fellow Advancement Informational Session & BOG Exam Review Course
- Established a Past Presidents Advisory Board
- Launched Quarterly New Member Orientation Sessions
- Created a chapter Finance Committee and the chapter’s first annual budget
- Introduced the C-Suite Insights series
- Held the chapter’s first Fellows-only Networking Event
- Successfully conducted the chapter’s first virtual Healthcare Leader Development Case Competition
- Nova Southeastern University began covering the cost of student memberships for those enrolled in its Complex Health Systems MBA program
- Offered the chapter’s first exclusive Platinum Level Sponsorship, which was purchased by Nova Southeastern University’s Complex Health Systems MBA program
- Created 2 new positions on the Board of Directors
  1. Chapter Secretary
  2. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging/Community Outreach
About ACHE of South Florida
ACHE of South Florida, known as the South Florida Healthcare Executive Forum (SFHEF) until 2020, is the local chapter of the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE). Its origins date back to 1972 and serves over one thousand healthcare executives, students, and supporters spanning seven counties throughout southeast Florida, from Monroe to the Treasure Coast.

The mission of ACHE and ACHE of South Florida (ACHE-SFL) is to advance our members and healthcare leadership excellence.

Thank You for Your Commitment to Service

I am truly grateful for the service and dedication from last year's Board of Directors.
2021 Board of Directors

Kenneth Wong, FACHE
Chapter President

Oyinkansola "Bukky" Ogunrinde
President-Elect

Jeffrey Kramer, CPA
Treasurer

Ashley Vertuno, FACHE
Regent – Eastern Florida

Haroula Protopapadakis Norden, FACHE
Immediate Past President

Ralph Rios, FACHE
Treasurer-Elect

Attila Hertelendy, PhD
Program Chair

Paula Zalueki, FACHE
Program Chair-Elect

Zunner Rios, FACHE, CPA
Membership Chair-Elect

Karissa Ostoski
Networking Chair

Rene Zipper, FACHE
Networking Chair-Elect

Kristen Palanza
Sponsorship Chair

Michelle Marsh
Sponsorship Chair-Elect

Ayana Miller, FACHE
Student Services Chair

Marla Sanfilippo, FACHE
Student Services Chair-Elect
In December, we introduced a new series known as C-Suite Insights, which is a chapter members-only event limited to a small number of guests who are given the opportunity to have open dialogue with a member of our healthcare community's C-suite.

I would like to thank Eddie Borrego, MBA, SVP and CEO of Jackson West Medical Center, and Madison Workman, FACHE, COO for the Miami Market and North Shore Medical Center with Steward Health Care, for serving as the first two honorary member speakers to launch this event.
Membership

Beginning last month (December 2021), Nova Southeastern University's H. Wayne Huizenga College of Business and Entrepreneurship began offering ACHE student memberships to all those enrolled in the Complex Health Systems MBA program!

I would like to extend a warm welcome to everyone that became a member in December, as well as express my sincerest gratitude to the following individuals that were responsible for approving this initiative and helping with new student enrollment; Dr. Andy Rosman, Dean, Liza Sumulong, Director of Enrollment Services, Dr. Francois Sainfort, FACHE, Dept. Chair, Professor, and Director, and the student leaders of the Complex Health Systems Student Association, Samanta Gomez, Abby Stout, and Tania Perez.

ACHE of South Florida is also truly grateful for NSU's renewed sponsorship commitment for the next two years as the chapter's exclusive platinum level academic partner!
Student Services

The 2021 Student Services Committee, led by Ayana Miller, FACHE, Committee Chair, and Marla Sanfilippo, FACHE, Committee Chair-Elect, recently completed awarding the chapter's student scholarships. Over $12,000 was made available to eligible undergraduate and graduate students!

Congratulations to these three winners, who are graduate students from FAU and UM!

---

Educational Programs

I would like to thank everyone that served on a panel throughout 2021, including those from the last three virtual F2F programs of the year.
A lot of time and effort is involved with the planning and execution of these educational events and I am grateful for the dedication of the following individuals; Dr. Attila Hertelendy, 2021 Education Chair, Paula Zalucki, FACHE, and Charles Felix, 2021 Education Chairs-Elect, and Haroula Protopapadakis Norden, FACHE, who worked with WHEN to organize the chapter's first educational event related to women in healthcare leadership roles.
Networking

In addition to the six virtual networking events held throughout the year, our chapter was able to offer four in-person networking events throughout South Florida in the last two months of 2021.

Thanks to all those that attended, sponsored, and helped to organize!
Member Updates & Recognition

Congratulations!

New Life Fellows (LFACHE) & Fellows (FACHE)
Becoming a Life Fellow (LFACHE) with the American College of Healthcare Executives represents the highest honor a member can achieve, signifying 25 years or more of membership along with a steadfast commitment to integrity, lifelong learning, leadership, diversity and inclusion.

I am honored to recognize the chapter's newest Life Fellows from the past two years.

C. Kennon Hetlage, LFACHE (2021)
Zeff Ross, LFACHE (2020)

Earning the FACHE credential signifies meeting eligibility requirements over several years, demonstrating competency in all areas of healthcare management.

To learn more about becoming a Fellow with ACHE, visit ACHE.org/FACHE.
15 new Fellows and 1 new Life Fellow. This represents the highest number of advancements in a single year!

Congratulations to the following individuals for earning board certification in healthcare management in the final quarter of 2021!

Thank you for your commitment to integrity, lifelong learning, leadership, diversity and inclusion.

Martha Aguero, FACHE
Francois Sainfort, PhD, FACHE
Madison Workman, FACHE
Matthew Garner, FACHE
Dave Lacknauth, PharmD, FACHE
Jenna Merlucci, FACHE
Marc Trajan, FACHE

All new Life Fellows and Fellows are given the opportunity to be recognized for this amazing professional accomplishment.
Why Become/Remain a Member of ACHE?

Join 48,000+ healthcare leaders from across the country and around the world, dedicated to improving health for their patients and their communities.
Learn more about membership **HERE.**

---

**MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS & TESTIMONIALS**

---

**BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT**

**ADRIAN PARKER, FACHE**

---

**EXECUTIVE SPOTLIGHT**

**CORY P. PELAS, FACHE**

Executive Director (CEO) West Palm Beach VA Healthcare System

---

What is your current role and how long have you served in it?

Executive Director (CEO), West Palm Beach VA Healthcare System, I started in the Interim Director role in January 2020, just before COVID-19, and was officially appointed in January 2021.

What prompted you to pursue a career in healthcare and, more specifically, with the VA?

I served as a Medical Service Corp Officer in the United States Army. After leaving military service, it was a natural transition to continue serving from military to VA healthcare. I found myself serving many VA services after active duty so it made sense. I also enjoy the camaraderie within the military community that is sometimes lost after leaving military service.

How long have you been a member of ACHE and ACHE of South Florida?

I’ve been a member of ACHE for almost 30 years and just recently transferred from ACHE of Central Florida to ACHE of South Florida. I was also a member of the Western Florida Chapter when I lived in the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area. I have enjoyed being active in several chapters, getting to know many healthcare leaders from across the state.

How has being a member and a Fellow contributed to your success and the care that you provide to our veterans?

The professional connections and mentorship I have received through ACHE have benefitted me tremendously. Not only have I been able to collaborate and partner with other chapter leaders and organizations in the healthcare community, but I have also formed many friendships within the VA staff. The VA has a very strong presence at the Annual Congress on Healthcare Leadership that has been very beneficial in connecting with peers and also mentoring those on their professional journey. I would not be where I am today without my ACHE membership.
What is your current role and how long have you served in it?
For nearly 3 years, I have been the Associate Director/Chief Operating Officer (CDO) for the West Palm Beach Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC).

What prompted you to pursue a career in healthcare and, more specifically, with the VA?
I wanted to be in healthcare since early childhood in Ireland, where there were few, if any, providers, and hardly any clinics in the rural areas where we lived. My education was focused on healthcare since the beginning, and my path to becoming a healthcare administrator was nurtured during the early days of my military career both as a Medical Service Corps officer, and through graduate education opportunities in the civilian sector. I was offered and selected for several defining positions that supported my career choices as I moved up the military career ladder in healthcare executive leadership. After completing 35 years in uniform and retiring from military service in 2016, I found myself looking for an opportunity to continue my passion of healthcare while still serving my fellow veterans, and the VA was the obvious choice. Where better to continue to serve my brothers- and sisters-in-arms from all areas of military service? So, I sought out a VA Medical Center leadership position because I love working with our patients in our hospitals. Our VA population is very special and unique - these are the men and women who served our country when they heard the call. Less than 1% of our population chooses to serve our country in uniform. I am very humbled to serve those who have served our nation!

How long have you been a member of ACHE and ACHE of South Florida?
I became a member of ACHE in 1985, a Diplomate in 2006, and a Fellow in 2007. As I have moved around a bit during my career, I have belonged to several ACHE Chapters, including Central California, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Central Texas, Northern California, the National Capital Region, and Germany. I moved to Florida in late 2015 and joined ACHE of South Florida at that time.

How has being a member and a Fellow contributed to your success and the care that you provide to our veterans?
ACHE has always been regarded as the Gold Standard of healthcare executive professionalism and Board Certification, especially within the military healthcare profession. That is how it was presented to me as a fledgling healthcare officer in 1985, when I was first approached by my mentor, who was also a member of ACHE. It was and is a highly sought-after credential and not easily met. Often, when seeking healthcare executive positions, when everything else is equal, having the ACHE credential is the preferential deciding factor. As members and Fellows, belonging to such a highly esteemed professional organization such as ACHE means we have set a high standard of excellence for ourselves, both ethically and professionally, and speaks to the high quality of care we strive to provide for our patients.

Anything else you want to share about you, membership and/or your role?
ACHE has always been part of my professional upbringing and advancement. It has been the credential that has opened doors to multiple professional opportunities and has been an advantage in close selections. I have always enjoyed the camaraderie with my ACHE colleagues at ACHE-sponsored events all over the US and Europe because it provided additional practical operational perspectives, avenues for networking, and opportunities I might not have considered if not for those seminars, clusters, or local get-togethers. Being part of ACHE has kept me centered and up-to-date with healthcare no matter where I found myself in the world practicing my craft. It has been, and continues to be, an indispensable organization for my continued development as a leader and life-long healthcare executive practitioner.
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Jeff Ritter
Assistant Professor
College of Nursing and Health Sciences
Master of Science in Health Service Administration Programs
Barry University

How long have you been with JHS and what roles have you held throughout your tenure? Throughout the past 8 years, I have held several roles within Jackson Health System, including Director of Corporate Initiatives for Jackson Health System, Chief Operating Officer for Jackson South Medical Center and, currently, Senior VP and CEO for Jackson West Medical Center. I have also led and played a key role in various complex initiatives for the health system, including the trauma designation, STROKE, STEMII and the expansion at Jackson South Medical Center, Department of Corrections Health, and COVID testing and vaccinations for Miami-Dade County residents.

As the CEO of South Florida’s newest hospital, what are you most proud of and what do you want the community to know about JWMC? This is the first academic medical center in Doral and the first built-to-suit campus in Jackson Health System’s network. As the first acute care hospital to open in South Florida in a decade, this comprehensive medical center was designed completely around the patient, including easy-to-navigate facilities, fist-of-its-kind innovation technology, and passionately engaged caregivers who deliver a boutique and personalized experience for our patients and families. JWMC is raising the bar when it comes to care. Patients and families are truly at the center, encouraged to serve as captain of their care and are involved every step of the way. Our patient satisfaction scores rank in the 97 percentile nationally which is remarkable for a new facility. These accomplishments, however, are the result of the collective skills and dedication from every member of the JWMC team. We have built a culture that is centered around inclusivity, engagement, and empowerment. We are intent on making every interaction - before, during and after - an amazing one.

Our CAREgivers are empowered to fulfill their highest potential and understand that they are what make the difference, patients choose Jackson because of them.

My motto is clear: when caregivers feel their best, they can give their best! I strive to provide my team with everything they need so that they can give their best all day, every day to their colleagues, our patients and their families.

Why did you join ACHE/ACHS of South Florida and why would you encourage others to join? A former colleague of mine, Gino Santonio, FACHE, became a member of ACHE and ACHS of South Florida and started the path towards Fellowship. Shortly after telling me about the organization, I decided to join. Unfortunately, it wasn’t until fairly recently that I realized that we had a local chapter that was offering so much for members in addition to all that national ACHE provided.

As a new member a few years ago, I applied for an ACHE scholarship to attend an executive leadership program and was accepted. I gained so much from that experience and applied much of it throughout my career, including opening JWMC. From the networking and educational events to scholarships and the Fellowship credential, ACHE and ACHS of South Florida offer some amazing benefits to members and I highly recommend that anyone involved in any aspect of healthcare consider joining.

My next goal is to become a Fellow with ACHE. I believe that becoming a Fellow gives you national professional credibility in healthcare management. It proves that you have achieved a certain level of experience and are knowledgeable in the healthcare field.
Please visit our chapter's EVENTS page to view and register for upcoming events.
Annual Corporate Sponsors

PLATINUM

H. Wayne Huizenga College of Business and Entrepreneurship
NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

GOLD

University of Miami

BRONZE

Baptist Health
South Florida

MEDIA PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

For the latest chapter news and events, follow us!