

Live Healthy

An Interview with Bo Boulenger,
President and Chief Executive Officer, Baptist Health South Florida

EDITORS' NOTE Bo Boulenger is responsible for Baptist Health's 12 hospitals and more than 200 outpatient facilities and physician practices spanning four counties, as well as Miami Cancer Institute, Miami Cardiac & Vascular Institute, Miami Orthopedics & Sports Medicine Institute, Miami Neuroscience Institute, Lynn Cancer Institute, Marcus Neuroscience Institute, and Lynn Heart & Vascular Institute. With more than 35 years of experience in healthcare administration,



Bo Boulenger

Boulenger began his career with Baptist Health in 1985 at South Miami Hospital in strategic planning focusing on opening new outpatient ventures, including home healthcare and radiation oncology. In 1994, he was named CEO of Homestead Hospital, and in 2006 he became CEO of Baptist Hospital. Boulenger was named "Ultimate CEO" (2008) and South Florida's "Power Leader" in Healthcare (2013) by the South Florida Business Journal. He received the Citizen of the Year Award (2003) from Homestead Civitan Club and was honored with the Fire Starter Award by the Studer Organization. Boulenger is a member of the Florida Hospital Association's (FHA) Board of Trustees, where he is Chair-elect and chairs the Policy Committee and the FHA Political Action Committee. He serves on the American Hospital Association Health System Committee and is a member of the Florida Council of 100. He has also served on numerous boards, including American Hospital Association – Section for Metropolitan Hospitals, Governing Council YMCA of Greater Miami, South Florida Healthcare Association, Vizient Southeast, South Dade Chamber of Commerce (former Board Chair) and Vision Council of South Dade. Boulenger earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Florida and a master's degree in healthcare administration from Washington University in St. Louis.

INSTITUTION BRIEF Baptist Health (baptisthealth.net) is the largest healthcare organization in South Florida, with 12 hospitals, more than 26,000 employees, 4,000 physicians and 200 outpatient centers, urgent care facilities, and physician practices spanning across Miami-Dade, Monroe, Broward, and Palm Beach counties. Baptist Health has internationally-recognized centers of excellence in cancer,

cardiovascular care, orthopedics and sports medicine, and neurosciences. In addition, it includes Baptist Health Medical Group; Baptist Health Quality Network; and Baptist Healthcare On Demand, a virtual health platform. A not-for-profit organization supported by philanthropy and committed to its faith-based charitable mission of medical excellence, Baptist Health has been recognized by Fortune as one of the 100 Best Companies to Work For in America and by Ethisphere as one of the World's Most Ethical Companies.

Will you highlight Baptist Health's history and heritage and what have been the keys to Baptist Health's consistent strength and leadership in the industry?

Baptist Health was founded by a group of committed, like-minded religious and civic leaders who wanted a faith-based, not-for profit hospital for their community. Their mission, which still guides us today, was to provide the highest quality, most compassionate care to the people of South Florida. As far as what has made Baptist Health a leader in our industry, I can say without reservation that our success resides in our great people and strong organizational culture. We deeply value our employees, our physician partners, and our volunteers. They are why we are the most preferred health system and they are how we have been able to serve our mission every day for more than six decades. Baptist Health has grown from one 270-bed community hospital to a four-county, 12-hospital system that delivers excellence every day to every patient in a very sustainable manner. And by creating and maintaining this culture of excellence in all domains, we are proud to have become the place that people want to work, physicians want to practice, and consumers want to seek care.

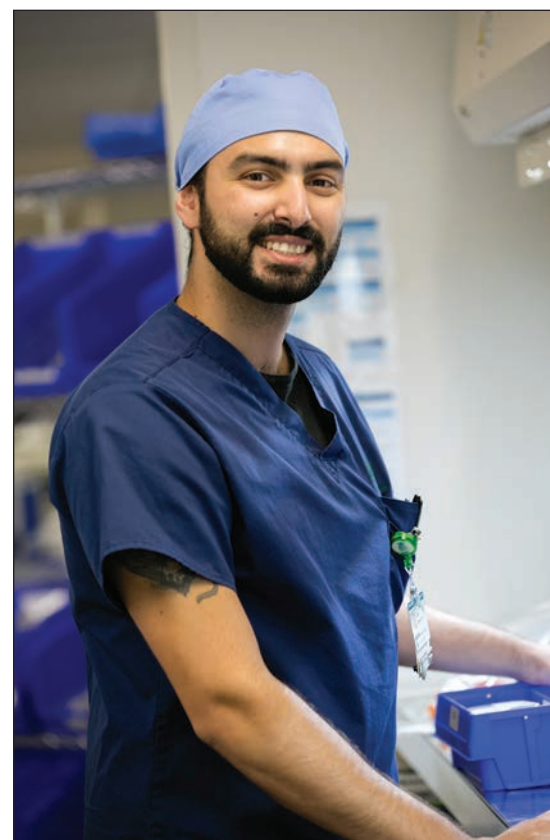
The healthcare industry is constantly evolving. We are challenged to stay ahead of that evolution through our commitment to excellence – whether that's through research and innovation, technology, or above all else, our people. At Baptist Health, our people are experts in their fields. This expertise, combined with the best technology and medical innovations available, allow us to provide the highest level of care to our community and ensure that nobody ever has to leave home to get the care they need.



Baptist Health Hospital in Doral,
one of the 12 Baptist Health hospitals in South Florida

Will you provide an overview of Baptist Health's network of hospitals and outpatient facilities?

Baptist Health is the largest healthcare organization in the region, with 12 hospitals, over 26,000 employees, 4,000 physicians and more than 200 outpatient centers, urgent care facilities and physician practices. With a presence across Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Palm Beach counties, we offer internationally renowned centers of excellence in cancer, cardiovascular care, orthopedics and sports medicine, and neurosciences. We have a team of world-renowned physicians and extensive virtual options to offer seamless care and welcome patients throughout any stage of their healthcare journey. South Florida is the gateway to the Americas, and Baptist Health also has a robust international division providing care to more than 14,000 international patients each year. We are among the largest not-for-profit healthcare systems in the nation, with an annual operating revenue of \$5.1 billion.



Baptist Health South Florida professionals (above and opposite page)



Will you discuss your focus on expanding Baptist Health's footprint and where you see continued opportunities for growth?

Our goal has never been to be the biggest; rather, the best and most convenient option for the communities we serve. With that in mind, we plan to expand access to care for our patients and meet them where they are. We are neighborhood-based in that wherever our patients live or work in South Florida, they know they have a trusted healthcare option nearby – whether that's an urgent care center, a diagnostic imaging center, a physician's office or a hospital. We grow to meet the needs of our communities. In the last few years, we opened a new hospital, free-standing emergency rooms, and a medical complex. We've also expanded some of our hospital campuses to accommodate growing needs for services – like cancer care, orthopedics, neurosciences, and cardiac and vascular care.

How has the role of a hospital evolved and what will the hospital of the future look like?

Maintaining your health and vitality will always be of utmost importance. As our community grows, so do its health and wellness needs. Outpatient care and follow-up care for patients will always intersect with the overall hospital experience – and we're growing to expand that access.

Healthcare systems all started with a hospital at the core, and historically have been very hospital-centric. Baptist Health evolved relatively quickly from a hospital to an outpatient and an Institute-driven organization. We will always need hospitals, especially with an estimated 10,000 Americans a day aging into the Medicare demographic,

but as we saw in the pandemic, consumers prefer care at home or near where they live. We will continue to expand and innovate the most convenient care offerings so that we will remain the provider of choice for our community.

With the growth of large health systems, how important is size and scale to address the future challenges in healthcare and will the independent, community hospital be able to survive?

That's an important question. At Baptist Health, we talk a lot about "smart growth" and expanding in a way that is beneficial to both the organization and the community. As a 12-hospital system with many outpatient sites, we can leverage our scale and our network, which has certainly been beneficial for all. We have seen tremendous advantages to our size and scale in improving quality, lowering costs, and investing in innovation. I can't imagine how challenging it must be for stand-alone hospitals to meet the needs of our growing communities.

Will you discuss Baptist Health's commitment to being engaged in the communities it serves?

Our mission is to care for the entire community and to be the best at meeting their healthcare and wellness needs. We serve this mission in many different ways. In 2022 alone, we provided \$487.9 million in charity care and community benefit across South Florida.

We offer free health screenings, educational programs and wellness classes throughout our communities and partner with many organizations, clinics and groups to make it happen. A motto of ours is "Live Healthy," and through these dedicated programs, strategic partnerships and community activations, we help the community to do just that. We're all about keeping people healthy, and we have to be deeply engrained in our communities in order to do that.

How critical is it for Baptist Health's workforce to mirror the diversity of its patients and the communities it serves?

For people to feel comfortable receiving care, it must be delivered with empathy and compassion, and it must meet individuals' emotional and spiritual needs. A diverse workforce helps us provide a care environment that optimizes healing and health for patients and their families. It is not difficult for us to have a diverse workforce since the community itself is so diverse. We are frequently recognized by *Fortune* magazine as a top 100 national employer and our top priority is to foster a vibrant team that is an accurate reflection of our multicultural community. We have a long-standing history of being recognized as a top employer for *DE&I*, having been highlighted by *Fortune*, *Working Mother*, and *Modern Healthcare* magazines, to name a few. We are also frequently approached to lead national research trials due to the diverse demographics of our community.

What do you feel are the keys to effective leadership and how do you describe your management style?

If you ask anyone at Baptist Health what sets us apart from other organizations, I can almost guarantee that they will say our culture. And a strong organizational culture is rooted in leaders who keep their focus on people – every decision they make, every goal they set or plan they create. To be an effective leader, you must be a careful steward of the talents, values, and hopes of the men and women you have the privilege of leading. Patient engagement and satisfaction is the reason that we have been so successful, and our great organizational culture is truly the root of that; it's our DNA and the glue that holds us all together and keeps us motivated.

As far as my management style, I like to keep things simple and lead by example. I'm a strong believer in empowering people – I don't micromanage. Having myself worked my way up the ranks, I have a deep respect for the individual contributions of all who work in our organization. I'm passionate about our mission and the purposeful work we do, and I never forget that we exist to care for and serve our community. When you look at challenges through that lens, things become more clear.

What do you tell young people about a career in medicine and the opportunities that exist in the industry?

I encourage young people to consider working in healthcare as it gives you an opportunity to do purposeful work with people you enjoy every day. It may be mentally, physically and emotionally challenging work, but the rewards are there every day. Healthcare delivery will continue to evolve and change, and we need future team members with the resilience and skills to take us to the next level.

My biggest piece of advice is to never stop learning and to be open to change. "How we've always done it" has no place in healthcare – you need a high tolerance for ambiguity to work in this industry. I would advise young people, as I do my own children, to never turn down an opportunity or additional responsibilities. I've held many different roles during my years at Baptist Health and have learned and evolved as a leader through each one. We as healthcare professionals have the ability to make a difference through medicine, both on the clinical and non-clinical sides, and that's both an honor and a huge responsibility. And most of all, work hard, be consistent and treat everyone with respect.

Do you take moments to reflect and celebrate the incredible work that takes place at Baptist Health every day?

Almost every day I learn about something – a patient experience delivered by a team member or an innovation by a bright mind – that makes me proud. I like to share these stories with our team to celebrate our mission and purpose. In this industry, it is not difficult to find inspiration or be reminded of the power of empathy. I truly believe that our success as an organization is a product of our team's shared compassion and commitment to each other and the community. ●