

Transforming Healthcare

An Interview with Alexandra Villoch, Chief Executive Officer, Baptist Health Foundation

EDITORS' NOTE Alexandra Villoch joined Baptist Health South Florida in June 2019 as Chief Executive Officer of Baptist Health Foundation. Her role also includes oversight of the organization's Government & Community Relations and Hospitality & Business Relations divisions. Villoch most recently served as President and Publisher of the Miami Herald Media Company and East Region Publisher for McClatchy, a national media company and parent company of the Miami Herald Media Company. There, she led all digital and print operations at seven media companies, including the Miami Herald Media Company, as well as other media properties in Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Pennsylvania. Prior to joining the Miami Herald, she was United Airlines' General Manager for Miami International Airport and the Caribbean. She also held roles with Southeast Bank and Eastern Airlines. Villoch is past Chair of The Beacon Council, Miami-Dade County's economic development agency, and Chair Emeritus of the Council's One Community One Goal Initiative. She has served on the Executive Committee of the United Way of Miami-Dade County, and co-chaired the annual campaign for two years. She also is past Chair of Big Brothers and Big Sisters Board of Miami-Dade County and has served on the Miami-Dade College Foundation Board and the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee. In 2012, she was awarded the International Economic Development Council's Citizen Leadership Award, a national award that recognizes a community and business leader who plays a key role in economic development in their community. She has also been the recipient of the Boys & Girls Club Community Builder Award and the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce's Power Leader of the Year Award, among other accolades. Villoch holds a BA degree in political science and an MBA degree from the University of Miami. She also attended Miami-Dade College.



Alexandra Villoch

and expands Baptist Health's ability to provide outstanding patient care and bring the latest treatments to patients and families affected by a serious illness. Donor contributions also allow the Foundation to assist Baptist Health facilities in keeping pace with technology and equipment advances, perform cutting-edge research and offer continuing education opportunities to medical staff.

What interested you in joining Baptist Health and made you feel it was the right fit?

Throughout my career, I have always been with companies that are mission-based and give back to the communities they serve in different ways. The ability to make an impact on the well-being of our community has always been very important to me, and I'm grateful for a career that's been both meaningful and rewarding. All the roles I have held in my career are similar in that they have offered me the opportunity to give back to the place that shaped both my personal life and career.

My current position as CEO of Baptist Health Foundation is part of this continuum – allowing me to promote our vision and develop meaningful donor relationships with the goal of transforming the future of healthcare in South Florida. Also, it is especially meaningful to me, as a 19-year breast cancer survivor, to be able to support our incredible physicians, groundbreaking research and compassionate care, right here where I live.

As an immigrant who came from Cuba with my parents in 1960, I was taught that we have been blessed and therefore we must give back in gratitude. I have been involved in the South Florida community in various non-profit board positions as a result. I served as Chair of The Beacon Council – Miami-Dade County's economic development agency – and continue to serve on the Executive Committee. I also served as Board Chair of Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Miami-Dade, along with chairing the United Way's Women's Leadership Initiative, and serving many years on the Executive Committee of United Way of Miami-Dade County. I also served on the board of the Miami-Dade College Foundation, as access to education can make all the difference.



Alexandra Villoch speaking about Bounce Back from Cancer™, a partnership between the Miami HEAT and Baptist Health Foundation

FOUNDATION BRIEF The mission of Baptist Health Foundation (BaptistHealth.net/Foundation) is to inspire philanthropy and build extraordinary donor relationships in support of excellence, innovation, community wellness, and global leadership in healthcare at Baptist Health South Florida. Through philanthropy, the Foundation supports

“Baptist Health is expanding the reach of our institutes and pioneering innovative, world-class healthcare as we evolve into a global destination for research, discovery, innovation, and treatment.”

Will you provide an overview of your role and areas of focus?

As the CEO of Baptist Health Foundation, I lead the philanthropic efforts that support the Baptist Health organization, which spans twelve hospitals, four specialized institutes for cancer, neuro, orthopedic, and cardiovascular research and care, and outpatient, urgent care, and other facilities throughout Miami-Dade, Monroe, Broward, and Palm Beach counties. My work also involves oversight of Baptist Health’s government and community relations, hospitality, and international divisions.

For Baptist Health, a not-for-profit healthcare organization, philanthropy is the key to advancing our mission and catalyzing our vision to become the preeminent healthcare provider in Florida, meeting and responding to today’s greatest challenges – and opportunities – in healthcare. In my role, I lead Baptist Health’s philanthropic strategy by showcasing the organization’s opportunities for transformative donor support and building the philanthropic partnerships that have a life-changing impact on our patients, the community we serve, and people everywhere who benefit from groundbreaking advancements in medicine and research.

As South Florida’s population grows and globalizes, the need for exceptional, accessible care and leading-edge research is more urgent than ever. In response, Baptist Health is expanding the reach of our institutes and pioneering innovative, world-class healthcare as we evolve into a global destination for research, discovery, innovation, and treatment. Philanthropy turns possibility into reality, and we are working to drive this momentum.

Will you highlight the history of the Baptist Health Foundation and how you define its mission?

Philanthropy at Baptist Health has come a very long way. Baptist Hospital was originally developed thanks to a gift from industrialist and real estate developer Arthur Vining Davis, who had a vision for healthcare to serve his residential communities. He donated 55 acres in what was then a remote part of Miami, as well as \$1 million to build the hospital, which opened in 1960.

As the 1980s approached the Baptist Hospital Foundation was formally established. The Foundation began by leveraging hospital events to raise funds, and donations gradually increased. New hospitals, such as South Miami,

Mariners and Doctors, joined the Baptist family; and Baptist Health Foundation was formed as an umbrella organization that was modeled on the organizational structure of Baptist Health.

As the Foundation grew, it began to secure major gifts, with the most transformative gift from Victor E. Clarke, the founder of Gables Engineering, whose two \$10 million donations included acreage in west Miami-Dade, an MRA machine for cardiac care and major funding toward the new Emergency Department on Baptist Health’s Kendall campus.

The Foundation’s most far-reaching initiative, however, was the creation of the Founders Society in 2000 to recognize the Foundation’s most generous donors – those who understood the importance of investing in healthcare in South Florida. Today this group, now known as The Giving Society, includes more than 2,800 of the Foundation’s top philanthropists that generously invest in insuring that our community has the best world-class healthcare available to all.

Over the years, funds raised have had an enormous impact on patient care throughout Baptist Health. Recently, Fishermen’s

Community Hospital, which was devastated by Hurricane Irma in 2017, was rebuilt from the ground up with \$16 million in support from the Middle Keys community. A helipad was built on the roof of Baptist Hospital’s Emergency Center to further reduce emergency response times, thanks to a multi-year campaign by the Ocean Reef community in the Florida Keys. More than 39 clinical trials in a wide range of specialties have been supported by philanthropy at Miami Cancer Institute. Donors fund a wide range of programs, including an oncology endowment to treat cancer patients at Mariners Hospital; web cameras for anxious parents of newborns in the South Miami Hospital’s Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU); free community events for West Kendall Baptist Hospital’s Healthy West Kendall program; physicals for student athletes as part of Baptist Health Orthopedic Care’s Youth Athletic Outreach program; and mindfulness workshops for patients at Miami Cancer Institute.

As the largest not-for-profit hospital system in the region, with more than a million patient visits every year, Baptist Health is uniquely positioned to offer a wide range of educational opportunities. In 2020 Baptist Health Academics,



Baptist Health Miami Cancer Institute

the hub for all nursing and medical education programs, was created to attract, educate, and retain highly skilled healthcare professionals to meet future workforce needs and support employee development. Through partnerships with academic institutions, such as Florida International University (FIU), over 9,000 students participate in programs offered each year.

There is great potential to further develop meaningful partnerships with FIU, and other academic institutions, through collaborations around clinical facilities, nursing education, and public health that would benefit both institutions and elevate South Florida on the global healthcare stage.

We are investing in innovative and enriching educational programs, such as the Baptist Health Nurse Scholars Program, to build a pipeline of talented nurses. Through academic partnerships with South Florida institutions of higher learning, programs such as this offer funding, faculty, classroom space and clinical sites for select nursing student programs. Philanthropy drives Baptist Health's ability to invest in the next generation of nurses, physicians and healthcare professionals through significant annual donations and transformational investments.

At the height of the pandemic in 2020, the Foundation established the COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund, which raised more than \$4 million to cover much-needed personal protective equipment and hot meals for clinical staff, iPads for isolated patients to video chat with loved ones, and vital research in the fight against the disease.

The mission of Baptist Health Foundation is simple: To inspire philanthropy and build extraordinary donor relationships in support of excellence, innovation, community wellness and global leadership in healthcare at Baptist Health.

An investment in Baptist Health is an investment in the health of our South Florida community as we strive to expand the reach of our Institutes and set a new standard for exemplary care across every county and every neighborhood we serve. It is the transformational support that will help us meet today's healthcare challenges and build a better Baptist Health for tomorrow's patient.

How critical are metrics to measure the impact of Baptist Health Foundation's initiatives and programs?

Metrics are very important. Our team is very connected to each of our hospitals, institutes and programs, and impact data is reported regularly to the Foundation, our boards and councils, and our donors. For example, in 2021, donor philanthropy launched 57 new patient clinical trials at Baptist Health Miami Cardiac & Vascular Institute; provided medical evaluations for 230 patients for treatment at Baptist Health Baptist Hospital and provided nearly 2,400 Halo® SleepSacks at South Miami Hospital to educate families on safe sleep practices that help significantly reduce the risk of Sudden Unidentified Infant Death (SUID).

Donors are helping us make tremendous strides for our patients and community, and impact metrics tell this story in the most meaningful way.

How do you engage Baptist Health's workforce in the work of the Baptist Health Foundation?

Baptist Health is a not-for-profit organization supported by philanthropy and committed to its faith-based charitable mission of medical excellence. Every one of the organization's more than 27,000 employees understands what the organization stands for and is committed to. It's this sense of the Baptist Health "family" – employees who support our patients, our

community and each other – that sets us apart from other healthcare organizations and keeps individuals engaged and working towards common goals.

Baptist Health physicians play an enormous role in securing donor gifts. When physicians have the opportunity to meet with donors directly, explain their work and share their vision for expanding their research and treatment capabilities, donors want to support their work. Similarly, the Foundation's Grateful Patient Physician Champions program helps leverage the gratitude of their patients to encourage philanthropic giving.

At the Foundation, we have various opportunities throughout the year for Baptist Health employees to get involved. Bounce Back from Cancer™, a partnership between the Foundation and the Miami Heat basketball team, is a grassroots community event to raise critical research funds for Baptist Health Miami Cancer Institute. Employees at every level get involved in this annual event. Last year, the event raised \$1.5 million for the Institute, in no small part because of Baptist Health employees. This year, we are on our way to hopefully raising over \$2.5 million.

We also engage employees through our annual Employee Annual Giving campaign in the fall. Baptist Health employees are encouraged to give through one-time gifts, recurrent payroll deductions or donations of paid time off (PTO).

What do you feel are the keys to effective philanthropy?

In my experience, there are several. First is benchmarking. This should not be viewed as a number or a goal to be achieved; rather, the value of benchmarking is its use as a management tool to improve fundraising performance. For example, donors have a clear idea of what they expect to happen to their donations – relatively little should be spent on fundraising and administration with the bulk being invested in areas of direct impact. They expect that the cost to raise a dollar should be about 20 cents – but of course, it depends on many factors. As a Foundation, we work to keep it within that range, but we are always looking for innovative ways to improve our performance.

Second is transparency. We keep our constituents – our donors, board and council members – regularly updated on our goals, strategies, progress and performance. When they have a thorough understanding of our challenges as well as our accomplishments, we are able to build trust and, in turn, this trust leads to greater support and commitment to our mission.

But probably the most important key is building strong, long-lasting relationships. In a fundraising relationship, the balance of power is naturally tilted in favor of the donor. But when you invest the time and effort to listen to what is most meaningful to an individual or family, and get to know them on a personal level, you can connect your mission to their passions. Just like transparency, relationships help build trust, engagement and, ultimately, philanthropic giving. ●



Entrance to Baptist Health Baptist Hospital in Miami