

Jacksonville's Exploding Medical Services and Research Cluster

The Jacksonville medical services industry is a thriving cluster within the Jacksonville business community. With over 50,000 employees, half a dozen major hospitals and a recent private capital investment of more than \$600 million, the healthcare industry serves as a driving force for business development and the expansion of world-class medical research facilities in the city of Jacksonville. These facilities cater to the city's 850,000 residents, as well as the surrounding northeast Florida regional population of more than 1.4 million.

St. Vincent's Medical Center is ranked among the nation's best in the heart and heart surgery categories according to *U.S. News & World Report*. The University of Florida and Shands, The Mayo Clinic and Baptist Health Systems lead the way in stroke, heart and children's care and research. In addition, Shands Jacksonville is establishing the benchmark in emergency technology with their new air ambulance, the EC-145. This addition to the TraumaOne program is the only one of its kind in the northeast Florida region.

The nation's third proton beam therapy center has been established at the Shands Jacksonville medical center. This groundbreaking form of cancer treatment effectively destroys tumors without damaging the adjacent healthy tissue. The Jacksonville Economic Development Commission (JEDC) has assisted Shands with the approval of approximately \$60 million in industrial revenue bonds to support the proton beam therapy. By 2009, the proton beam therapy center is expected to create 118 new jobs and treat more than 2,000 cancer patients annually.

The Mayo Clinic Jacksonville is in the process of building a 214-bed, six-floor tower, totaling 650,000 square feet adjacent to its existing facility. The JEDC played a pivotal role in providing \$125 million in industrial revenue bonds for the capital improvements to the Mayo Clinic. The clinic employs a staff of nearly 300 physicians along with a multitude of health professionals. In addition to the structural expansion, the Mayo Clinic plans to invest \$22 million over the next nine years to expand its clinical laboratory program. The expansion will enable Mayo Medical Laboratories to provide their specialized care to more of the local Jacksonville community.

The accolades surrounding Baptist Health are outstanding and will continue to grow due to their \$400 million expansion over the next five years. This growth aims to meet the ever-changing and growing needs of the Jacksonville community. There are three major projects included in this expansion. \$114 million is being allocated to Wolfson's Children's Hospital which will fund a new 150-bed facility that is expected to create approximately 110 new jobs. Baptist Medical Center South is being allocated \$65 million to construct a 80-bed inpatient building off of St. Augustine Road. Lastly, there will be a \$26 million expansion and renovation to the operating rooms at Baptist Medical Center Downtown. In 2006, *Child* magazine ranked Wolfson Children's Hospital in the top three children's hospitals in Florida. Imagine the research and individual care possibilities that accompany an expansion of this magnitude!

Recently, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Inc. (BCBSF), which is headquartered in Jacksonville, has collaboratively embarked on an initiative with the University of Florida tackling healthcare issues across the state. BCBSF has established a \$3.5

million endowment at UF to open a research center that will address critical issues such as statewide access to healthcare, the nursing shortages and the quality of patient care. The total investment in this BCBSF Center for Health Care Access, Patient Safety and Quality Care at the University of Florida in Gainesville will undoubtedly have an enormous effect on all facets of the healthcare industry throughout the state of Florida and beyond.

The demand for excellence in the healthcare industry is fueled by the combination of the unprecedented growth of the Jacksonville population and the existing exceptional business climate. The JEDC is highly committed to helping the healthcare service industry thrive and grow by supporting existing investors and attracting new healthcare service providers and researchers that will enable the Jacksonville community to receive the highest quality medical care possible.

For more information about the medical services industry in Jacksonville, visit the websites of our local providers:

[Baptist Health](#)

[Memorial Hospital](#)

[Shands Jacksonville](#)

[Mayo Clinic Jacksonville](#)

[St. Vincent's HealthCare](#)