

On the Same Page

I Promise
July 7, 2011

"My promise is to be a nurse who is caring, trustworthy and a patient advocate. I promise to be a team player with my colleagues. I promise to be an excellent and approachable nurse." Patrice Cushion, R.N., Shands Jacksonville charge nurse

"I promise to take extra time to listen to my patients and co-workers every day." Donald Novak, M.D., professor of pediatrics, College of Medicine

"I promise to listen carefully and thoroughly to each caller and patient before they have finished, before I take action." Travis George, telecommunications technician, Shands HealthCare

"I promise to work with our staff to ensure that each and every patient is treated in the same caring and respectful manner that I or my family members would expect to be treated." Stuart Klein, M.H.A., executive director of the UF Proton Therapy Institute, Jacksonville

"I promise to challenge myself on a daily basis so that I may continue to grow in my knowledge and provide the best patient care," Jennifer Cortes, PharmD, Pharmacy Critical Care Resident, Shands Jacksonville

"I promise to treat all my patients as if they were one of my loved ones, with compassion, caring and respect." Ruth Thompson, R.N., pediatric nurse, Shands Hospital for Children

What's your promise?

At UF&Shands, we strive for excellence in all our missions. In education, we provide our students with the educational foundation they will need to lead the next generation of health-care providers. In our labs, our scientists are focusing on discoveries that will transform human and animal health. But the thread that runs through everything we do, the reason we teach our students and why our researchers work tirelessly in their labs, is to provide the best possible care to our patients, both now and in the future.

Nothing we do is as important as the way we treat the people who come to us in need of care. But it's not just the medical treatments we provide that matter to our patients and their families. It's the entire experience they have when they walk through the doors of our hospitals and practice offices. We must strive to make every patient's experience the best it can be.

When it comes to ensuring patients receive the highest quality care and have the best experience possible, we all have a crucial role to play, from the schedulers who make appointments and the cafeteria cook who makes sure every patient gets a hot meal to the physician who attends to the psychological and social needs needs of his or her patients as well as their medical needs, and the nurse who stays by a child's bedside through the night.

Throughout the UF Health Science Center and Shands HealthCare, we have faculty, staff and students who are ready to commit fully to putting patients' needs first. I Promise is about making that individual commitment, a promise, to each other and to our patients, that we will do everything we can to make sure they receive the best care and have the best experience.

It starts with a promise, your promise, such as those listed at the beginning of this newsletter. Hopefully, you are wearing your "I Promise" button. By putting it on each day, or noticing it on our lab coat from yesterday, the button reminds us of the promise that we've made to our patients. Thus, I Promise is more than the button. Each of us should live the promise that we've made to our patients — as represented by the button — each day.

My promise is always to put our patients first in making decisions, large or small, regarding UF&Shands as a whole.

Here is a link to the first iteration of our I Promise website, which is only viewable to people on the UF and Shands networks: <http://ipromise.health.ufl.edu>. We will continue to add to and refine this. Of particular note, please check out the patient stories under the 'multimedia' then 'video' links, "Half a Heart" and "Lauren's Story." We will be doing more of these. We also will be adding your promise to the list, so please share it with us if you haven't already.

If all faculty, staff and students at UF&Shands embrace a culture of "one promise, every patient" and of providing the right care at the right time for every patient, it will inexorably follow that quality, safety and our patients' experience will improve throughout our health system.

I am pleased to report that we have won a Florida Hospital Association Mark of Excellence Award for I Promise. The ceremony is July 13 in St. Augustine. Kudos to Andy Fletcher, Melanie Ross, Wanda English, Erin VanWey and many others on the communications team for helping to craft such a powerful message, which will be an ongoing theme for UF&Shands.

Forward Together,

David S. Guzick, MD, PhD
Senior Vice President, Health Affairs
President, UF&Shands Health System