

# USF DEPARTMENT OF CARDIOVASCULAR SCIENCES

FALL 2015

*Setting the standard for cardiovascular care  
in the Tampa Bay Region*

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## USF Health South Tampa Center for Advanced Healthcare

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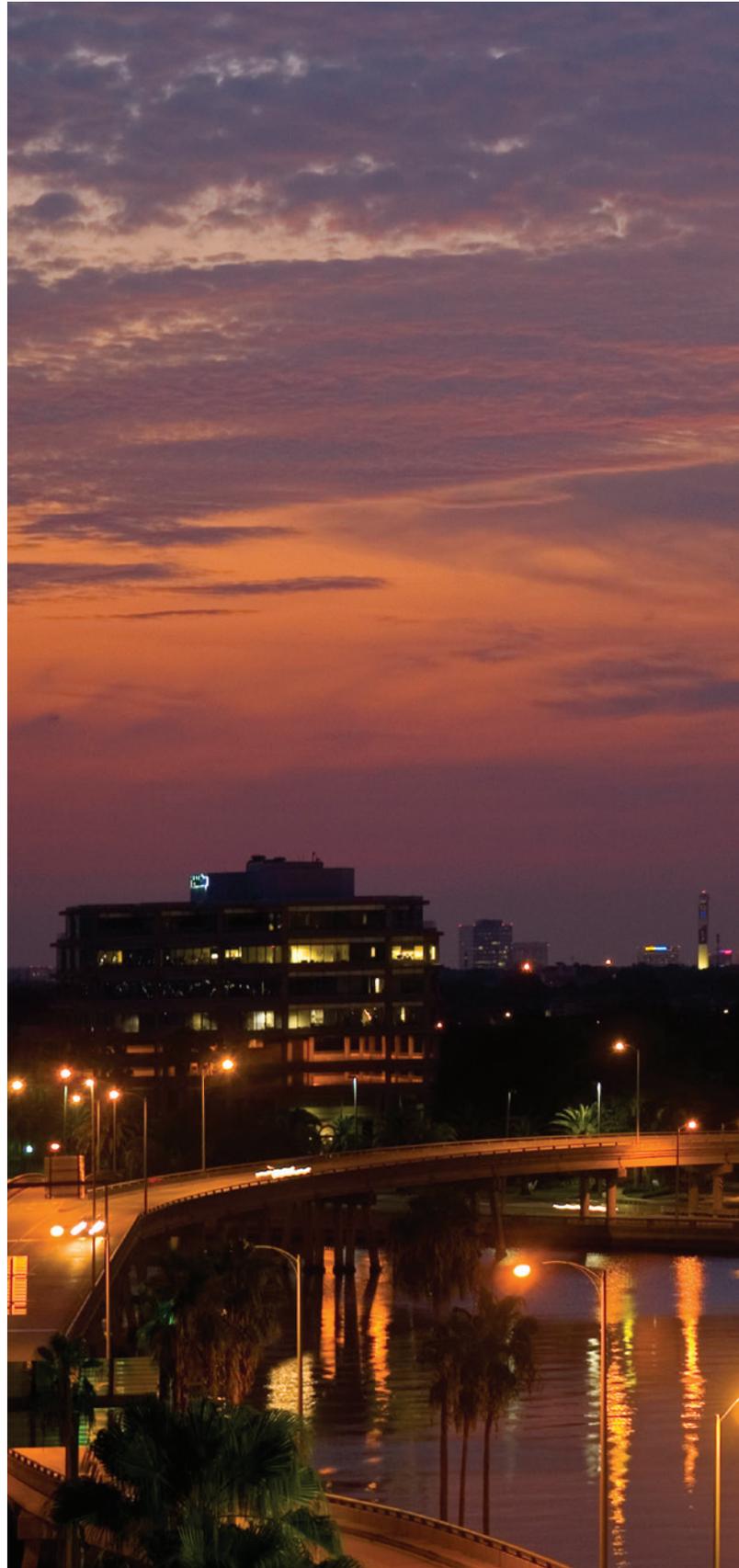
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## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

It's a new day.

No longer should residents of Tampa Bay or other regions of Florida board a plane to Minnesota or Cleveland or elsewhere to find state of the art cardiovascular care. They can find it right here in Tampa.

A broad and exciting coalescence of people and initiatives is elevating medical care to unprecedented levels. With the help and cooperation of the city of Tampa, Tampa Bay Lightning owner Jeff Vinik, top USF officials and numerous others, the USF Department of Cardiovascular Sciences is moving steadfastly toward our mission of providing state-of-the-art, comprehensive cardiovascular care.

The Department of Cardiovascular Sciences is growing at an unprecedented rate. The USF Health Heart Institute will be relocated to downtown Tampa, to be incorporated with the new Morsani College of Medicine in a 331,000-square-foot, 12-story building in the Channelside area. The project will create an estimated 1,400 jobs and an economic output of \$215 million a year. The land was generously donated by Mr. Vinik, who has a bold and expansive vision for the future of downtown Tampa. All of us at the Department of Cardiovascular Sciences look forward to being part of it. We have a group of world-renowned experts in all aspects of cardiovascular care.

The department is enjoying major success on several levels. In the area of research, USF has been given approval for a \$2.5 million clinical trial using newer blood thinners to diminish the impact of stroke in patients with atrial fibrillation. The success of this trial stems from the hard work of our research team in cardiology and our partnership with the USF Department of Neurology.

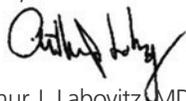
We have also launched two new focused programs in the Department of Cardiovascular Sciences, including a women's heart health program, and a clinical program and fellowship in the evolving field of cardio-oncology. The women's heart health program will have specific physicians in our department dedicated to women's heart issues. Services will be provided at two of our centers of excellence, the USF South Tampa Center and at the Pepin Heart Institute in New Tampa. We will offer activities ranging from heart healthy cooking to yoga. The cardio-oncology fellowship, under the directorship of Dr. Michael Fradley, is a joint initiative between USF Cardiovascular Sciences and Moffitt Cancer Center. The first such program in Florida, this collaborative program will provide team based care for cancer patients who have a history of or ongoing cardiovascular problems, or where the heart and vascular system is affected by the treatment of their cancer.

I want to convey a special thanks to Dr. Charly Lockwood, our new Dean of the Morsani College of Medicine. Dr. Lockwood has continued to support the efforts and expansion of the department, and under his leadership we will continue to grow and broaden our efforts to provide service and accessibility to all of our patients with known or suspected cardiovascular disease.

We have three missions that we hope to excel in: Providing the highest quality cardiovascular care available; educating the finest cardiologists of the future; and performing meaningful research that will impact the future care of the cardiovascular patient.

Please enjoy our annual report.

Yours,



Arthur J. Labovitz, MD, FACC, FASE  
Chairman, Dept. of Cardiovascular Sciences  
Edward C. Wright Professor of Medicine



Dr. Arthur J. Labovitz

## ABOUT USF CARDIOVASCULAR SCIENCES

USF Health Cardiovascular Sciences is on the forefront of development in heart health. Some of the leading experts and most brilliant minds in the field are a part of the USF Health team, and have joined forces in the fight against the nation's number one killer: Heart Disease. As an entity of the University of South Florida we provide patients with the latest and best services and treatment options, not only in procedural breakthroughs, but in expertly-designed clinical trials as well.

All aspects of patient heart health, prevention, testing, and treatment for any heart related problem, are handled with state-of-the-art clinical care by our renowned physicians. Symptoms from chest pain, shortness of breath or dizziness to heart attack, atrial fibrillation or congestive heart failure are treated here. With three locations in the Tampa Bay Area, and availability of the latest advances in equipment and treatment options, USF Health Cardiovascular Sciences provides the best care for patients and their heart health needs.

Our mission is the pursuit of excellence in clinical care, teaching, research, along with service to the citizens of the State of Florida and the global community. The faculty provides the best clinical care in all areas of cardiovascular disease to patients in the Tampa Bay community and beyond.

The educational programs provide instruction in cardiovascular diagnosis and management as well as technical skills in invasive and noninvasive cardiovascular procedures to medical students, residents, and fellows. There are active programs in clinical research, clinical trials, and basic and translational research. The faculty, fellows, and allied professionals associated with the USF Department of Cardiovascular Medicine are dedicated to reducing the impact of cardiovascular disease in the regional and global community by their efforts in clinical care, education, and cutting-edge research.

# BY THE NUMBERS

The phenomenal growth within the **Department of Cardiology Sciences** the past three years can be readily seen in the numbers.

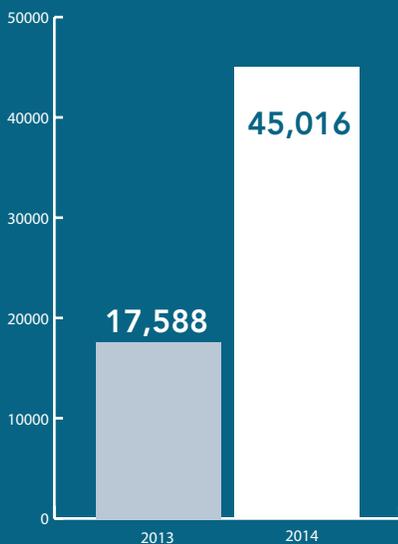
- + The number of cardiologists has grown from **7** to **22**; fellowships have grown from **14** to **26**.
- + Cardiovascular research studies have ballooned from **seven** in 2013 to **41** in 2015.
- + The number of outpatients has nearly tripled from **17,588** in 2013 to **45,016** in 2015.
- + The number of catheterization procedures grew from **385** in 2013 to **1,509** in 2015.
- + The number of cardiac nuclear procedures has increased from **598** in 2013 to **1,424** in 2014.
- + ECHO procedures increased from **9,105** in 2013 to **15,041** in 2015.



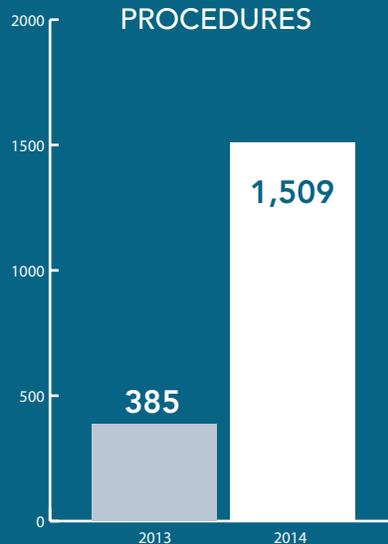
State of the art diagnostics and word class education programs are hallmarks of USF Cardiology



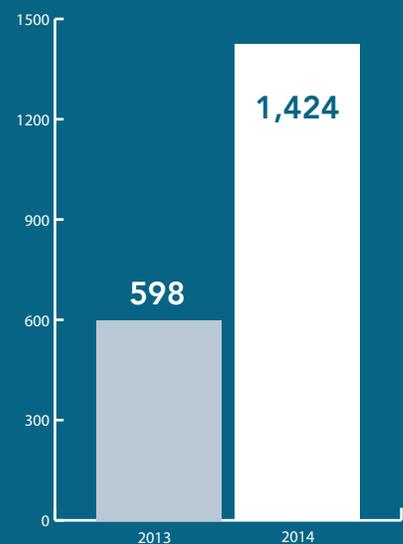
### INCREASE IN NUMBER OF OUTPATIENTS



### NUMBER OF CATHETERIZATION PROCEDURES



### NUMBER OF CARDIAC NUCLEAR PROCEDURES



## ■ GROWTH & CHANGE

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The unprecedented growth of the USF Department of Cardiovascular Sciences already has seen the achievement of several milestones, part of a sustained period of growth spurred by the 2012 arrival of the department chair, Dr. Arthur Labovitz.

- The department has demonstrated quick and critical growth in its cardiovascular fellowship programs, along with a concurrent increase in faculty members. Research development also is on an upward trajectory, including numerous investigator-initiated studies.
- In 2014, Florida Cardiovascular Institute joined with USF, creating the largest clinical cardiology department in Tampa at the region's only academic health center.
- Women's health has become an important focus, too, with the development of a Women's Heart Health Program, including offices in North Tampa and South Tampa.
- The department's Cardio-Oncology program, a joint venture with Moffitt Cancer Center, is the first such comprehensive program in the state of Florida.
- And another major development is in the works, with the transfer of the USF Morsani College of Medicine on the USF campus to a 12-story, 350,000-square-foot facility in downtown Tampa, a move recently helped along by Gov. Rick Scott's approval of a \$17 million legislative appropriation. Under development is the USF Health Heart Institute, a state-of-the-art facility that would be co-located in the Morsani College of Medicine facility.
- The USF Heart Health institute's mission is to integrate the latest heart health research and leading cardiovascular care, and finding creative solutions to heart diseases and related disorders such as stroke and diabetes. On the horizon are more cooperative studies into the molecular and genetic causes of heart disease, which will lead to new methods for predicting, preventing and diagnosing heart issues.
- USF Health is now in its first genomics trial linking analysis of DNA from blood samples of consenting USF cardiology patients to the American College of Cardiology's clinical database of millions of patients with heart disease.
- Still on the horizon: The Department of Cardiovascular Sciences is making a move into Pinellas County.





# RESEARCH



Research collaboration with the Neurology department offers the prospect of a new treatment regimen and changing the outcomes in patients with afib and stroke.

## THIS YEAR HAS BROUGHT ACCELERATED GROWTH IN OUR RESEARCH EFFORTS, WITH SEVERAL IMPORTANT STUDIES UNDER WAY.

Research trials are pivotal in establishing the highest standards of cardiovascular care and, thus, improving the quality of life for patients today and for generations to come. Researchers within the Department of Cardiovascular Sciences are pursuing innovations in cardiologic care by evaluating new technologies and contributing new standards of care to achieve optimal patient outcomes.

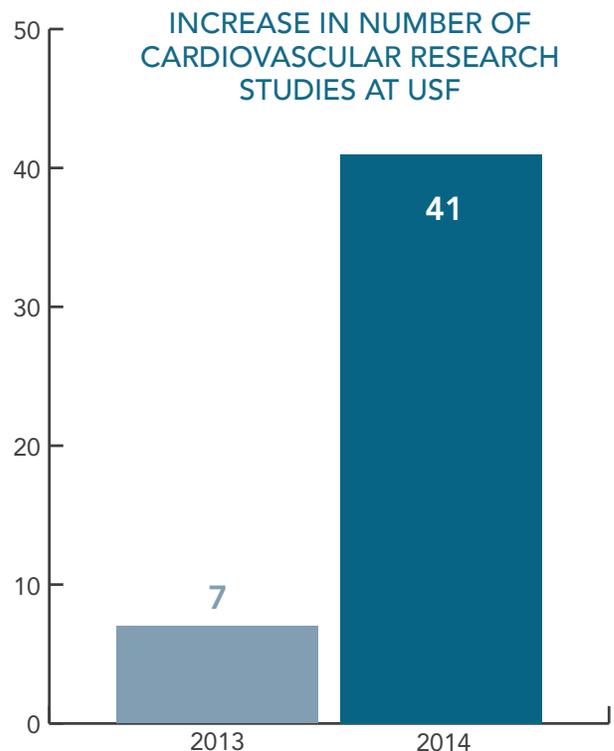
This year has brought accelerated growth in our research efforts, with several important studies under way. Research projects at all participating clinical facilities including Morsani College of Medicine, USF Health South Tampa Campus, Tampa General Hospital, and Florida Cardiovascular Institute (FCI) campus are on-going.

Amid the varied research under way at the Department of Cardiovascular Sciences, two particular projects could yield profound insight and understanding into cardiovascular care. The AREST study is an investigator initiated study that hopes to lower the risk of strokes caused by blood clots in patients with atrial fibrillation. Also being launched is the Cardiac Study, which will link the analysis of genetic information and medical histories of patients with the risk of developing various types of cardiovascular diseases. The resulting database of information could help identify the best treatments based on an individual's genetic makeup.

Our Principle Investigator-initiated studies have increased dramatically this year, with clinical trial results presented at the national meeting of the American Heart Association, American College of Cardiology, American Society of Echocardiography, and the European Cardiac Arrhythmia Society.



The founding of the USF Health Heart Institute will facilitate the integration of basic and clinical research.



# ■ PATIENT CARE & PROGRAMS

## CARDIO-ONCOLOGY

With extraordinarily successful cancer treatments leading to improved survival, these cancer survivors represent a new patient population. In a promising new venture, USF Health and Moffitt Cancer Center are working together to reduce and treat cardiovascular complications among cancer patients. Florida's first comprehensive cardio-oncology program, combining experts in both fields, seeks to improve care for the approximately 30 percent of cancer patients who develop cardiovascular issues during treatment. Directed by Dr. Michael Fradley, assistant professor of medicine at USF, the program is set to launch on July 1, 2015. Dr. Fradley will work collaboratively with Dr. Roohi Ismail-Khan, oncologist with the Center for

Women's Oncology at Moffitt Cancer Center to provide team based care for this special population of patients. A cardio oncology fellowship will join the program this year. A new but rapidly developing field, cardio-oncology seeks to improve care for patients with the two most common diseases: cancer and heart disease. The program will offer services from early evaluation of risk of cardiovascular disease, to assessment and management of potential or active problems with respect to patients' values and preferred tailored therapy designed by the joint cardiology and oncology team to provide the highest quality of life and survival for the specific population.



The Department of Cardiovascular Sciences partners with the Moffitt Cancer Center to create the first Cardio-oncology Program in Florida.



OUR TEAM OF  
EXPERT HEALTH CARE  
PROFESSIONALS STRIVES  
TO DELIVER STATE OF  
THE ART CLINICAL CARE  
AND PROCEDURES TO  
ALL PATIENTS WITH  
KNOWN OR SUSPECTED  
CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE.

This partnership strengthens the 'team approach' to patients with heart disease to assure the optimal treatment plan for the individual patient.

## FLORIDA ADVANCED CARDIOTHORACIC SURGERY (FACT)

Poised to become a national leader in cardiovascular care, USF Health is joining forces with one of the country's top heart and lung surgical transplant groups to expand the university's education and research opportunities. The academic partnership with Florida Advanced Cardiothoracic Surgery (FACT Surgery) opens the door for USF to create accredited fellowships in cardiothoracic surgery and heart and lung transplantation. This alliance is the latest step

forward for the Department of Cardiovascular Sciences at the USF Health Morsani College of Medicine. Through this partnership, high performing cardiovascular surgeons with FACT Surgery will supervise and train USF fellows and residents while conducting research as they provide the best of cardiovascular care. Dr. Christiano Caldeira, president and CEO of FACT Surgery, said the partnership "will make us both better."



The USF Department of Cardiovascular Sciences boasts the most outstanding EP service in the Tampa Bay region with three world class electrophysiologists that perform the most advances procedures for arrhythmia management . In 2014, over 1,500 EP procedures were performed. This service includes a comprehensive Afib Center.

With an interventional cardiology service comprised of the most skilled operators in the region, USF Cardiology offers state of the art treatments including transcatheter valve replacement and repair.



# PATIENT STORIES

I had no symptoms with my heart issue. I had no family history, I wasn't overweight and I had a healthy diet. I wasn't tired and I had no pain.

But when I went in for an unrelated minor procedure, tests revealed I had something much more serious. They told me I had an aortic valve that wasn't closing the way it should. Who knew? That's the way it is with women. We don't present the same way as men. And that's why they call heart disease a silent killer.

I had the choice to go to the Cleveland Clinic, or stay close to home for my open-heart surgery. I chose to stay here because of the support system and the excellent reputation of Tampa General Hospital and University of South Florida. And now there's the Women's Heart Health program, which is putting focus on an area that needs it. I am very impressed that USF is now paying more attention to women and their hearts.

A year later, and my life is back to normal. I'm playing golf, working out and doing weight training. I'm very grateful to my surgeon, Dr.



"...now there's the Women's Heart Health program, which is putting focus on an area that needs it. I am very impressed that USF is now paying more attention to women and their hearts."

~Betty Castor

Christiano Caldeira. Now I tell everyone the importance of prevention. We put so much emphasis on breast exams; we need to do the same for our hearts. We need to have routine EKGs. Stay in good health, don't tax the organs in your body, exercise regularly and drink modestly. And make sure you have a good medical support team. That could save your life.

— Betty Castor, 73, Tampa

"When I was diagnosed with atrial fibrillation, it wasn't that much of a surprise. Both my parents suffered from it. But I knew my options were better than theirs 20 years ago.

As a retired ICU nurse, I did my homework. I could have gone back to Massachusetts General in Boston, where I graduated from nursing school and worked 28 years. But I knew about TGH's reputation and decided this would be the best possible place for me to undergo treatment. This is a teaching hospital, so it will draw the cream of the crop and offer the newest technology.

Dr. Bengt Herweg and his staff were wonderful and very knowledgeable. They kept me in the loop every step of the way. I could have stayed on medication or had a cardiac ablation. I don't do well with drugs, so I chose the procedure, even though there's no guarantee how long it will last.

It's been over two years and I've never felt better. I walk my dog three miles a day and go to the gym regularly. I tell people I have heart disease but I don't feel like it. I made the right decision when I chose this facility."

— Diane Landry Lawson, 65, Lakewood Ranch



Compassionate patient care in a state of the art environment.



Patient-centered care is the foundation of USF Cardiology.



# PATIENT STORIES



William Bacia

I've had a history of heart trouble. I've had three procedures for stents and five bypasses over the years.

I've been under the care of Dr. (Fadi) Matar for some time. In fact, he's the cardiologist for my entire family. He's more than a doctor. He's a friend who calls me by my first name and puts me at ease. He doesn't take chances. He's so thorough in his exams and abilities. I trust him completely.

With this latest thing, I had an irregular heartbeat and high blood pressure. He ordered some extensive tests and they found a blood clot attached to my stent. Dr. Matar was able to break up the clot through the balloon procedure and put me on medication to dissolve it.

I know he saved my life. Thanks to his excellent care, I'm back on my feet and I feel exceptionally well. Not bad for a fellow my age.

— William Bacia, 89, Brandon

I was unconscious when they brought me to the emergency room. They told me I almost died five times, but they were able to bring me back.

I was lucky to get Dr. Xavier Prida. I mean it, he's the best doctor I've had in my whole life. I got a new pacemaker and a new lease on life. He never gave up on me, even though things weren't looking so good.

My family was scared, too, with me being in the hospital for about six weeks. But they got the reassurance they needed from the staff and the doctor. It's not just the patient who needs care during this time.

There's no department like this anywhere. They insist on giving you the best care under the worst circumstances. I mean it when I say they are my guardian angels.

— Mario Garcia, 77, Tampa



## ■ FELLOWSHIPS



Dr. Ryan Martin

### THIRD-YEAR FELLOW DR. RYAN MARTIN

Opportunity for research is what drew chief fellow Dr. Ryan Martin to the USF Department of Cardiovascular Sciences.

Now in his final and third year in the program, Dr. Martin, 30, says his experience here is “everything and more” than he expected.

“Every fellowship is structured differently. What so impressed me with this one was a setting that allowed me to improve my procedural competencies and research skills,” he says.

His main concentration: Working with Dr. Arthur Labovitz, department chairman, and neurologists from the USF Cerebrovascular Division on how

patients with atrial fibrillation differ from stroke victims in the general population. He is studying different blood thinners and how soon they can be administered to prevent future episodes.

“It’s not very common to get to work across departments and draw upon so many resources,” Dr. Martin says. “We also get the chance to work in several hospital settings with a range of patient populations with different problems.”

Like Dr. Robin Singh, he’s also a winner of the “Outstanding Teaching Fellow Award” by USF Internal Medicine residents.

## AN ATMOSPHERE OF LEARNING: EDUCATING THE CARDIOLOGISTS OF THE FUTURE

The USF Cardiovascular Disease Fellowship Program admits six highly qualified physicians to its program each year. This three-year program emphasizes clinical and research training. USF cardiologists maintain a busy patient practice and the institutions offer the fellows diverse clinical exposure to a wide variety of patients.

The fellowship experience is divided into two major parts: core training and electives.

During the third year, electives are available in advanced noninvasive imaging, invasive cardiology, or cardiovascular research. Elective opportunities also exist in the areas of pediatric cardiology, transplantation medicine, prevention and rehabilitation, advanced cardiac imaging, and electrophysiology.

By the end of three years, fellows have gained extensive experience in consultative cardiology, cardiac catheterization, transeophageal and transthoracic echocardiography, stress testing, ECG interpretation and noninvasive electrocardiographic monitoring. In addition, fellows participate in electrophysiological studies, pacemaker and defibrillator implantation and evaluation, and percutaneous coronary interventions.

In addition to our three year general cardiology fellowship program, we offer a one year ACGME-accredited interventional cardiology program and a one year ACGME-accredited cardiac electro-physiology program.

The interventional program accepts two qualified fellows each year and the electrophysiology program accepts one fellow each year.

USF is second to none when it comes to being at the top of the game in cardiovascular sciences.

— Dr. Robin Singh

### SECOND-YEAR FELLOW DR. ROBIN SINGH

Picking a career wasn't difficult for second-year fellow Dr. Robin Singh, 29.

His father is a cardiologist and his mother is an internist. As their only child, Singh got the "full-court press" to pursue medicine. Fortunately, it was a good fit for him.

"It's a very dynamic and evolving field," he says. "The amount of technological advances being made on a consistent basis is striking. I also like the idea of taking care of patients in an acute setting."

He also found a good fit at the USF Department of Cardiovascular Sciences. He wanted to train at an academic center with a high-volume hospital staffed with educators well versed in cutting-edge developments in his field.

"You only learn so much from reading a book. With all the clinical exposure we receive here in three years, I'll feel very equipped to handle the workload in the real world," he says. "USF is second to none when it comes to being at the top of the game in cardiovascular sciences."

He's already made his mark in the department. Dr. Singh won an "Outstanding Teaching Fellow Award" by the USF Internal Medicine residents. And he's been selected as the future chief fellow to succeed Dr. Ryan Martin.



Dr. Robin Singh



# FACULTY

Extraordinary advances in cardiovascular prevention and treatment are a testament to dedication and commitment exhibited by Dr. Arthur Labovitz, chair of the Department of Cardiovascular Sciences and co-director of the USF Health Heart Institute.

A nationally recognized leader in the diagnosis and treatment of cardiovascular diseases, Dr. Labovitz joined the USF Health Morsani College of Medicine in 2012. Dr. Labovitz has been a career leading-edge researcher who is dedicated to raising the quality of cardiovascular care in the Tampa Bay area and beyond.

Before joining USF Health, he was director of cardiology and led the cardiovascular fellowships

at St. Louis University. He is a past president of the National Board of Echocardiography and a board member of the American Heart Association. He also has served on the editorial boards of several journals and has been an editorial consultant for the New England Journal of Medicine and numerous other journals. He has published more than 300 scientific articles and book chapters.

While acknowledging the need for more research, Dr. Labovitz is nonetheless encouraged by improving heart disease survival rates. "We are making incredible strides," he said in a recent interview with the blog Tampa Bay Heart.



**Dr. Arthur J. Labovitz**  
Chairman, Department of Cardiovascular Sciences  
Director of Cardiac Imaging  
USF Cardiology  
Professor of Medicine



**Dr. Michael Berlowitz**  
Interventional Cardiology  
Assistant Professor of Medicine



**Dr. Adam Cohen**  
General Cardiology  
Assistant Professor of Medicine



**Dr. Sanders Chae**  
Electrophysiology  
Assistant Professor of Medicine



**Dr. Michael Fradley**  
Electrophysiology  
Assistant Professor of Medicine



**Dr. Joel Fernandez**  
Non-invasive Cardiology  
Assistant Professor of Medicine



**Dr. Bengt Herweg**  
Electrophysiology  
Professor of Medicine  
Director, Electrophysiology & Arrhythmia Services  
Program Director, Clinical Cardiac Electrophysiology Fellowship



**Dr. Arzu Ilercil**  
Non-Invasive Cardiology  
Professor of Medicine



**Dr. Olga Kristof-Kuteyeva**  
Non-invasive Cardiology  
Assistant Professor of Medicine



**Dr. Fadi Matar**  
Interventional Cardiology  
Associate Professor of Medicine

## OUR TEAM OF EXPERTS DEDICATED TO ELEVATING THE LEVEL OF CARDIOVASCULAR CARE IN THE TAMPA BAY REGION



**Dr. Angela McClanahan**  
General Cardiology  
Assistant Professor of Medicine



**Dr. Xavier Prida**  
Interventional Cardiology  
Assistant Professor of Medicine



**Dr. John Ramirez**  
Non-invasive Cardiology  
Assistant Professor of Medicine



**Dr. Philip Rogal**  
General Cardiology  
Assistant Professor of Medicine



**Dr. Dany Sayad**  
General Cardiology  
Assistant Professor of Medicine



**Dr. John T. Sullebarger**  
Interventional Cardiology  
Associate Professor of Medicine



**Dr. Aarti Patel**  
Non-Invasive Cardiology  
Assistant Professor of Medicine



**Dr. Theresa M. Beckie**  
RN, BScN, MN, PhD, FAHA  
Professor



**Jamie Douglas**  
PA-C



**Rachel Hermann**  
ARNP-BC

### **JAMES A. HALEY VA**

Richard Bowerman  
Raymond Cutro  
Ramona Gelzer-Bell  
Maung Khin  
Fabio Leonelli  
John Nobel  
James Rittelmeyer  
Michael Scholfield  
Maqsood Siddique  
David Whitaker  
David Wilson

### **LEHIGH VALLEY**

Nadeem Ahmad  
Robert Biggs  
Ronald Freudenberger  
Larry Jacobs  
Hari Joshi  
Matthew Martinez  
George Persin  
Deborah Sundlof  
Anthony Urbano

### **ADJUNCT FACULTY**

Jay Amin  
Luis Arroyo  
Michael Barrett  
Saurabh Chokshi  
Guillermo Cintron  
Gul Dadlani  
Mahfouz El Shahway  
Syed Gilani  
Eric Harrison

H. Andrew Hazlitt  
Mark Hepp  
Ravi Khant  
Kevin Klein  
Paul Kudelko  
Charles Lambert  
Frederico Lenz  
Vanessa Lucarella  
Vasco Marques  
Aimon Miranda  
Cesar A. Morales-Pabon  
Jorge Navas  
Paul Phillips  
Debbie Rinde-Hoffman  
Louis Rosenfield  
Michael Rossi  
Kenneth Sabatino  
Asad Sawar  
Vibhuti Singh  
Richard Sola  
Bernardo Stein  
Hoshedar Tamboli  
Marc Taylor  
Mark Weston  
Michael Williamson  
Jason Zelenka  
Robert Zoble



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