

# Med School Watercooler

NEWS FROM FREDERICK P. WHIDDON COLLEGE OF MEDICINE  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

Thursday, September 14, 2023

Register now: USA Health Game Day set for Oct. 17



USA Health Game Day 2023 is expected to be bigger and better than ever! This year's event is set for Tuesday, Oct. 17, as the University of South Alabama Jaguars take on the Southern Miss Golden Eagles. The game will kick off at 6:30 p.m. at [Hancock Whitney Stadium](#) on the USA campus.

USA Health employees and volunteers – including our new employees from USA Health Providence – and Whiddon College of Medicine faculty, staff, medical and graduate students are each eligible to receive two free tickets to the football game. This year, we are bringing back the tailgate dinner catered by Sonny's BBQ before the game. Registrants will receive two wristbands to attend the tailgate event, which begins at 4:30 p.m.

The deadline to register is Thursday, Oct. 5. Visit the [USA Health Game Day](#) event page for registration and additional information. [Register now!](#)

This event allows us to recognize and honor our employees for their many contributions to our mission of helping people lead longer, better lives. We hope you will join us this year as we continue our USA Health tradition and cheer on the Jags!

## Whiddon College of Medicine alumnus joins orthopaedic surgery faculty

William A. Cutchen, M.D., has joined USA Health as one of two orthopaedic surgeons who focus on caring for children with musculoskeletal problems. He is also an assistant professor of orthopaedic surgery at the Whiddon College of Medicine.

Cutchen comes to USA Health from Children's National Medical Center in Washington, D.C., where he recently completed a fellowship in pediatric orthopaedic surgery and sports medicine.



He said he is happy to be back in Mobile and at the academic health system where he trained for five years as an orthopaedic surgery resident. "I am excited to be able to incorporate the teaching of residents and students into my practice. I want to give back to the place that trained me," said Cutchen, who graduated from the Whiddon College of Medicine in 2016. "It is also nice that there is a children's hospital here that serves a wide area."

While he will treat a range of orthopaedic problems, Cutchen said he is particularly interested in addressing limb deformities and foot and ankle issues, as well as helping patients with cerebral palsy and other neuromuscular issues.

A native of Hoover, Alabama, he earned a degree in chemical engineering with a biomedical specialization and a business minor from Auburn University. He recognized his passion for orthopaedics during a stint as a high school football coach after college. "I enjoy working with young people," he said. "I also think being able to identify and treat an issue in a child can make a difference in their life trajectory into adulthood."

He is also interested in research, having been an author on scientific journal articles and a presenter of research at regional, state and national meetings. Among his current research are projects exploring patient costs following a closed reduction of a fracture and using artificial intelligence to look at migration index in pelvis radiographs of individuals with cerebral palsy.

"I think new technology is going to continue to impact the field of pediatric orthopaedics. Certain things are being investigated and used to limit radiation exposure to children who require multiple surveillance radiographs for a specific issue," he said. "I am currently involved in one project looking at using AI, and I think the possible uses of AI will continue to grow."

Cutchen will see patients at the Strada Patient Care Center, located at 1601 Center St., on USA Health's campus in midtown Mobile. To make an appointment, call 251-665-8200.

**Wednesday, September 13, 2023**

## Senior medical students named to Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society



Fifteen senior medical students from the Whiddon College of Medicine have been elected to the Beta Chapter of the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society.

New members from the Class of 2024:

- Madeleine Boudreaux
- Arcole Brandon
- Taylor Coe
- Rachel Emig
- David Gahan
- Matthew Handley
- Jordan Ingram
- Christian Manganti
- Bailey Manning
- Jessica Moore
- Mary Moore
- Lauren Mussell
- Brandon Rosser
- Claudia Stephens
- Robert Yockers



AΩA, a professional medical organization, recognizes and advocates for excellence in scholarship and the highest ideals in the profession of medicine. Membership may be attained as a medical student, resident, fellow, faculty member, alumni, clinician, or distinguished leader in medicine. Each school may elect up to 20% of the graduating class of students for membership.

## Lunch & Learn session to focus on promotion and tenure

The Office of Faculty Affairs and Faculty Development invites Whiddon College of Medicine faculty to a Lunch & Learn session on "Promotion & Tenure."

The session is set for Wednesday, Oct. 11, from noon to 1:30 p.m. in the Strada Patient Care Center first-floor conference room.

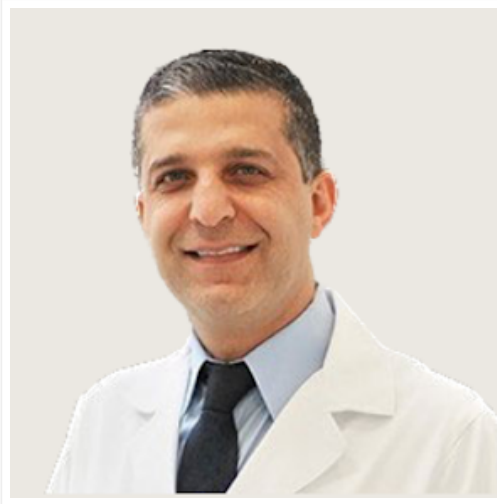
Email Jeanna M. Smith, executive director, at [jmsmith@southalabama.edu](mailto:jmsmith@southalabama.edu) to sign up for this session.



## USA Health names new chair of internal medicine

USA Health has appointed Nasser Lakkis, M.Sc.- M.D., FACC, as the new chair for the Department of Internal Medicine. A respected researcher, educator and clinician, he will officially join the region's only academic health system in November.

As chair of internal medicine, Lakkis will have oversight of divisions including cardiology, endocrinology, gastroenterology, nephrology, infectious diseases and others.



"My vision for the department is to promote excellent patient care and quality education and to elevate quality metrics," he said. "These goals will require participation of every practitioner in our health system. I will encourage honesty, transparency and constructive dialogue."

Lakkis plans to develop a leadership team/council to help make the best decisions to continue to elevate the department and the health system.

With more than 25 years of working in academic medicine, Lakkis said he is drawn to its innovative approach, which is also what interested him in the position at USA Health.

"Although I have always been busy clinically, I had a natural gravitation to academic medicine since my early training years and, subsequently, as an attending physician," he said. "Academic medicine ensures we stay up to date in practice, it helps maintain interaction with young students and trainees who bring new ideas and concepts into the practice of medicine, and it helps us to stay focused on the non-transactional aspect of patient care."

Lakkis will bring a well-rounded background in teaching, practice, research and leadership to the internal medicine department.

"USA Health's continued goal is to be a premier academic health system providing unmatched medical care to the community as we train the next generation of physician leaders," said John V. Marymont, M.D., M.B.A., vice president for medical affairs and dean of the Frederick P. Whiddon College of

Medicine. "Dr. Lakkis will add a wealth of experience in research, teaching and leadership to further guide us in that direction."

Lakkis serves on review panels and editorial boards for multiple medical journals, and he is a member of many professional societies, including the American College of Cardiology (Fellow), Society of Coronary Angiography and Intervention (Fellow), the American Heart Association, Council on Thrombosis (Fellow), and the Southern Society of Clinical Investigation.

"Dr. Lakkis has an established reputation of excellence in research, education and service," said Owen Bailey, M.S.H.A., FACHE, USA Health chief executive officer and senior associate vice president for medical affairs. "We are excited that he will bring this experience and leadership to USA Health as we continue to advance our academic health system."

Lakkis is currently a tenured professor at Wayne State University (WSU) School of Medicine, where he is also the chief of cardiology at Wayne Health and Detroit Medical Center (DMC) Adult Hospitals.

At WSU, Lakkis has established multiple programs at DMC Cardiology, including the Structural Heart Program and PERT program for percutaneous treatment of pulmonary embolus, and he has worked closely with the Wayne Health clinic leadership to establish the foundation for subspecialty clinics. He is a member of the Medical Staff Operations Committee, Wayne Health clinical advisory committee, and the DMC peer review committee, among others.

Before joining WSU, Lakkis served as chief of cardiology at Ben Taub General Hospital at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, and as the Temple and Spencer Chair in Cardiology. Throughout his tenure, he has been extensively involved in education and research.

Almost yearly, Lakkis received the Award for Excellence in Teaching. He was recognized so often that the award was eventually named for him. He was presented with the Fulbright and Jaworski Faculty Excellence Award, the Gifted Teacher Award from the American College of Cardiology, and the Master Clinician Lifetime Award from Baylor College of Medicine. He was elected to the Academy of Distinguished Educators and inducted to the prestigious Alpha Omega Alpha Society – the national medical honor society – for life.

He began his academic career at Baylor College of Medicine as an assistant professor in 1997 and rose through the ranks of academia to become professor in 2007. He served as the program director for Cardiovascular Diseases and Interventional Cardiology Fellowship programs at the Baylor College of Medicine for more than 15 years.

He graduated from the American University of Beirut with a degree in medicine. Then he completed a residency in internal medicine, a fellowship in general cardiology, and advanced interventional cardiology, all at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.