

VERO BEACH 32963

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Cleveland names future Vero hospital president. P10

Do-over Vero Council vote set for Feb. 26. P9

Foes launch email campaign in bid to block island Publix. P8

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MY VERO BY RAY MCNUITY

New option is floated for Dodgertown golf property

Earlier this fall, when contemplating the fate of the former Dodgertown Golf Club property, Vero Beach City Council members rejected a \$2.4 million offer from the county and a \$2.43 million bid from a developer.

Instead, they chose a third option: They voted to keep the land.

Now, City Councilman Val Zudans has floated a fourth option – one he believes will allow proposed commercial development to proceed while also satisfying Major League Baseball, which won't agree to take over Historic Dodgertown's operations unless the county guarantees enough parking for big-crowd events – which ownership of the golf club property would provide.

"I'd like to explore getting the city, county and the de-

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Historic day for Vero electric customers and staff two weeks away

BY LISA ZAHNER
Staff Writer

Unless something goes awry, 50 Vero electric employees will clock-in for their first day of work with Florida Power & Light on Dec. 17.

They'll get new badges, new

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Dr. George Mitchell (left) and Dr. Richard Rothman with Florida State University medical student Jennifer Riche. PHOTO: LEIGH GREEN

Dr. George Mitchell named to lead expansion of Indian River hospital's medical education program

BY MICHELLE GENZ
Staff Writer

Dr. George Mitchell, a long-time critical care physician at Indian River Medical Center, has been named the hospital's first director of medical education.

His appointment comes as the hospital launches an expansion of existing third- and fourth-year medical school rotations, potentially beyond the dozen or so students who train each year at IRMC as part of the current program with Florida State University's Fort Pierce medical school campus.

If the incoming Cleveland

Clinic leadership agrees, and if in the weeks ahead Cleveland's merger with IRMC passes regulatory hurdles, future graduate residencies and

fellowships could be available here to medical school graduates from around the country and abroad.

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Judge refuses to dismiss charges in 'pill mill' case

BY FEDERICO MARTINEZ
Staff Writer

A motion to dismiss charges against defendants accused of operating a "pill mill" in Vero Beach was rejected by Judge Cynthia Cox during a three-hour hearing on Nov. 30.

Attorneys for the 12 defendants in the high-profile case argued the charges should be dismissed because undercover detectives "lied" about their identities and engaged in extreme methods to produce fake documents used to "entrap" those charged.

"This is not about our clients breaking the law," said Daniel Aaronson, a Fort Lauderdale attorney who spoke on behalf of the other attorneys present. "This investigation was started for political reasons and nothing else."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Great white shark Katharine returns to our waters

BY SUE COCKING
Staff Writer

Along with the annual migration of snowbirds, another repeat visitor arrived for Thanksgiving and the holidays: Katharine the Great White Shark.

Katharine, who is more than 14 feet long and weighs 2,300 pounds, popped up

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Katharine's satellite tag being implanted by OCEARCH.

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Christmas Parade: Jolly good fun in very merry Vero. P12

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Indian River hospital's medical education program expands

STORY BY MICHELLE GENZ

Dr. George Mitchell, a longtime critical care physician at Indian River Medical Center, has been named the hospital's first director of medical education.

His appointment comes as the hospital launches an expansion of existing third- and fourth-year medical school rotations, potentially beyond the dozen or so students who train each year at IRMC as part of the current program with Florida State University's Fort Pierce medical school campus.

If the incoming Cleveland Clinic leadership agrees, and if in the weeks ahead Cleveland's merger with IRMC passes regulatory hurdles, future graduate residencies and fellowships could be available here to medical school graduates from around the country and abroad.

All parties speak guardedly about those more advanced programs, but it's clear that the groundwork is being laid for graduate medical education should Cleveland Clinic choose to have it here.

"We can certainly look at it and see what makes the most sense," Cleveland Clinic Florida's CEO and president Dr. Wael Barsoum told Vero hospital officials last March.

With Mitchell's new post and the expansion of the program, there is hope that IRMC will one day reach full teaching hospital status.

"We've put the bricks and mortar together for that process to move ahead smoothly," said Mitchell, though he added that so far, physical spaces such as offices and classrooms are being shared with other departments.

At the same time, the interest from physicians is proving strong, he said. Already, some 70 physicians from Vero Beach are on the FSU-Fort Pierce faculty. Mitchell says new hires at IRMC are being asked if teaching is of interest, and those who say 'yes' are increasingly getting the jobs on offer.

"When we look at the landscape and new physicians coming on board, what we see is that there's a lot of interest in medical education," Mitchell said.

"We have named several physicians representing specialties like internal medicine, OB-Gyn and surgery, as well as physician assistants and nurse practitioners, which will be an integral part of our education program."

While FSU provides training for physician assistants, the closest institution training advanced-practice registered nurses is Florida Atlantic University.

"We will be getting medical students from other medical institutions so we're looking at other options right now," said Mitchell. "But our commitment is strongly to FSU – to continue to train and expand the training at this institution. There are students from other schools who want to do electives here, and they can, as long as it doesn't infringe on our relationship with FSU."

Mitchell said any programs begun at IRMC will have to be approved by FSU's medical school as well as its dean, Dr. Juliette Lomax.

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Lomax was asked to join the IRMC board of directors, where she now serves, by retired hospital CEO Jeff Susi. Susi for years hoped IRMC would develop a rigorous medical education program.

Lomax said she expects her students, who learn in community-based clinics and hospitals as opposed to training with residents at a university-affiliated hospital, will continue to get "one-on-one, apprenticeship style opportunities" at IRMC.

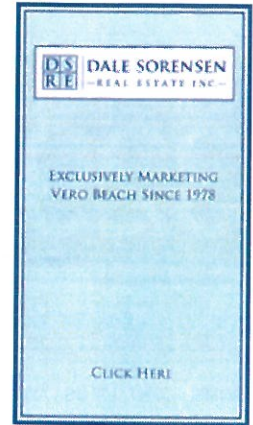
"The formalized medical education program that has been developed at IRMC will enhance our students' learning opportunities," she said.

Mitchell pointed out that students from Cleveland Clinic's medical school may one day come to Vero to train, which would benefit patients. Studies have shown that having more eyes on patients saves lives at teaching hospitals.

For now, IRMC's medical education department doesn't have a dedicated space within the hospital. Students and faculty are using a medical conference room and two training rooms in the administration wing.

Mitchell hopes to use those spaces for discussion-based learning sessions that help medical students analyze published research, or to brainstorm on diagnoses and treatment of challenging cases, much as the cancer center does with tumor boards.

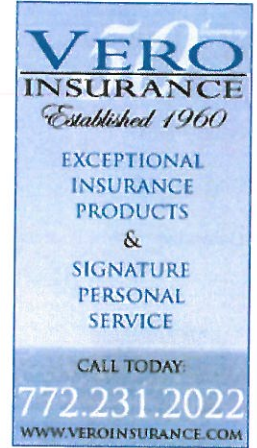
As for the new department's administrative office, Mitchell the intensivist has found a de facto home. "It's up in the surgical intensive care unit," he said.



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