

MUSC lab detects BA.4 and BA.5 subvariants

By HELEN ADAMS

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Scientists at MUSC have detected the Omicron subvariants BA.4 and BA.5 in their latest sequencing run. Sequencing involves looking at the genetic makeup of COVID samples.

"We had one of each. The BA.4 was from the Lowcountry and the BA.5 was from the Upstate," said Bailey Glen, Ph.D. He's a scientist who specializes in using computer data to analyze biological data, and an assistant professor in the College of Medicine.

The two cases were among 60 included in the sequencing run. All of the COVID-positive samples came from people who got tested at MUSC sites.

This marks the first time BA.4 and BA.5 have shown up in the MUSC sequencing data, but it's not likely to be the last. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently estimated that BA.4 and BA.5 represented 13% of all new cases in the U.S., up from about 7% a week ago.

Julie Hirschhorn, Ph.D., an associate professor in the College of Medicine, directs the Molecular Pathology Lab at MUSC. "BA.4 and BA.5 do seem to have that doubling that we've seen in the past, with certain variants that tend to fight to take over."



Hirschhorn

It's unclear how widespread BA.4 and BA.5 are

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Photo by Brennan Wesley

Pediatric cardiologist Dr. John Rhodes, operations director for the Pediatric & Congenital Heart Center, performs surgery.

Children's heart program No. 4 in country as hospital celebrates new USNWR rankings

By HELEN ADAMS

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The Pediatric & Congenital Heart Center at the MUSC Shawn Jenkins Children's Hospital ranks a stellar No. 4 in the country in U.S. News & World Report's 2022-2023 Best Children's Hospitals survey. "And if you look at just the outcome component of the score, we actually had the best outcome score of anywhere in the country, including the places whose overall rank was above us,"

said cardiothoracic surgeon Scott Bradley, M.D. Outcomes refer to how well patients fared after treatment.

"We have a great team that's incredibly collegial. We also benefit greatly from having a statewide pediatric cardiology network. It's called the Children's Heart Program of South Carolina and includes all of the pediatric cardiologists in the state. That supports us in that we're the only center that does cardiac surgery and cardiac catheterizations

in the state," Bradley said.

That centralization means that surgical expertise isn't diluted among multiple facilities but concentrated at MUSC Shawn Jenkins Children's Hospital, Bradley said.

The heart program's success is just part of the reason the hospital is celebrating this year's U.S. News & World Report survey results. Three other specialties, kidney, cancer and gastrointestinal, achieved high

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rankings as well. And the hospital itself is the only children's hospital in the state to be ranked by the survey.

Mark Scheurer, M.D., MUSC Children's Health chief of clinical services, said the rankings can help families in the Southeast and beyond decide where to take their kids. "Our MUSC Shawn Jenkins Children's Hospital and Pearl Tourville Women's Pavilion care team members endlessly strive to offer safe, compassionate and advanced care to all families who seek treatment for their children. A parent can feel confident in choosing MUSC Shawn Jenkins Children's Hospital to care for their child."

David Zaas, M.D., CEO of MUSC Health-Charleston Division, agreed. He also noted the COVID-driven circumstances that have presented a series of new challenges. "I am so proud of the dedication this team demonstrates every day, and especially over the last two years as we have responded to the COVID pandemic. We are committed to improving the health of children in South Carolina and privileged to serve our community with these outstanding programs and amazing teams."

One of those programs, kidney, also known as nephrology, maintained its No. 30 rank in the country. It's the highest ranked kidney program for children in the state. That means it excels when it comes to the survival rate of children who have kidney transplants, the management of dialysis and infection prevention and other factors.

The pediatric cancer program,

also known as oncology, jumped to No. 31, up from No. 44 in last year's rankings. Michelle Hudspeth, M.D., division chief for pediatric hematology/oncology, called that a testament to the collaboration between doctors, nurses and the multi-disciplinary staff involved in caring for children with cancer.

"I think for me, it's so striking — it's a little bit like the little engine that could, because so many of the points for the overall rankings are based on volumes, and we're consistently in the very lowest volume category," she said. "We are making our ranking based on quality and outcomes. In fact, based on outcomes alone, we're 15th in the country."

The gastroenterology & GI surgery program was also in the top 50, ranking No. 41, up one spot from last year. The rankings factor in the survival rate for children who have had liver transplants, the effectiveness of the hospital's treatment of children who have inflammatory bowel issues and other key measures.

Scheurer said the rankings are a testament to the passion doctors, nurses, techs and everyone else at the hospital bring to their roles every day. "These rankings, this national recognition, are because of them and their commitment to overcoming the challenges health care teams face daily. They are genuine, persistent and are changing what's possible."

He also credited the work that goes on behind the scenes. "We've been on the precipice of noteworthy national recognition for several years. Our clinical and basic science researchers collaborate with one essential goal: improving



Photo by Brennan Wesley

Dr. Michelle Hudspeth, division chief for pediatric hematology/oncology, talks with a patient.

patient care and outcomes," Scheurer said.

"Our providers trained at prestigious academic medical centers across the country and bring that knowledge to the MUSC's children's hospital and Children's Health ambulatory centers. Our clinicians and researchers methodically train the next generation of health care providers so that MUSC

helps ensure healthier futures for all families."

Bradley, the heart surgeon, said being methodical does not come at the expense of personalized care. "We all know the patients and their families, and they get a lot of personal attention here, which I think is difficult to get in centers that are a lot bigger than we are."

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in South Carolina since the number of people who do home tests instead of going to test sites has gone way up, and there isn't widespread wastewater surveillance.

The impact of the new Omicron subvariants isn't clear either. They obviously spread easily, but Hirschhorn said that so far, there's no evidence that they're otherwise worse than what was already out there.

"The threat for hospitalization with Omicron appears to be diminished compared to some of the other variants that we have seen. But it's not gone. So people with at-risk conditions could still see hospitalization or death if they were to catch COVID."

Her lab's findings come during a COVID wave in the Charleston Tri-county area, one that's estimated to peak in about a month. "Think about how you need to protect yourself and

those around you in any way that you can, whether that be wearing a mask or getting a vaccine or a booster if you're eligible. It might be a good time to consider getting a vaccine or booster if you can," Hirschhorn said.

"We continue to kind of hold our breath that the variants are going to continue along the same path. Maybe they're a little bit more transmissible, but we're not seeing hospitalizations go up. Variation is not always that predictable, so we're grateful every time a new variant comes out that doesn't cause a spike in hospitalizations."

Glen said they'll keep sequencing as the coronavirus continues to evolve, to let scientists, health care workers and the public know what they're dealing with — and maintain their ready stance into the future. "I think it's important that all the infrastructure and tools that have been put in place are maintained in some form or fashion to be able to be spun up again as needed."



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Speed is key to treating type of facial paralysis affecting singer Justin Bieber

BY HELEN ADAMS

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Justin Bieber is not normally top of mind for Paul Lambert, M.D., whose musical tastes run more to Motown and R&B than pop music. But the distinguished university professor of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery at MUSC did tune into the star’s recent health announcement.

“It caught my ear when they said that he had Ramsay Hunt syndrome because that is something that we occasionally see and treat,” Lambert said.

The Canadian singer announced on Instagram that he has the shingles-related condition, which has caused partial, and hopefully temporary, facial paralysis. Lambert explained the biological process that leads to Ramsay Hunt.

“It’s a reactivation of the chickenpox virus. The formal name of that is varicella zoster virus. So once a person gets chickenpox, this virus can remain dormant in the body for decades. Then it can suddenly break out. Even if you’ve had the chickenpox vaccine, you can still get this condition, though not as commonly and not as severely.”

There’s a vaccine to prevent the condition, Shingrix, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends it for people 50 and older and people with weakened immune systems. Bieber is just 28.

Whatever the person’s age, Lambert said when the virus goes from dormant to active, it can infect a nerve. “That nerve can be anywhere on the body.

Frequently it’s on the trunk or on the face, and we call it shingles. It presents as blisters or a rash with rather intense pain. Occasionally, it will infect the facial nerve.”

That’s what happened to Bieber. “The facial nerve makes the side of the face move. When it infects that nerve, it usually causes a rash or blisters around the ear. Occasionally, that rash can extend onto the face or inside the mouth, but it’s usually on the ear proper. And it can cause a facial paralysis, as though someone has had a stroke on that side. So they can’t raise their eyebrow, blink their eye or smile on the involved side of the face.”

Ramsay Hunt can also cause hearing loss and/or dizziness in about a quarter of all cases, Lambert said. The good news is that the condition is treatable. “The important thing with this is to catch it early on, and early on means within the first three days, ideally. Usually we use an antiviral agent, the most common one we use is called famciclovir, and a steroid. If you treat within the first two to three days, then you can expect close to an 80% complete or very close to complete recovery.”

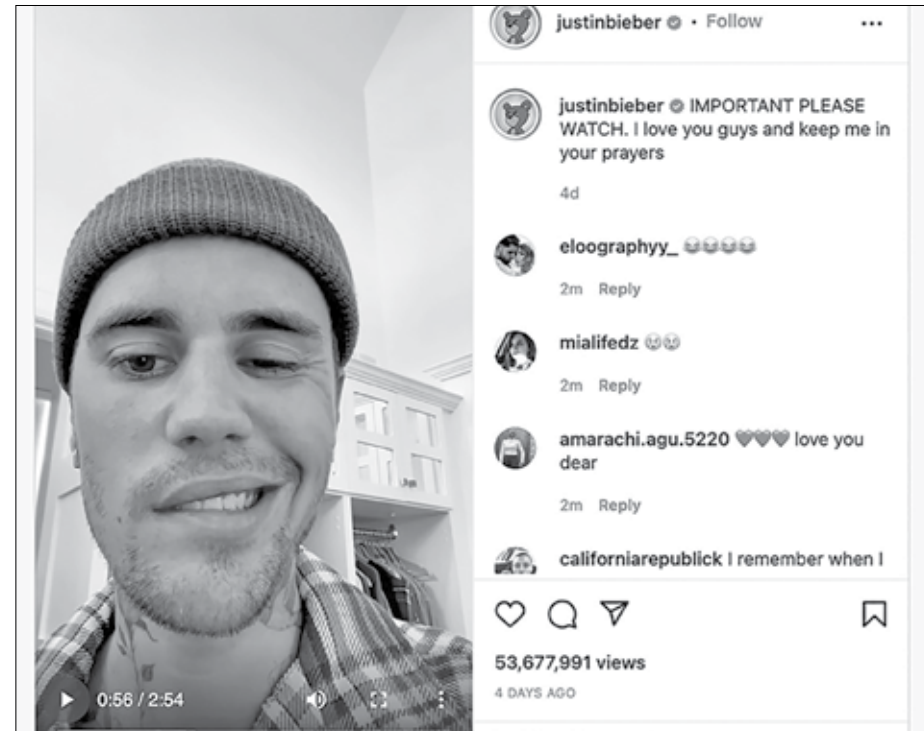
Lambert said Bieber’s willingness to talk about his illness may mean more people seek help quickly. Ramsay Hunt is characterized as rare by the National Organization for Rare Diseases, affecting an estimated five out of every 100,000 people. Lambert said it affects more than 100 South Carolinians a year.

“I think that it helps people understand that this can be a serious condition, and vanity aside, you need to see a specialist. That specialist could be your primary care physician or a neurologist or an ear, nose and throat physician. ENTs frequently treat facial paralysis.”

Lambert said that while most people recover from Ramsay Hunt, some end up with longer term facial dysfunction.



Lambert



Instagram Screenshot

Justin Bieber posted on Instagram about his bout with Ramsay Hunt syndrome, showing how it’s affecting one side of his face.

“It is socially embarrassing. The more expressive they become, the more noticeable it is. So sometimes they’re a little shy to laugh and show more extreme emotions because it’s becomes apparent then.”

But they still have options that can ease those issues. “There are a multitude of things that can be done to rehabilitate the either totally paralyzed face or partially paralyzed face. Those involve things from Botox to physical therapy to various types of surgery. The surgery is

very sophisticated and only done at select centers such as MUSC. It can be very effective.”

Bieber, who has postponed performances while he recovers, said he’s feeling better every day and finds comfort in his faith in God. Lambert hopes his example will inspire others to also put their trust in fast treatment. “There’s a window of opportunity that you really need to take advantage of to maximize the outcome and the chance for a normal appearance.”

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MUSC Health becomes one of handful of U.S. hospitals with two Icono neuroendovascular suites

By HELEN ADAMS
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There was an air of excitement among the surgeons and technicians who treat life – threatening conditions such as aneurysms and strokes as MUSC Health debuted its second Icono neuroendovascular suite.

“We had one Icono installed January 2021, which is the newest iteration of an angiography machine from Siemens. At the time, we were one of five hospitals in the U.S. that had Icono. We were an early adopter of technology. Now, the novelty is that we have our second one in adjoining side-to-side suites,” said neurosurgeon Alejandro Spiotta, M.D.

“So we’re not only the only hospital in the state to have this latest technology, but we’re also one of only a handful in the country currently that has more than one.”

David Zaas, M.D., CEO for MUSC Health-Charleston Division, said it will help patients across the state and beyond. “We are really excited about

this expansion of innovative technology that will enable our teams to have a greater impact, saving more lives through outstanding clinical care and cutting-edge research.”

The Icono acquisition is part of MUSC’s partnership with the technology company Siemens Healthineers, which was established five years ago. At the time, leaders of both organizations spoke of their vision of a transformational relationship. Spiotta said the new endovascular suite with the second Icono is a realization of that.

He also summarized the purpose of a neuroendovascular suite. “It’s a highly specialized, high-tech procedure room that’s radiation-based for visualization. It’s procedure room where we perform critical procedures like aneurysm treatments, stroke, revascularization procedures, some of the most complex, urgent and emergent procedures in the neuro space.”

The Icono is an imaging machine – it lets the medical team see inside the patient without invasive surgery. Spiotta



Photos by Sarah Pack

Technician Damian Browne prepares the new neuroendovascular suite for a patient on its opening day. The Icono angiography machine is on the left in the background.

said MUSC Health used an earlier version of the Icono for years, but it was time for an upgrade.

“The new Icono offers a lot of different functionalities that allow us to visualize the arteries of the brain in better ways. So we can take care of patients and take care of complex diseases more safely. It’s been years in development. They have higher-resolution images at lower radiation doses to both the patient and the staff,” Spiotta said.

“It allows us to take specialized functional images of the brain to determine if an area is salvageable or not. Then, it also interfaces with the new robotics that we use for treating patients, that hold great promise in making procedures safer for and allowing us to perform procedures remotely, from far away, to extend our reach to patients,” Spiotta said.

“In previous generations, if you wanted to get better pictures at critical moments, when you’re working with a sub-millimeter vessel, for example, you would have to deliver more radiation to get better pictures. Now you have better pictures to start with at a fraction of the radiation.”

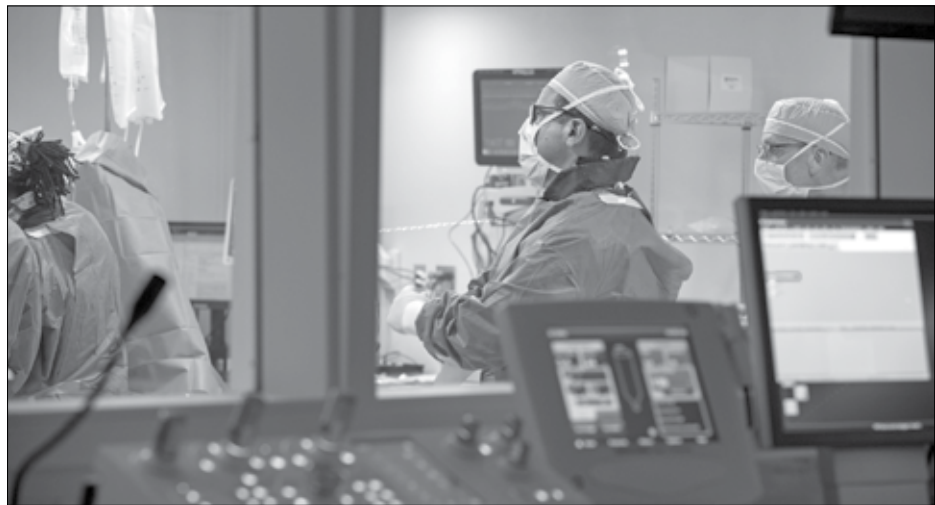
The new device and suite will get plenty of use. Spiotta’s team treats an

average of five to 10 patients a day.

“We have a fair number of scheduled procedures, like someone with an aneurysm that hasn’t ruptured and we’re going to treat it to prevent it from rupturing in the future. But then throughout today, we also usually have several emergencies that come in. That’s why it’s so important to have the second Icono, so if one of them is tied up and we get an emergency, we can go right to the second one.”

Spiotta said MUSC Health’s endovascular team in Florence will also get an Icono this summer to offer cutting-edge care to patients in the Pee Dee region. “Both we and Florence had equipment that was satisfactory to get the job done, but this represents a very heavy investment by our hospital leadership. To me, it just shows that MUSC is committed to providing the best care for our patients in the state.”

Neuroendovascular technician Damian Browne agreed, speaking as he prepared the suite for its third-ever patient on its opening day. “The new suite’s fantastic. You know, it allows us to do double the stuff at the same time with state-of-the-art technology. So we kind of continue to lead what we do. It just shows that we willing to go so much farther to make stuff a whole lot better for everybody.”



Neurosurgeon Dr. Alejandro Spiotta, center, looks at images generated by the Icono to see if a recent fall caused any dangerous internal injuries for a young woman he’s treating.

MEET CHLOE



Chloe Myers Backman

Department; Years at MUSC *University Risk Management—Occupational Safety & Health; 46 years*

Family *Husband, Moses; son, Matthew; grandchildren, Lincoln Clay 8 mos., twins, Zoe and Maddison, 3, and Mathew Moses, 16*

Accomplishment at work you're most proud of *Working as a senior environmental health manager II, I've learned so much through the years from co-workers. I started out as a clerk in the MUSC Blood Bank.*

Work mentors you'd like to acknowledge *My manager Wayne Brannan retired in October 2021 – He was knowledgeable, calm and had a special way of leading and motivating others. Research principal investigators also taught me so much about issues and compliance.*

Favorite place in the world *Hawaii*

Best TV series to binge watch *"Law & Order"*

Words of advice *Work hard and treat people with kindness*



Employee – Mary Evelyn Armstrong
OurDay Change Champion

Assistant dean for Finance & Administration,
College of Nursing

What is the biggest challenge – and the biggest reward – with the implementation of OurDay?

Disseminating information across a huge organization in such a condensed timeline is a challenge. Ensuring effective training will be critical to a successful implementation. It is also difficult to implement and adopt change while also maintaining one's "day job," which is something that many are already feeling.

As a Change Champion, I help to advocate for why this change is important by leading awareness and communications in my college and throughout the organization. These communications are two-way, both sharing information with the user community as well as bringing feedback to the OurDay project teams.

Once we have implemented the new platform, it will be rewarding to save time with properly functioning systems and hopefully redirect that time to more strategic decision-making.

For more information or if you have questions about OurDay, visit <https://horseshoe.musc.edu/everyone/ourday> or email ourdayquestions@musc.edu.

Editor's note: OurDay Change Champions are part of a group of 50+ MUSC employees from across the enterprise who have volunteered to advocate for the new platform and share information to their teams.

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Disparities champion, institutional adviser celebrated

BY CINDY ABOLE
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Longtime adviser, trailblazer and diversity champion Sabra C. Slaughter, Ph.D., associate professor of research and former director of the Center for Health Disparities Research in the Department of Medicine at MUSC, will retire on June 27.

A tireless leader in the areas of diversity and improving minority health throughout South Carolina, Slaughter has worked in multiple levels of public service, conducting health inequity research, enhancing cultural diversity and increasing minority roles in health care.

In one such role, he served as executive director of the South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium (SC AHEC) from 1996 to 2000, where he improved access to primary care medicine for underserved minorities throughout the state and made strides in establishing cultural diversity training among family practice clinicians and practitioners at SC AHEC institutions.

Former provost and MUSC President Emeritus Raymond S. Greenberg, M.D., Ph.D., remembers Slaughter for his leadership, collaborative spirit and commitment to change.

“As provost, I had the privilege of observing Dr. Slaughter work statewide with the Area Health Education Center program which he directed. It was a great challenge to manage this far-flung enterprise with so many different locations, disciplines, personalities and agendas. What impressed me the most was the diplomatic manner in which Dr. Slaughter interacted with all constituents. His management style was very collaborative, but he could also use a firm hand when necessary,” said Greenberg.

Slaughter began his career at MUSC in 1992 as interim executive assistant for Affirmative Action and Minority Affairs for then-President James B. Edwards. From 1988 to 2000, he held several

positions, including director of Minority Programs.

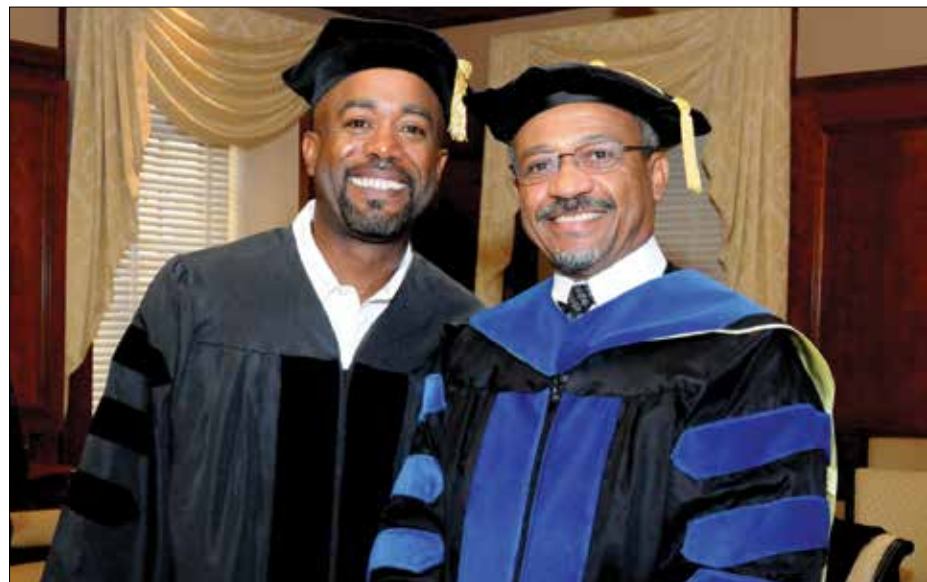
A passionate mentor and educator, Slaughter has also been instrumental as the principal investigator for several funded research initiatives, which included minority health and health disparities grants as well as an anti-terrorism emergency assistance program grant to provide support and resources for victims of mass violence, following the Mother Emanuel Church massacre in June 2015.

In 2010, Slaughter co-led the Southeastern Virtual Institute for Health Equity and Wellness (SE VIEW), a Department of Defense-funded grant that supports community-based research and outreach programs, which helped to lay the foundation for MUSC’s telemedicine work addressing stroke and other chronic disease conditions. A key researcher on this project Marvella Ford, Ph.D., SmartState Endowed Chair for Cancer Disparities Research and associate director of Population Sciences and Cancer Disparities at the MUSC Hollings Cancer Center, led several SE VIEW-funded grant projects and worked closely with Slaughter.

“One of Dr. Slaughter’s greatest legacies he leaves behind is the way he models interactions with other people. He is one of the most gracious, kind, humble and thoughtful people I have ever met. I will miss working with him but will work hard to continue his legacy,” said Ford.

Slaughter’s leadership at MUSC also took him to higher levels of service, working as chief of staff to President Greenberg from 2000 to 2013 and as a senior adviser to current MUSC President David J. Cole, M.D., FACS.

“When I was appointed president, one of my first decisions was to ask Dr. Slaughter if he would be willing to leave AHEC to serve as my chief of staff,” Greenberg said. “Fortunately for me, he accepted the offer. For the next nearly 14 years, we were virtually inseparable. His advice and guidance was always highly



Photos By Anne Thompson

Dr. Sabra Slaughter, right, took a moment to meet with 2011 MUSC Commencement speaker and music star Darius Rucker.



Slaughter, from left, with the late David Rivers and College of Medicine Dean Emeritus Dr. Layton McCurdy at a function.

principled and carefully considered. His kind and gentle manner often helped to calm anxieties of those around him – including, maybe especially, me. He represented the President’s Office on many occasions and always did so with great dignity and a personal warmth that reflected well on the entire institution.”

Willette Burnham-Williams, Ph.D., interim chief equity officer at MUSC, has worked closely with Slaughter over many years, holding him in the highest esteem.

“Dr. Slaughter’s legacy and

contributions are too many to name and they are all great,” said Burnham-Williams. “For me, the most untold legacy is the calm, thoughtful and expert leadership he brings to every endeavor he undertakes. His contribution is one of compassion and understanding in the midst of often difficult and controversial issues; it is one of intentionality and affirmation regarding the values and purpose he has made his life’s work, and it is one of intellect and distinguished service, particularly to the underserved

See CHAMPION on page 9

Diversity in focus: Photo project spotlights patients with special health needs

BY BRYCE DONOVAN

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Pam Loudon is one of those people you just like immediately.

She's witty, friendly, has an infectious laugh.

But she'll be the first to admit that the laid-back, jokey exterior you see — while truly reflective of who she is — is best put to use as a coping mechanism.

As the parent of a child with special needs, Loudon knows that if she's not able to laugh through some things, she could easily get mired in sadness and self-pity.

"It can be a very isolating life, raising a child with special needs," she said. "You're constantly weighing stress and time and energy to do something versus not. I hate to say it, but a lot of the time, staying home is just so much easier. And that just adds to the feeling of being alone."

Loudon's 19-year-old daughter, PJ, lives with profound physical and intellectual impairments that affect her ability to communicate and move independently. According to Loudon, caring for PJ is like caring for a 100-pound infant.

"PJ doesn't fit into a neat little category," she explained. "Like most kids, she loves. She smiles. She cries. She laughs. But someone will always need to be with her, feed her, change her diaper, move her and speak for her."

And then, like a switch, Loudon's sense of humor kicks in.

"Now if you're looking for a category for me, I generally accept supermodel. Because mom/caregiver/friend/translator/cook/maid/seamstress/advocate doesn't exactly roll off the tongue."

It's that ability to find the bright side of things — something she says PJ has taught her — that gets her through the toughest times. But as difficult as raising PJ can be, Loudon will admit there are the rare occasions that require no work at all.

"Every so often, you get these moments of pure joy," she says. "Like when PJ is laughing, there's no holding back. I know it's tough for most people to understand because a lot of what they see looks hard. But when you get these glimpses — oh, it's amazing."

Early one sunny Saturday morning in March, Pam and PJ had one of those moments.

A FOCUSED PLAN

Just over two years ago, MUSC opened its James B. Edwards College of Dental Medicine's Delta Dental of South Carolina Accessible Treatment area. Though a mouthful, the facility has brought lots of smiles in that time.

Michelle Ziegler, a doctor of dental medicine, leads



Photos by Rick Guidotti

James "Rico" Meriwether absolutely loves Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson. When photographer Rick Guidotti shot Rico's portrait earlier this year, he couldn't help but strike some classic Rock wrestling poses.

the Pamela Kaminski Center for Adults and Adolescents with Special Health Care Needs at MUSC.

"I wish it wasn't the case, but because so many general dentists lack the exposure to patients with special needs, those patients end up with us," she said. According to Ziegler, students in MUSC's College of Dental Medicine work with patients with special needs patients as a part of their curriculum to get them practice, as well as comfortable with, that population of patients.

"We are health professionals first, and this is a group that needs to be seen and welcomed," she said.

When Ziegler came to MUSC 10 years ago, she had maybe 12 special needs patients. Today, the clinic has upward of 400. But even with that marked increase, if you walk into the building right now — a bright, inviting space that somehow makes a dentist's office appealing — you will be surrounded by pictures of smiling faces all over the walls. But not one of them represents this patient population.



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PHOTOS *Continued from Page Seven*

So, it was serendipity when, during a dental conference last year, Ziegler crossed paths with a photographer named Rick Guidotti. Together, a plan was hatched: Ziegler and her staff would select a handful of ambassadors, as she calls them – patients with a variety of special health care needs who epitomize what the clinic is all about – and Rick would photograph them. Then, later in the year, Guidotti would return with almost 20 portraits to adorn the walls of the clinic, complementing the others that are already there – and, in turn, better represent the cross-section of MUSC’s patients.

“We want to show them as people, not as disabilities,” Ziegler said. “This is a population that is underrepresented not only in health care but in society. We want to embrace them for who they are.”

POSITIVE EXPOSURE

In 1997, Guidotti was a fashion photographer working in places like Milan, Paris, London and New York

City. He was at the top of his game – his work appearing in publications like GQ, People and LIFE magazine – living a life most photographers can only dream of. And then he ran into a teenager at a bus stop, and everything changed.

The girl he met was living with albinism and, as he quickly learned, her life had been filled with bullying and isolation. Guidotti told the girl’s mother what he did for a living and asked if he could photograph her daughter. The mom’s answer was resolute – “No.” Her reasoning: Every time something was done featuring her daughter or her daughter’s condition, it was always exploitative. But Guidotti assured her that he had different plans. He wanted to do a collection of portraits that celebrated her individualism, her beauty. And so, he persisted.

“I’m a New Yorker, I don’t take ‘no’ for an answer,” he joked.

Eventually the mom relented. But when the 16 year old walked into his studio the next day – the exact same studio where Guidotti had done

See **PHOTOS** on page 11



Photo by Rick Guidotti

Pam Loudon’s daughter PJ was one of the 20 ambassadors chosen for the dental clinic photo project.

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CHAMPION *Continued from Page Six*

and historically by-passed of citizens he has served in South Carolina and beyond.”

A native of Beech Island, South Carolina, and a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, Slaughter earned his bachelor’s degree in psychology from the University of California–Santa Cruz in 1973 and later, completed his master’s and doctorate in psychology from the University of Michigan–Ann Arbor in 1977 and 1985, respectively.

Slaughter returned to South Carolina in 1984 as project director for the ASSIST program, a faculty development effort launched by the Charleston Higher Education Consortium, prior to joining MUSC.

A recipient of numerous awards and accolades, Slaughter was recognized by the National Environmental Justice Proclamation and has received the James Clyburn State Award for Health Care Leadership, the Charleston Trident Urban League’s Leadership Award, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Award, S.C.

Rural Health Association’s Excellence in Education Award, Earl B. Higgins Diversity in Leadership Award, to name just a few. He has authored numerous publications and journals and also held memberships in multiple professional organizations, including the National Association of Health Service Executives, American Psychological Association, American Association of Medical Colleges Group on Minority Affairs and others. Slaughter’s exemplary work in the community has garnered him great respect and thanks, and he actively supports the Greater Charleston YWCA, Trident United Way, S.C. DHEC Health Disparities Workgroup and S.C. Medical Care Advisory Committee.

And even with his many decades of professional achievements and prestigious accolades, Slaughter may best be remembered at MUSC for his sterling personal character, his deep and abiding dedication to the organization and the humanity and respect he showed to all.

“Sabra’s work to address health inequities and his engagement with historically underserved communities

Thank you Sabra!

“I have the pleasure and honor to have worked with Dr. Slaughter for the past three decades with numerous projects and community interventions, including SE VIEW, AHEC high school blood pressure education and measurement, population blood pressure assessments, community outreach and engagement, among numerous other projects. While much of these activities focus on the reduction of health disparities, a passion of Sabra, it is important that the whole population has benefited from these efforts. Indeed, Sabra has made this a better world, and I feel privileged to have worked with him.”

*Daniel T. Lackland, DrPH.,
Professor of Medicine
Department of Neurology*

“It was in my good fortune to work with Sabra during my 11 years as Dean from 1990 to 2001. I’ve always gone to him when I needed advice

regarding things that I thought he could help with and appreciated his enormous contributions to MUSC and to this community. I believe he has been actively participating in worthwhile things on a more national scale. Nevertheless, he has been a remarkable contributor to better health care in South Carolina. On a few occasions, I’ve had the good fortune of having wonderful private conversations with him. I’ve learned a lot from him and about him. He has won my enthusiastic admiration for the things he has done and for the man who he is.

Best wishes to you Sabra for a happy continuing life.”

*Layton McCurdy, M.D.
Dean Emeritus, MUSC College of
Medicine, Department of Psychology and
Behavioral Sciences*

“Dr. Slaughter, on a few occasions, reminded me that I welcomed him

See CHAMPION on page 10



Photo Provided

Dr. Sabra Slaughter and wife, Dr. Shannon Richards-Slaughter.

will provide an enduring legacy, but for me,” Greenberg shared. “Sabra leaves a more personal legacy. He is a man of great virtue and integrity whom I continue to regard as one of my closest and dearest friends.”

Lisa Saladin, PT, Ph.D., executive vice president for Academic Affairs and provost, echoed that affinity and praise for the impact he had and legacy he leaves. “What Dr. Slaughter probably does not know is the significant impact he has had on emerging leaders at MUSC during his tenure here,” she said. “As a developing leader in the early 2000s, I can speak from personal experience that he was and continues to

be a role model for many of us. He is a great listener, negotiator, strategist and collaborator who leads with authenticity, humility, respect and inclusiveness. I learned so much just from observing him in action and witnessing the way he motivated those around him to be better versions of themselves. There is a quote by the Dalai Lama that says, ‘Just as ripples spread out when a single pebble is dropped into water, the actions of individuals can have far-reaching effects.’ Dr. Slaughter’s ‘ripples’ have affected many of us, and he leaves behind a great legacy, not only of accomplishments, but of impact and influence on the lives he has touched. Thank you, Dr. Slaughter.”

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CHAMPION *Continued from Page Nine*

Thank you Sabra! (continued)

on campus when we first met about 40 years ago, in front of the Colbert Education Center and Library. I was with a few other African American Medical students. You must remember, there were very few students of color at that time, and he was new to MUSC. Since that first encounter, we have both seen much progress in the number of underrepresented in medical students, residents, faculty, researchers and administrators here at MUSC. I believe he played a large role in that evolution. After my return in 1989 to work at Charleston Memorial and eventually MUSC, he has been a source of encouragement to me and other faculty members of color. Through his position in the President's Office, he quietly encouraged me to pursue my medical history interest and to develop talks for the 1969 Hospital Strike and the Cannon Street Hospital Historical Marker Dedication programs.

I have seen him become a well-respected ambassador for MUSC, not only in the local African American community but for all the communities

throughout the state. His efforts to increase access to quality health care and reduce health disparities in the Lowcountry and across the State of South Carolina are just some of the fruits of his labor. I deeply appreciate his example, friendship and guidance over the years and wish him all the best in this time to embrace family and future interests."

James Tolley, M.D.
Assistant Professor Emeritus,
Department of Emergency Medicine

"In his work as chief of staff and later as director of the Center for Health Disparities Research, Dr. Slaughter has maintained a laser focus looking for opportunities to build MUSC relationships with community health care providers, such as community health centers, with the goal of reducing health disparities and improving health care for vulnerable people in South Carolina. I will personally miss his calm, gentle but incredibly effective leadership and his devotion to underserved communities of the state."

William P. Moran, M.D.
McKnight Chair in Genetics
Department of Medicine – General Internal Medicine



Photo by Anne Thompson
Slaughter, right, joins employees and guests at the dedication of the James E. Clyburn Research Center at MUSC in October 2011.

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	3			4		6	2	1

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PHOTOS *Continued from Page Eight*

a six-hour photoshoot with Cindy Crawford the day before — her shoulders were hunched. She didn't make eye contact. Everything was a one-word answer.

"You could just see this broken person," he said. "So I told her, 'You need to see what I see. You are magnificent.'"

He gave her a mirror and told her to look at herself, to appreciate her diversity.

"I don't remember exactly what I said after that, but when she looked in that mirror, something switched inside because she exploded with a smile that lit up New York City," he said.

And from then on, Guidotti knew he had a higher calling. He quit the fashion industry and formed Positive Exposure, a charitable organization that promotes a more inclusive world through award-winning photography, films, exhibitions, lectures and educational programs.

And so, for the last 25 years, Guidotti has continued to travel the globe — this time seeking out less traditional beauty with the goal of promoting a more equitable and compassionate world where individuals and communities at risk of stigma and exclusion are understood, embraced and celebrated — the spirit of difference, he calls it.

"I love getting to create an opportunity to showcase diversity," he said. "If we do this right, we can help create a space for these people to be heard, to be seen and to be loved."

THE BIG REVEAL

On that sunshine-filled March morning in Charleston, Guidotti photographed nearly 20 ambassadors over the course of the day in the breezeway just outside the dental clinic.

Any time he does a project for Positive Exposure, Guidotti makes sure that there is a huge support system on hand for his subjects so they are as comfortable as possible. Family, friends, neighbors, you name it — he tells them to bring them all.

"When I'm taking their pictures and they get these huge smiles on their faces, I usually take a moment to look just past them to their moms or dads or friends,



Guidotti in his former life as a fashion photographer, seen here with supermodel Cindy Crawford.

Photo Provided

"When I'm taking their pictures and they get these huge smiles on their faces, I usually take a moment to look just past them to their moms or dads or friends, and almost every time, those people are somehow beaming even brighter."

Rick Guidotti

and almost every time, those people are somehow beaming even brighter," he said.

Loudon still can't believe PJ was one of the ambassadors chosen for the project.

"When opportunities like these come along, to be able to take advantage, that's huge," she said, before adding with a laugh: "I still think they picked us because we're always on time for our appointments, though."

Want to support the College of Dental Medicine and programs such as the special needs clinic? Simply scan the QR code or click here for a link to donate.

Loudon said one of the best parts of the experience was watching other kids

are around each other, it's such a joy to watch how they behave. They're sweet and open and honest, and you're just blown away."

On Sept. 29, Guidotti will return to MUSC's downtown campus and present the framed portraits to the College of Dental Medicine in the form of an art opening. All the ambassadors will be commemorated in framed 20-by-24 inch portraits.

"So often when kids like PJ are seen or recognized, it's a staring-type situation," Loudon said. "She doesn't fit the norms of what is attractive. Kids like her are rarely portrayed in pictures."

Ziegler said she plans to hang the framed photos in the main lobby, just outside the entrance to the clinic, for everybody to see.

Loudon gets emotional when she thinks about it. "The fact that Dr. Ziegler wants all her patients to have representation, I think it just speaks volumes because, Lord knows, what they do on a daily basis — it's a labor of love."

like PJ interact. "They were so full of energy," she said. "When kids like that

BRIHTE Leadership Academy recruiting

The David J. and Kathryn Cole BRIHTE (Building and Retaining Inclusive High-Talent and Excellence) Leadership Academy is currently recruiting for its 2022-2024 cohort of scholars.

The academy is a two-year leadership program designed to identify and prepare high-potential, diverse talent among MUSC's workforce.

The program is managed by Willette Burnham-Williams, Ph.D., interim chief equity officer, and the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Applications are being accepted until 5 p.m., Monday, June 20. For details and to apply, visit <https://web.musc.edu/about/leadership/institutional-offices/diversity/programs/brihte-leadership-academy>.

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