U.S. News & World Report names UC Davis Children’s Hospital among nation’s best

UC Davis Children’s Hospital has been recognized as a Best Children’s Hospital for 2022-23 by U.S. News & World Report. The annual Best Children’s Hospitals rankings and ratings, now in their 16th year, are designed to assist patients, their families and their doctors in making informed decisions about where to receive care for challenging health conditions.

UC Davis Children’s Hospital is nationally ranked among the nation’s 50 best in these five specialty care areas:

- 19th nationally in nephrology
- 47th nationally in pediatric diabetes & endocrinology
- 29th nationally in pediatric neonatology
- 19th nationally in pediatric orthopedics
- 35th nationally in pediatric pulmonology & lung surgery

The orthopedics ranking was awarded in collaboration with Shriners Children’s — Northern California, UC Davis Children’s Hospital’s longstanding partner in caring for children with burns, spinal cord injuries, orthopedic disorders and urological issues. 

Children’s Hospital strategic retreat focused on the future of care

UC Davis Children’s Hospital hosted a Strategic Plan Retreat in September with 67 participants. The retreat was facilitated by the Strategic Planning Department, with support of 15 colleagues from the Office of Strategy and Growth.

Ann Boynton, executive director of the Strategic Planning Department, presented the introductory content, which featured how the Children’s Hospital Strategic Plan aligns with the Clinical Strategic Plan (CSP) and a proposed strategic framework with specific strategies to move the organization forward.

“We want our children’s hospital to be fully equipped to provide kids across Northern California and their families with the best care possible,” said Boynton. “A comprehensive strategy focuses our vision and work so we can collaborate on a spectrum of issues that will improve care for our tiniest patients. This retreat solidifies the foundation for that strategy.”

Hirose appointed surgeon-in-chief of UC Davis Children’s Hospital

UC Davis chief of fetal and pediatric surgery Shinjiro Hirose was appointed surgeon-in-chief of UC Davis Children’s Hospital. He has served as chief of pediatric surgery, vice chair of surgery and founder and director of the UC Davis Fetal Care and Treatment Center.
Exploring low vaccination rate for cancer-causing HPV

The COVID-19 pandemic has complicated efforts to increase the rate of vaccinations. That includes those to prevent the human papillomavirus (HPV), which is linked to six types of cancer, including head and neck cancers.

HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the U.S. As states consider ways to increase vaccinations, UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center has joined the Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation of Harvard Law School to put out a new resource called the HPV Vaccine Policy Landscape, Public Health Strategies.

The new guidebook highlights the roles that state policy makers, educational institutions, and health care providers can play in increasing HPV vaccination rates by navigating the policy landscape more effectively. READ MORE »

Watching video feed of hospitalized baby improves pumping experience

Parents who used videoconferencing technology to view their hospitalized baby reported an improved pumping experience while expressing milk for their premature infant. Videoconferencing also helped the whole family connect to their infant in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). These findings were published in Breastfeeding Medicine.

"Breast milk feeding is an essential component of care for the hospitalized premature infant, but it can be challenging due to factors including low milk supply, the need to express milk instead of feeding directly from the breast, as well as the stress and anxiety for new parents who are physically separated from their premature infants in the hospital environment," said study lead author Adrienne Hoyt-Austin. "Our study explored the experience of pumping milk while watching one's hospitalized baby with videoconferencing."

The UC Davis Health study enrolled parents who used FamilyLink when they are not at the bedside in the UC Davis NICU. FamilyLink is a videoconferencing program which gives families the option to see their baby through a secure connection from a home computer, tablet or cellphone 24/7. READ MORE »
Pediatric kidney transplant patients fare better when kidney is from live donor

Do pediatric kidney transplant patients have better long-term outcomes when their kidney comes from living, biologically unrelated donors compared to deceased donors?

A new UC Davis Health study finds that they do. The study reviewed data from the Organ Procurement & Transplantation Network database from Jan. 1, 2001 to Sept. 30, 2021. Researchers compared the rates of graft failure (when the organ is rejected by the recipient) and death, as well as long-term outcomes of children who received kidney transplants from living related donors, living unrelated donors and deceased donors.

It is the largest study of its kind and was published in the journal Pediatric Transplantation.

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International study identifies risks for long COVID in children

A new international study conducted in eight countries and published in JAMA Network Open offers a clearer picture of the risks associated with long COVID in children.

The study was co-led by a team of researchers from UC Davis Health, the University of Calgary’s Cumming School of Medicine and Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago. It showed nearly 6% of children who presented to the emergency department with COVID-19 reported symptoms of long COVID 90 days later. Among these patients, three characteristics were associated with long COVID:

- Initial hospitalization of 48 or more hours
- Four or more symptoms at the initial emergency department visit
- The child was age 14 or older

“We found that in some children, illness with COVID-19 is associated with reporting persistent symptoms after three months,” said Stephen Freedman, professor at the University of Calgary’s Cumming School of Medicine and co-principal investigator of the study. “Our results suggest that appropriate guidance and follow-up are needed, especially for children at high risk for long COVID.”

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New procedure transforms grafts used in bladder augmentation surgeries

UC Davis pediatric urologist Eric Kurzrock has devised a new procedure to create graft tissues with functioning blood vessels needed in bladder augmentation surgeries. His innovative method solves a common problem in bioengineered graft implants, the challenge of tissue contraction caused by inadequate blood supply.

Kurzrock is the chief of pediatric urologic surgery and professor of urology and pediatrics at UC Davis Children’s Hospital. His study on vascularized grafts for bladder augmentation was published in the Journal of Tissue Engineering and Regenerative Medicine.

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Congenital syphilis linked to socioeconomic factors in small/medium California counties

Cases of syphilis passed from mother to developing baby are on the rise

**Congenital syphilis** is a sexually transmitted bacterial infection that passes from a mother to her child during pregnancy or childbirth. In up to 40% of cases, it may lead to the death of the developing baby in utero or in infancy.

Congenital syphilis rates in California continue to rise each year. A **new UC Davis Health study** finds that California residents living in small-to-medium counties had higher rates of congenital syphilis infection and female poverty and lower education levels compared to those in large, metropolitan counties. The study also linked congenital syphilis infection rates to higher female poverty and lower female education levels.

The study, published in the Journal of Perinatology, is the first to investigate rural-urban differences in congenital syphilis infection in California, a **state experiencing a disproportionate burden of congenital syphilis cases**.

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California takes lead on mandated screening for childhood traumas

Research supports expansion of insurance-covered trauma screening nationwide

A group of researchers and policy analysts has published a brief that suggests California’s expansion of screening for childhood trauma can be a model for other states.

The researchers from UC Davis Health and other University of California institutions say the screenings have the potential to demonstrate the current prevalence of **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)** and how they affect health outcomes for adults.

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Global team of scientists discover a new gene causing severe neurodevelopmental delays

An international team of researchers led by UC Davis geneticist Suma Shankar has discovered a new gene implicated in a neurodevelopmental condition called DPH5-related diphthamide-deficiency syndrome. The syndrome is caused by DPH5 gene variants that may lead to embryonic death or profound neurodevelopmental delays.

Findings from their study were published in **Genetics in Medicine**.

“We are so excited about the novel gene discovery,” said the lead author **Suma Shankar**, professor in the **Departments of Pediatrics** and **Ophthalmology** and faculty at the **UC Davis MIND Institute**. Shankar is the director of Precision Genomics, Albert Rowe Endowed Chair in Genetics, and chief of Division of Genomic Medicine.

DPH5 is essential for protein biosynthesis. It belongs to a class of genes needed for the synthesis of diphthamide, a type of modified amino acid **histidine**, critical to **ribosomal protein synthesis**.

“**We are so excited about the novel gene discovery**”
— Suma Shankar

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Pediatric residency program director receives national leadership award

Su-Ting Li, vice chair of education and residency program director in the UC Davis Department of Pediatrics, has received the Robert S. Holm, M.D. Leadership Award. She accepted the honor this month at the annual spring meeting for the Association of Pediatric Program Directors' (APPD) in San Diego.

This award honors one APPD member each year for extraordinary contributions in leadership and support of other program leaders as a mentor, advisor or role model at the organization’s national level.

“I am so honored and touched to receive this award from my incredible mentees and amazing medical education colleagues,” Li said. “I love learning from and being inspired by our next generation of future leaders in medical education – and I’m so grateful to be part of their journey.”

UC Davis Medical Center re-verified as level I trauma center by American College of Surgeons

UC Davis Medical Center has been re-verified as a level I trauma center and a level I pediatric trauma center by the American College of Surgeons (ACS). This achievement recognizes the trauma centers’ dedication to transforming trauma care for optimal outcomes and meets Sacramento County EMS Agency requirements for the medical center’s designation as a trauma center for Sacramento County.

As California’s only level I trauma center north of San Francisco, UC Davis Medical Center is one of only three in the state with level I verification for both adult and pediatric trauma.

UC Davis Health receives AAMC Telehealth Equity Catalyst Award

UC Davis Health recently received a Telehealth Equity Catalyst (TEC) Award from the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) for its efforts to advance health care equity and telehealth.

This year’s TEC Award was presented to Jennifer Rosenthal, associate professor of pediatrics, and collaborators Kristin Hoffman, associate professor of neonatology, and Daniel Stein, Epic telehealth supervisor at UC Davis Health. They were recognized for the innovation of UC Davis Health’s NICU Virtual Family-Centered Rounds (FCR) program and the integration of video translation services into the telehealth platform known as Extended Care.

The Virtual FCR program engages families in multidisciplinary bedside rounds for hospitalized patients, giving parents and caregivers a chance to be virtually present at their baby’s bedside through a telehealth platform.

Pediatric resident receives diversity award

UC Davis pediatrics resident Ivan Marquez has been named the recipient of the 2nd annual Dr. Ifeanyi Onyefuji Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Award. The honor is presented by the Resident Medical Staff Committee, the Office of Graduate Medical Education (GME) and the Office of Student and Resident Diversity (OSRD).

Marquez is a member of the Pediatrics Committee on Departmental Diversity and Pediatric Health Equity and has helped lead pediatric trainee support group meetings around EDI. He has spoken to community groups and given interviews to Spanish-language television and radio about health topics such as COVID-19.

Awards and honors
Free youth heart event screens more than 300 kids and young adults

More than 300 children and young adults, ages 12 to 25, attended the free youth heart screening event at Jesuit High School in August. Hosted by the Kyle J. Taylor Foundation (KJTF), in collaboration with UC Davis Health and Project ADAM Sacramento, the all-day event helped to identify youth with an undiagnosed heart condition.

“Our first heart screening event was very successful,” said Rebecca McCormac, Project ADAM Sacramento coordinator. “As a result of this endeavor, our community is more educated about heart health and sudden cardiac arrest preparedness.”

McCormac shared that 307 young people from all over the Sacramento region came to receive a cardiac risk assessment, an electrocardiogram (EKG), a physician review and CPR training.

“I’m very proud of our dedicated team of experts who worked tirelessly to achieve this distinction,” said Jack Lin, director of the UC Davis Medical Center Comprehensive Epilepsy Program and professor in the Department of Neurology. “This accreditation reflects the program’s commitment to serving our patients with the most advanced neurodiagnostic monitoring, state-of-the-art neuroimaging tests and renowned surgical expertise.”

Giving back

Pediatric nurses host Operation Backpack drive

The pediatric nurses at UC Davis Children’s Hospital hosted an Operation Backpack drive for the 14th year, collecting and donating 129 backpacks filled with school supplies, which are delivered to needy students by the Volunteers of America.

Backpacks were filled with needed grade-specific school supplies for children in need.

“Our staff has once again pulled their resources to make a difference for children in our community,” said Angie Marin, nurse manager of the pediatrics unit. “We love to do this every year. Thank you to all who participated in this backpack drive.”

Children’s Miracle Network awards 14 new clinical, research grants

Fourteen grants totaling $383,029 have been awarded by Children’s Miracle Network at UC Davis to clinicians and researchers at UC Davis Children’s Hospital. Eleven grants in the amount of $236,823 will enhance the clinical care of children, while three grants totaling $146,206 were awarded for research directly improving the health and welfare of children.

Each year, applications are accepted by Children’s Miracle Network (CMN) for both clinical services and research grants. Each application must support CMN’s mission to improve the health and wellbeing of children and demonstrate how the project or research contributes to the UC Davis Health Clinical Strategic Plan. Special consideration is given to junior faculty members and junior investigators. The amount of funds awarded each year is determined by the CMN Executive Committee and chief executive officer of UC Davis Medical Center.
Patient milestone

Transfer to UC Davis Children’s Hospital saves micro-preemie twins’ lives

Nova and Nylah's parents faced double the joy and double the concern upon their arrival. Both babies were born with multiple life-threatening challenges. But the Barnes credit prayer, Facebook and UC Davis Children’s Hospital for helping their children survive.

“You could tell how much the whole staff believed in Nova and Nylah. The doctors, the nurses, the fellows and residents. Even the cleaning crew. All of them were cheering for us. It was like family. We felt so at home,” said Dondre Barnes, father to Nova and Nylah.

Now a year old, Nova and Nyla are developmentally on track. The twins are crawling and walking and chatting, feats their mom and dad were initially told would never happen — even if the girls survived.

READ THEIR HEARTWARMING PATIENT STORY »

Giving back (continued)

Spirit Halloween raises funds for UC Davis Child Life

Spirit Halloween is once again helping make the hospital less scary for kids by raising funds for the Child Life and Creative Arts Therapy Department at UC Davis Children’s Hospital.

Stores are now open and shoppers can download this coupon to receive 10% off their Spirit Halloween purchase and make a 10% donation to UC Davis Child Life and Creative Arts Therapy Department. The coupon is good for purchases made online at spirithalloween.com or at the following store locations through Oct. 31, 2022:

- 5712 Folsom Blvd., East Sacramento
- 6130 Birdcage Center Lane, Citrus Heights
- 7811 Lichen Dr., Citrus Heights
- 6660 Lonetree Blvd., Rocklin
- 11395 Folsom Blvd., Rancho Cordova
- 917 Dana Drive 4A/4E, Redding
- 3101 Greer Road, Turlock
- 3401 Dale Road, #480, Modesto
- 3440 McHenry Ave., Modesto

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— Dondre Barnes, father
Republic FC, UC Davis Health partner, celebrated childhood cancer awareness month

This year, Republic FC and UC Davis Health turned to the brave children enduring and fighting pediatric cancer to create a special item to show the world their indomitable spirit. The Fritz & Friends Scarf was designed by Riley Blum, Fritz Stark, and Emily Love – three childhood cancer survivors who were treated at UC Davis Health. It is now available online. Proceeds of the scarf sales will support patients and their families through the Super Fritz & Friends Fund, which was inspired by one of the scarf artists.

“The indomitable spirit of our club and community are mirrored every day in the children and families affected by childhood cancer,” said Republic FC president and general manager Todd Dunivant. “We’re proud to join with our great partner UC Davis Health to honor and support pediatric cancer patients and provide ways for the community to give as well.”

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— Todd Dunivant, Republic FC president

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instagram.com/ucdavischildren has 5,026 followers!