

UC DAVIS HEALTH

Fall/Winter 2024



A new
brain-computer
interface helps
a man with
ALS to

'speak' again

page 20

Shown above: Surgically implanted microelectrodes, used to record a patient's neural activity as part of a highly accurate new brain-to-text speech neuroprosthesis.

A nationally ranked
medical school and hospital
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Transforming the patient health journey

When I visit our facilities across the UC Davis Health system, I see the power of our purpose, our culture, and our people in action. Our incredible teams have such a positive impact on our patients throughout our Northern California communities — all of which contributes to rising distinctions for UC Davis Health in many esteemed national rankings, as you'll see in this issue.

This magazine spotlights several examples of that shared purpose and

the ability to speak once again within minutes of being deployed. A truly heartwarming story, this technology enabled the participant to once again communicate with his family, friends and caregivers.

Elsewhere in this issue you will find news on research progress, facility growth, leadership appointments, clinical and programmatic updates, and partnerships. For example, UC Davis Health has launched a new at-home program that monitors

Our strategic approach is based on the fact that the future of health care delivery will look quite different than the health care of today. Evolving technologies, patient expectations, and value-based care will shape the future of care at UC Davis Health and beyond.

collective action in the last few months. Through our sense of humanity and empowering technology, UC Davis Health is thinking differently about how we can improve human life and deliver the compassionate care our people deserve.

One example is the new brain-computer interface developed by UC Davis Health scientists that amazingly translates brain signals into speech with up to 97% accuracy. The most accurate system of its kind, this technology recently gave a clinical trial participant with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)

patients with high blood pressure. So, we're finding inventive ways to make care more convenient and accessible for our patients, while also reducing costs by preventing hospital readmissions and unnecessary visits.

In health equity, UC Davis Health is expanding access to postpartum care for Black patients through video-based telehealth, which will help to alleviate numerous historical barriers to access in this particular realm. Everyone who walks through our doors is an extremely valued patient, and that's why we're continually putting an emphasis on

equitable care and overcoming the social determinant obstacles to good health.

Altogether, these are just a few examples — there's much more to share with you. Everything we do should be about bringing greater health to the people that we serve throughout Northern California. Our strategic approach is based on the fact that the future of health care delivery will look quite different than the health care of today. Evolving technologies, patient expectations, and value-based care will shape the future of care at UC Davis Health and beyond — this is what our patients increasingly expect and what our providers support in this new era of health care.

In fact, about a quarter of adults younger than 30 now use chatbots to find medical advice and information at least once a month, according to a recent survey from KFF. And, an American Medical Association study recently found that 56% of physicians thought AI would be helpful in improving care coordination, patient convenience and patient safety.

In all that we do, transparency is key, and communicating the benefits of transformative care and listening to feedback will underpin the “human acceptance curve” when it comes to technology and health care. That's what our UC Davis Health teams are doing right now, transforming the patient health care journey, each and every day — while creativity may be thinking up new things, innovation is actually doing the new things as the next step.

Yours in health,



David Lubarsky, M.D., M.B.A., F.A.S.A.
Vice Chancellor of Human Health Sciences
Chief Executive Officer, UC Davis Health



Driving nation-leading, groundbreaking research to advance better health for all

It's been an exciting year of national and international recognition for the UC Davis School of Medicine's 2024 research and education achievements.

For the third consecutive year, UC Davis garnered more than \$1 billion in external research funding. Our school's internationally recognized research community generated 40% of that total, with \$400 million in external research funding. The Blue Ridge Institute for Medical



Eighty-one percent of our talented 2024 graduates stayed in California for their residency training programs and 54% are training in primary care.

Research again placed our school among the nation's leading medical schools for National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding – with four of our departments ranked in the top 10 nationally.

This year, we also received national media coverage of the life-changing results of our BrainGate clinical trial brain-computer interface, which translates brain signals into speech with up to 97% accuracy – the most accurate system of its kind. This represents significant progress toward restoring communication for people who can't speak due to paralysis or neurological conditions such as ALS.

In August, we also celebrated the graduation of a healthy, active 2-year-old from his in-person follow-up testing phase of the CuRe trial, the world's first stem

cell treatment for spina bifida delivered during fetal surgery at UC Davis Health. Our CuRe trial health care team, who have watched him grow since his birth, will monitor him until he is 6 years old.

This fall, Garen J. Wintemute, UC Davis emergency medicine physician and director of the Violence Prevention Research Program, was elected to the prestigious National Academy of Medicine (NAM). Membership in NAM, an international body of 2,400 leaders, is considered one of the highest honors in the field of health and medicine.

U.S. News & World Report ranked us as the country's fourth most diverse medical school and Tier 1 in primary care training in 2024. Eighty-one percent of our talented 2024 graduates stayed in California for

their residency training programs and 54% are training in primary care.

This year, we partnered with Cal Poly Humboldt to launch the Huwighurruk Health Postbaccalaureate Program, to enroll pre-med students passionate

about providing health care to Native American and Alaska Native communities. This is one of our many innovative pathway programs designed to train the physician workforce California's communities need.

These are just a few examples of how the UC Davis School of Medicine continues to be a national leader in all its mission areas. Thank you for supporting our work to transform lives and achieve better health for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Murin'.

Susan Murin, M.D., M.Sc., M.B.A.

Interim Dean, UC Davis School of Medicine
Professor, Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine

*A publication for alumni,
donors, faculty and friends
of UC Davis Health*

in this issue



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NOTEWORTHY: CLINICAL UPDATES

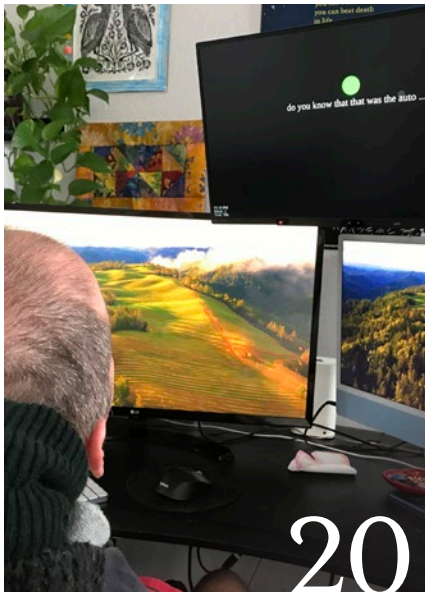
Select updates about new centers, services, partnerships, technologies, milestones and more.

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BREAKING THE COMMUNICATION BARRIER

New brain-computer interface technology developed by UC Davis Health reaches a transformative level of accuracy – helping a man with paralysis to communicate with friends, family and caregivers.

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'I CAN RELATE BECAUSE I WAS IN THEIR POSITION, TOO'

A new family residency training partnership between UC Davis Health and CommuniCare+OLE benefits residents, patients and the FQHC pipeline.

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HOW UC DAVIS CREATES EQUITY-MINDED NURSES

The documentary 'Everybody's Work' includes personal stories about nurses who advance diversity on the job and in the community.



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ON THE COVER: *Closeup of new brain-computer interface technology developed by UC Davis Health that translates brain signals into speech with up to 97% accuracy – the most accurate system of its kind.*

U.S. News ranks UC Davis School of Medicine a national leader in primary care training, research

According to the 2024 annual “Best Medical Schools” rankings released in July by *U.S. News & World Report*, UC Davis is in the Tier 1, or top, category for its leadership in educating students to work as primary care doctors.

UC Davis also ranked No. 22 in the country for medical school graduates who practice in primary care settings, up from No. 37 the year before.

The rankings are a testament to the success the school of medicine has achieved for years in training students, residents and fellows to help fill a workforce shortage of primary care physicians.

“The UC Davis School of Medicine continues to be a national leader in training the physician workforce needed to meet the needs of our diverse communities and advance health equity — especially in primary care,” said Susan Murin, M.D., M.Sc., M.B.A., interim dean of the UC Davis School of Medicine.



“These rankings also show we continue to be among the leading medical research institutions committed to improving health and transforming lives.”

The latest rankings also place the school as the fourth most diverse in the country, behind three well-respected historically Black colleges and universities.

Finally, the school reached a record-high \$401 million in external research funding last year and, according to the new *U.S. News* rankings, was placed in Tier 2 for research.

U.S. News ranks UC Davis Medical Center among nation’s best

UC Davis Medical Center has once again been recognized as one of the nation’s leading hospitals for outstanding patient care, according to the 2024–2025 *U.S. News & World Report* prestigious Best Hospitals survey.

As the region’s only comprehensive level 1 trauma center for both adult and pediatric patients, the medical center ranked as the No. 1 hospital in Sacramento, No. 8 in California and among top 50 hospitals nationwide in 8 adult specialties:

- Ear, Nose & Throat (No. 15)
- Geriatrics (No. 24)
- Pulmonology & Lung Surgery (No. 24)
- Neurology & Neurosurgery (No. 28)
- Cardiology, Heart & Vascular Surgery (No. 35)
- Cancer (No. 37)
- Orthopedics (No. 39)
- Diabetes & Endocrinology (No. 41)

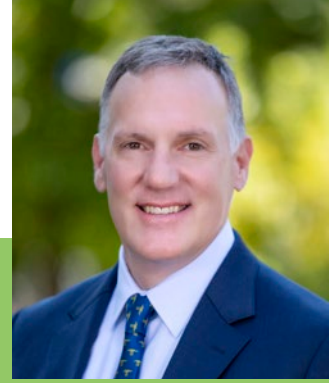
For its quality of care in common adult procedures and conditions, UC Davis Medical Center was rated “high performing” — in this case, the highest rating possible — in 14 areas:

- Acute Kidney Failure
- Colon Cancer Surgery
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Gynecological Cancer Surgery
- Heart Attack
- Heart Failure
- Hip Fracture
- Leukemia, Lymphoma & Myeloma
- Lung Cancer Surgery
- Pneumonia
- Prostate Cancer Surgery
- Spinal Fusion
- Stroke
- Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement (TAVR)

“These rankings reflect the unrelenting efforts and collective commitment of the entire UC Davis Health team to improve the quality, safety and equity of the care we provide.”

—David Lubarsky, M.D., M.B.A., F.A.S.A., CEO of UC Davis Health





Inaugural System Chief Operating Officer for UC Davis Health

Michael Condrin, M.B.A., has been appointed System Chief Operating Officer (System COO) and Chief Administrator for UC Davis Medical Center. As the inaugural System COO, Condrin will drive the vision and strategy for the nearly \$4 billion clinical enterprise, encompassing the medical center, the cancer center, and expanding network of multispecialty clinics, surgery centers, imaging centers, and outpatient clinical affiliations. Condrin previously served as the Interim Chief Administrator for UC Davis Medical Center, Chief Operating Officer for the Hospital Division and Chief Operating Officer for Ambulatory Care. Under his leadership, UC Davis Health launched the Patient Contact Center, expanded telehealth capabilities, and opened the Ernest E. Tschannen Eye Institute and the Edwards Family Athletic Center for sports medicine clinic. He was recognized by *Becker's Hospital Review* in February as one of "60 academic medical center COOs to know."

Jennifer Doll named Chief Financial Officer

Jennifer Doll, M.P.A., C.P.A., a highly accomplished executive with more than 31 years of experience in public accountancy and financial leadership, has been named Chief Financial Officer at UC Davis Health. She will provide executive oversight for the

financial operation of UC Davis Health, including the School of Medicine, Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing, Medical Center, and the Medical Group.

Doll previously served as the Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer at the

Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU Health Care), an 800-bed academic health system where she collaborated with leadership on strategic partnerships with two affiliated health care entities. She also served University of Missouri Healthcare as its Interim CFO/Executive Director Finance. Doll was recently chosen by *Becker's Hospital Review* as one of "77 academic medical center CFOs to know" for 2024.



PERMANENT HOSPITAL CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER



UC Davis Health named **Joseph Galante, M.D., M.B.A., F.A.C.S.**, as its Hospital Chief Medical Officer. Galante, who served as interim, will oversee Hospital Clinical Care Services (HCCS) and provide medical oversight of all hospital and campus processes in collaboration with the school of medicine, patient care services, and operational leadership. He will continue as a keystone in collaborative leadership of ORs, ICUs, the ED, and the 48X outpatient surgery center. Galante was among *Becker's* "chief medical officers to know" in 2023, 2024 and 2025; he joined Department of Surgery faculty in 2008.

AMBULATORY CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER NAMED



Debbie Aizenberg, M.D., has been named Ambulatory Chief Medical Officer for UC Davis Health, where she will lead Ambulatory Clinical Care Services (ACCS) and oversee ambulatory quality, safety, efficiency, and accessibility. She will also continue as Executive Director of UC Davis Medical Group. Aizenberg previously served as Associate Chief Medical Officer for Ambulatory Care, and is a clinical professor of Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery. She has received institutional awards for excellence, and has been recognized as a top doctor in regional and national media.

CANCER CENTER NAMES PHYSICIAN-IN-CHIEF



David Tom Cooke, M.D., F.A.C.S., has been permanently appointed physician-in-chief for UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center after serving as interim. Cooke is a UC Davis Health professor and founding chief of the Division of General Thoracic Surgery, and will continue as the cancer center's associate director of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEAL). *Also see page 10.*



Stahmer named new director of UC Davis MIND Institute

Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences **Aubyn Stahmer, Ph.D.**, has been appointed director of the UC Davis MIND Institute. Stahmer is a clinical psychologist, a nationally recognized expert in autism intervention, director of the MIND Institute's Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, and has been a faculty member of the MIND Institute since 2015.

Stahmer's extensive federally funded research program emphasizes increasing access to autism services for historically marginalized communities. She has published more than 150 research articles and served as the editor of the international journal *Autism* for 11 years. She specializes in implementation science, which focuses on moving research innovations to community programs.

Stahmer is also the director of the LEND (Leadership Excellence in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities) program, which provides leadership training to clinicians, families, self-advocates, community leaders and others involved with developmental disabilities.

She takes over the MIND directorship from Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Marjorie Solomon, who has been serving as interim director since Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Leonard Abbeduto stepped down in late 2023. As part of the new appointment, Stahmer will also hold the Tsakopoulos-Vismara Endowed Chair in the UC Davis School of Medicine.

WEITZEL APPOINTED CHAIR OF ANESTHESIOLOGY AND PAIN MEDICINE



Nathaen Weitzel, M.D., has been appointed professor and chair of the Department of Anesthesiology and Pain Medicine at the UC Davis School of Medicine. He previously served as a professor, vice chair of clinical operations and quality, and associate chief

medical officer of perioperative services at University of Colorado Health. Weitzel has earned numerous teaching awards and has an extensive publishing background, serving as editor-in-chief of *Seminars in Cardiothoracic and Vascular Anesthesia* for more than a decade. Recently he managed clinical operations across more than 90 locations, oversaw the launch of a new hospital tower, and recruited more than 30 anesthesia providers in three years.

Alzheimer's Disease Research Center celebrates leadership changes

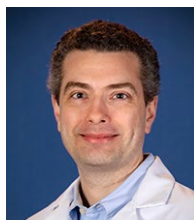
The UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC) announced two leadership changes that bolster the center's next phase of research and public education impact.

Charles DeCarli, M.D., long-standing leader of the ADRC, welcomed **Rachel Whitmer, Ph.D.**, to serve as co-director with him.



Whitmer served as the associate director of the ADRC beginning in 2019, and in that role expanded the breadth of ADRC research. Whitmer's expertise complements the ADRC's aims, including DeCarli's research focus on the impact of vascular, neurodegenerative, and genetic influences on cognition among diverse populations.

DeCarli joined the center in 2000 as associate director and assumed the directorship in 2004, guiding the center to its current stature as a national leader in Alzheimer's and dementia research and community education.



A second addition to the center's leadership is **Thomas Wingo, M.D., Ph.D.**, named faculty and associate director. As a cognitive neurologist and geneticist, Wingo studies shared mechanisms across major psychiatric and neurodegenerative diseases, including how people change cognitively over time. Eventually,

Wingo will take over behavioral neurology direction of the ADRC.

Over the next two years, DeCarli, Whitmer and Wingo will collaborate with other ADRC leaders and staff to ensure the continued success of the center as it moves into a new phase of scientific discovery, medical innovation and community care.

Leadership transition for Center for Precision Medicine and Data Science



Colleen Clancy, Ph.D., associate dean of faculty development and professor of Physiology and Membrane Biology and Pharmacology, has been appointed director of the Center for Precision Medicine and Data Science. Fred Meyers, M.D., M.A.C.P., distinguished professor emeritus of Internal Medicine,

Hematology and Oncology, previously served as the center's director, and recently served as co-director with Clancy to ensure a smooth transition. Meyers will continue as the center's director of educational programs, and as associate director of Cancer Research, Training and Education Coordination (CRTEC) at the UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center and director of the School of Medicine's Academic Research Careers for Medical Doctors (ARC-MD) Program.

Lubarsky among medical center CEOs to know

David Lubarsky, M.D., M.B.A., F.A.S.A.,

CEO of UC Davis Health, has been

recognized by *Becker's Hospital Review*

as among "96 academic medical center

CEOs to know" in the country. Since arriving in 2018, Lubarsky has increased the health system's

revenues, tasked his teams with launching digital and AI platforms to deliver more efficient and

innovative care to patients, and established key regional partnerships aimed at expanding care to

patients throughout Northern California.

Earlier this year, *Becker's* recognized Lubarsky as among "60 health system CEO influencers" who are shaping the future of health care. In 2023, he was selected as one of *Becker's* "101 academic medical center CEOs to know." In 2022, he was chosen by *Modern Healthcare* as one of health care's "Top 100 Most Influential People." In 2021, the *Sacramento Business Journal* named him as a "Most Admired CEO," and *Becker's Hospital Review* honored him as one of America's "100 Academic Medical Center CEOs to know" in 2023. Also, *C-Suite Spotlights* selected Lubarsky as one of the "Top 25 CEOs of the Year" and Press Ganey named him "CEO of the Year," both in 2023.



Earlier this year, *Becker's* also recognized Lubarsky as among "60 health system CEO influencers" shaping the future of health care



Ton receives top national recognition for DEI work

Hendry Ton, M.D., M.S., associate vice chancellor for health equity, diversity and inclusion, is among the top 2024 leaders recognized by *Becker's Hospital Review* for efforts to create inclusive health care environments.

Ton served as director of education at the UC Davis Center for Reducing Health Disparities, where he authored a training program for health care leaders on making culturally and linguistically appropriate system changes at academic, county, and state health organizations. He is also founding medical director of the Transcultural Wellness Center of Asian Pacific Community Counseling. He has presented nationally on cultural competence, education, and system change, and regularly receives teaching, leadership, and community awards for his work with care professionals and underserved communities.

Morrison president of Society for Neuroscience

UC Davis Health neurology professor **John Morrison, Ph.D.**, began term this fall as president-elect of the Society for Neuroscience. Morrison is the director of the California National Primate Research Center at UC Davis and a distinguished professor in the Department of Neurology. With nearly 35,000 members in more than 95 countries, the society strives to advance neuroscience, support the neuroscience community, advocate for the field, and educate the public. Morrison is taking on a three-year commitment: one year as president-elect, one year as president, and one year as past president. He is the second UC Davis faculty member to be elected president of the society; it's uncommon for a university to be represented twice.

Digital Health Most Wired, Provider of the Year awards

For the 13th year in a row, UC Davis Health has received the Digital Health Most Wired recognition from the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME). The Medical Center earned a certified Level 9 out of 10 for acute and ambulatory care.

The Digital Health Most Wired Survey (DHMW) is an international benchmarking and recognition program that serves as a comprehensive “digital health check-up” for health care organizations worldwide. It assesses how effectively health care organizations apply technologies to their clinical and business programs

to improve health and care within their communities.

David Lubarsky, M.D., M.B.A.,F.A.S.A., CEO of UC Davis Health and vice chancellor for human health sciences, and UC Davis Health also received the inaugural Provider of the Year Award at the HLTH Digital Health Awards for 2024 for how the health system is implementing innovative, digital capabilities. The Digital Health Hub Awards celebrate the achievements of innovative health tech companies that are transforming health care through the use of groundbreaking technology.



Pediatrician elected to international academy



Ulfat Shaikh, M.D., M.P.H., M.S., professor of pediatrics and medical director of health care quality at the UC Davis School of Medicine, has been elected to the International Academy of Quality and Safety (IAQS). IAQS recognizes those who have made significant contributions to the field of quality and safety in health care and excellence of leadership within research, academia or service delivery. Shaikh’s expertise lies in measuring performance in health care and supporting clinicians in designing, implementing and evaluating quality improvement initiatives.

Meyers is City Year Sacramento Chair



Fred Meyers, M.D., distinguished professor emeritus of Internal Medicine, Hematology-Oncology at UC Davis School of Medicine, began his term as Board Chair for City Year Sacramento (CYSac), a non-profit that provides service opportunities for young adults in the Oak Park and South Sacramento schools. Meyers has extended development opportunities from high school students to early-career faculty through the UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center. He also founded a program focused on cultivating diverse, community-focused physician-scientists.

NURSING AND MED SCHOOLS AWARDED FOR DIVERSITY EDUCATION FOR THIRD TIME

The Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis and UC Davis School of Medicine are among the nation’s top institutions in higher education for their commitment to diversity and inclusion. Receiving the 2024 Health Professions Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award marks the third time each school has earned the honor. The award, given by *Insight Into Diversity* magazine, is the only one of its kind in the nation. It honors colleges, universities, or health profession schools for their outstanding commitment to making diversity and inclusion a top priority across their campuses. The UC Davis schools are featured, along with 69 other recipients, in the November/December issue of the magazine.



UC Davis Medical Center named one of nation's top hospitals

UC Davis Medical Center was recognized as one of the nation's top hospitals by the 2023 edition of *Becker's Hospital Review's* "Great hospitals in America" list. This year, UC Davis is one of 91 hospitals nationwide, one of 12 hospitals in California and the only hospital north of San Francisco to receive recognition on the list.



Medical center one of 'America's Best Maternity Hospitals'



UC Davis Medical Center has been named one of "America's Best Maternity Hospitals 2024" by *Newsweek* magazine and the global market research and consumer data firm Statista. The distinction recognizes 404 hospitals that provide exceptional care to mothers, newborns and their families. It is the fifth consecutive year UC Davis Medical Center has been included on this list.

Children's Hospital listed among America's best

UC Davis Children's Hospital has been named one of America's Best Children's Hospitals 2024 by *Newsweek* magazine and Statista. The hospital was ranked in three pediatric specialties: neonatology, neurology and cardiology. UC Davis Children's Hospital is the only hospital in Sacramento to be recognized. The rankings honored 175 leading hospitals in various pediatric specialties.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT'S PRESTIGIOUS LANTERN AWARD



The Department of Emergency Medicine at UC Davis Health has been honored by the Emergency Nurses Association with the 2024 Lantern Award. Emergency departments that receive the Lantern Award demonstrate exceptional and innovative leadership, practice, education, advocacy and research performance. The award also recognizes an emergency department's accomplishments in incorporating evidence-based practice and innovation into emergency care. UC Davis Medical Center is the only emergency department in Sacramento and just one of two hospitals in Northern California to receive the recognition this year. This is UC Davis Health's second Lantern Award.



No. 1 health system in California, and among ‘America’s Best-In-State Employers’

Forbes has recognized UC Davis Health as one of “America’s Best-In-State Employers” for 2024 with a No. 1 ranking in California’s health care services category. Across all types of industries and organizations in California, UC Davis Health was ranked No. 20 by *Forbes*. Overall, 1,294 organizations made the national list. According to the publication, the most recent *Forbes* list was based on an independent survey of over 160,000 employees working for companies employing at least 500 people within the U.S. The survey was open to companies from all industry sectors, and around 4.4 million employer evaluations were analyzed.

UC Davis Health a ‘Best Employer for Women’

UC Davis Health has ranked No. 29 among all 600 listed organizations on *Forbes’* list of Best Employers for Women – a testament to the efficacy of several multi-pronged, ongoing efforts to strengthen inclusivity across the community. Some of these efforts include the UC Women’s Initiative for Professional Development, UC Womxn in Tech and the Status of Women at Davis Administrative Committee. UC Davis Health has also created new diversity hiring resources, career advancement programs and family care services such as a lactation support program.

CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL AGAIN NAMED LEVEL 1 CHILDREN’S SURGERY CENTER



UC Davis Children’s Hospital has been re-verified as a Level 1 Children’s Surgery Center by the American College of Surgeons (ACS). The designation, the highest of three, comes from the ACS Children’s Surgery Verification Quality Improvement Program, and focuses on

the nation’s first and only multi-specialty standards of surgical care for pediatric patients. UC Davis Children’s Hospital was the first hospital on the West Coast to earn this distinction nearly a decade ago. A Level 1 Children’s Surgery Center has specialty trained children’s surgeons in every discipline; offers pediatric anesthesiologists round-the-clock; and provides dedicated operating rooms for children available 24 hours a day.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR SURGICAL ONCOLOGY CARE

The UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center has been designated an American College of Surgeons (ACS) Surgical Quality Partner. The award is given to cancer programs that excel in quality of care, preventing complications, saving lives and reducing costs. ACS quality improvement programs are grounded in more than a century of experience and are an important measure of a hospital’s surgical quality. The designation follows the news that UC Davis Medical Center and the cancer center earned accreditation once again from the Commission on Cancer, a quality evaluation program of the ACS.



AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION AWARDS FOR HIGH-QUALITY HEART, STROKE CARE

UC Davis Medical Center has received multiple awards from the American Heart Association for its dedication to life-saving care and best practices for treating heart disease and stroke. The medical center received these achievement awards as part of the Get With The Guidelines program:

- Heart Failure Gold Plus Award – Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll
- Coronary Artery Disease STEMI Receiving Gold Plus – Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll
- Stroke Gold Plus – Stroke Elite Plus Honor Roll, Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll and Stroke Advanced Therapy Honor Roll
- Coronary Artery Disease NSTEMI – Bronze

The awards are part of the Get With The Guidelines program run by the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association. The program helps ensure patient care is aligned with the latest evidence- and research-based guidelines, leading to better patient recovery, reduced readmissions, reduced time to receive treatment, and more healthy days at home.



Chief of pediatric cardiology receives lifetime achievement award

Frank Ing, M.D., F.A.C.C., M.S.C.A.I., chief of pediatric cardiology at UC Davis Children's Hospital, has received national recognition from the Society for Cardiovascular Angio-graphy and Interventions (SCAI). Ing was

honored with the organization's Helping Little Hearts Lifetime Service Award. The award recognizes the work of interventional cardiologists specializing in the treatment of pediatric congenital heart disease. These specialists, SCAI stated, work tirelessly to develop less invasive solutions and optimize outcomes for their young patients. Ing is also co-director of the UC Davis Pediatric Heart Center and professor of pediatrics at the UC Davis School of Medicine.

Among top Black health care leaders

Becker's Hospital Review recently selected **David Tom Cooke, M.D., F.A.C.S.**, the UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center's new physician-in-chief, as among 231 Black health care leaders to know in 2024. Cooke was recognized by *Becker's* in their Clinical Leadership/Diversity and Health Equity subcategory. Cooke is also founding chief of the general thoracic surgery division at UC Davis Health, and the associate director of the cancer center's Office of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility.



Champion of Health Equity honor

Julie Dang, Ph.D., M.P.H., executive director of the UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center's Office of Community Outreach and Engagement, has been named by *Cancer Health Magazine* as one of the top 25 people nationally who is breaking down barriers to cancer health equity. The magazine's fourth annual Cancer Health 25: Champions of Health Equity award recognizes Americans who are dedicated to defining and responding to health disparities. Dang has also been awarded a National Cancer Institute Mentor Research Scientist Development Award to Promote Diversity, and is using the grant to increase uptake of the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine.



Resident elected to AMA council

Surgical resident **Rachel Ekaireb, M.D.**, was elected to the American Medical Association Council on Science and Public Health. Ekaireb has been active in organized medicine at the state and national levels since medical school, and is currently representing the California Medical Association Resident and Fellow Section on the CMA Board of Trustees. She previously served on the CMA Council on Science and Public Health.

Society for Academic Emergency Medicine research award



James F. Holmes, M.D., M.P.H., executive vice chair and interim chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine, received the Excellence in Research Award for his contributions to

the field from the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine (SAEM). The award honors a SAEM member who has made outstanding contributions to emergency medicine through the creation and sharing of new knowledge. The organization is dedicated to improving the care of acutely ill and injured patients by improving research and education.

3 HONORED FOR EXCELLENCE IN PEDIATRIC CARE

Three UC Davis Health faculty are being recognized for their excellence in pediatric care and education by the Western Society for Pediatric Research (WSPR) and the Western Section of the American Federation for Medical Research. They will honor the faculty at the Western Medical Research Conference next year.



Daniah Belefard, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Physiology and Membrane Biology and UC Davis MIND Institute faculty member, receives the WSPR's 2025 Abbott Nutrition Young Investigator Award.



Satyan Lakshminrusimha, M.D., M.B.B.S., chair of the Department of Pediatrics and physician-in-chief of UC Davis Children's Hospital, receives the 2025 WSPR Joseph W. St. Geme Jr. Education Award.



Geoanna Bautista, M.D., assistant professor in the Department of Pediatrics, receives the 2025 Western Section of the American Federation for Medical Research Young Investigator Award.

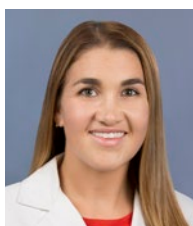
Distinguished lectureship for cardiovascular researcher



The American Physiological Society named **Manuel Navedo, Ph.D., F.A.H.A.**, the 2025 recipient of the Robert M. Berne Distinguished Lectureship, presented annually by the society's Cardiovascular Section to an established research leader. Navedo is a professor in the Department

of Pharmacology and an international thought leader with groundbreaking research on novel channel-signaling pathways in the vasculature. For example, he found a network of proteins activated during diabetic hyperglycemia that may contribute to blood vessel dysfunction in people with diabetes.

NATIONAL AWARD FOR ADVANCING DEI EFFORTS



The Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine (AAIM) recently honored Associate Clinical Professor of Internal Medicine **Stephany Sanchez, M.D.**, with its 2025 AAIM Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award, which recognizes an individual or team that promotes

and champions diversity, equity, and inclusion in their department of medicine. Sanchez is an associate program director for the Internal Medicine Residency Program at UC Davis Health, and practices primary care at the Sacramento County Health Center.

NRC HEALTH BEST IN CLASS AWARD

NRC Health has once again awarded UC Davis Health the Consumer Loyalty Best in Class Award, which recognizes organizations for the commitment and initiative necessary to cultivate and maintain long-lasting loyalty among patients and communities. Each year, NRC Health ranks 100 health care facilities based on their consumer loyalty score. Only the top facilities receive the highest honor of Best in Class, and UC Davis Health was among only 11 organizations nationwide to receive the top honor. NRC Health is a market research organization that helps health care systems learn data-driven insights to improve outcomes.



Notable quotes

“She’s like my saving angel. When I was going through all of it, she was the first person I called, and she’s been staying with me throughout the whole thing.”

American Olympic gymnast Sunisa “Sunni” Lee, speaking about USA Gymnastics team doctor and UC Davis Health sports medicine physician **Marcia Faustin, M.D.**, in a July *Washington Post* profile “Rebuilding from horror, U.S. team doctors sought to earn gymnasts’ trust.” Lee’s career was almost sidelined by complications from a kidney issue, which Faustin and fellow team physician Ellen Casey helped to unearth.

“She’s a warrior. What she’s come out of, and what she’s doing just tells us we should never box humans in. We should allow them to flourish and hold that hope for them.”

Faustin, speaking about Lee, in a July *New York Times* profile “Gold medalist Suni Lee is back at the Olympics. A team doctor helped make it so.”

Even when symptoms arise, “I think many younger folks ignore them, thinking they cannot get cancer because they’re young.”

Rashmi Verma, M.D., an oncologist who specializes in gastrointestinal cancers at the UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center, in a *Washington Post* story “Gen X and millennials at higher cancer risk than older generations.”

“It’s the job of that majority to make their views known, over and over again, and as publicly as possible. A climate of intolerance for violence reduces the chance that violence will occur. The question before us as a nation is, ‘Will violence become part of American politics?’ Each of us as an individual needs to answer that question, ‘Not if I can help it.’”

Garen Wintemute, M.D., M.P.H., director of the UC Davis Violence Prevention Research Program, in a July *New York Times* article on American political division and violence. Most Americans still reject political violence, he noted.

The website’s goal is to “give people tools to better manage often-distressing situations.”

Helen Kales, M.D., geriatric psychiatrist and chair of UC Davis Health’s Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, in a May *Washington Post* story “When dementia becomes too much to handle, this tool offers guidance.” Kales is one of the creators of DICE, a comprehensive approach to managing neuropsychiatric symptoms of dementia based on research and clinical practice.

“The real growth is [being driven by] the decreasing need for hospital beds in the future. Many services, orthopedics being a prime example, already have moved from primarily an inpatient to an outpatient environment. We’re going to see more of that with more services, as procedures become less invasive and slide down to ambulatory surgery centers with overnight stay capacity, and then out of surgery centers to office buildings.”

UC Davis Health CEO **David Lubarsky, M.D., M.B.A., F.A.S.A.**, in a June *Modern Healthcare* story “Healthcare construction continues shift from inpatient care.”

A summary of recent findings
in clinical, translational and
basic-science research at UC Davis

Body of Knowledge



Abdominal aortic aneurysms can be deadly, but are often underdiagnosed and, or, undertreated in women. To help address this disparity, researchers at UC Davis

Health have harnessed powerful artificial intelligence (AI) software to show how these aneurysms can grow faster in women and may require more rigorous surveillance. The study was published in the *Journal of Vascular Surgery*. ucdavis.health/abdominal-aneurysms



A retrospective study by UC Davis Health researchers assessed effects of naloxone administration by paramedics to patients with out-of-hospital cardiac arrest.

Published in *JAMA Network Open*, it concluded there was an association between naloxone administration and both return of spontaneous circulation and survival to hospital discharge. The antagonist was also associated with improved clinical outcomes in both drug-related and non-drug related cardiac arrests.

ucdavis.health/Naloxone-cardiac-arrest



A team of UC Davis Health researchers has discovered a novel bioelectrical mechanism that harmful pathogens such as *Salmonella*

use to find vulnerable entry points in the gut, allowing them to invade and infect the body. Authors say their study, published in *Nature Microbiology*, might have the potential to explain complex chronic diseases such as inflammatory bowel disease, as well as potential implications for additional bacterial infections.

ucdavis.health/4dQv8eO

A major new study led by the UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center has found that women who received a false-positive mammogram result that required additional imaging or biopsy were less likely to return for that follow-up screening. Asian and Hispanic/Latinx women were the least likely to return for future screening mammograms after a false positive result, which may contribute to existing health disparities. *The Annals of Internal Medicine* paper analyzed data on more than 3.5 million screening mammograms nationwide.

ucdavis.health/3ZdpOhk



Autistic youth who were born in underserved neighborhoods are more likely to have greater attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) symptoms than those born in communities with more resources, according to a UC Davis MIND Institute-led study published in the journal *JCPP Advances*. The study is the first time researchers have investigated how neighborhood factors are associated with ADHD in autistic and non-autistic children, and has the potential to inform public policy changes to improve health equity. ucdavis.health/3WWakNe



Siblings of autistic children have a 20% chance of being autistic themselves — about seven times higher than the rate in infants with no autistic siblings — according to a paper by UC Davis MIND Institute researchers and the Baby Siblings Research Consortium. Published in *Pediatrics*, the new study is based on a large, diverse group of families at research sites across the United States, Canada, and United Kingdom, and confirms the same group's 2011 findings about likelihood of autism in siblings. ucdavis.health/3W5OZiD

Groundbreaking for 14-story hospital tower and 5-story pavilion

In July UC Davis Health hosted a groundbreaking for the medical center's California Tower, an expansion project that includes a 14-story hospital tower and 5-story pavilion designed to deliver superior care and adapt to meet evolving community needs.

"The addition of the California Tower to UC Davis Medical Center is a testament to our innovative forward thinking across our health system and main campus," said UC Davis Chancellor **Gary S. May**. "This project will position our researchers, students, faculty and staff to meet and adapt to regional health care needs for the next 50 years."



The new tower will add nearly one million square feet of space to the existing medical center, with operating rooms, an imaging center, facilities for pharmacy and burn care, and about 334 private rooms for patients.

More than 250 of the rooms are being designed for greater flexibility in the event of a patient surge such as a pandemic, wildfire

or other disaster. These will easily convert into intensive-care-unit rooms with air isolation to treat patients of any level of hospitalization.

"With the California Tower, we are building a new paradigm of patient care, centered around how a health system can deliver tomorrow's health care today," said **David Lubarsky, M.D., M.B.A., F.A.S.A.**, CEO of UC Davis Health. "We are building into this new tower some of the lessons we learned from the recent pandemic."

The \$3.74 billion tower will replace parts of the hospital that must close due to state seismic regulations; hospitals across California are upgrading facilities or constructing new buildings that can withstand major earthquakes. The current, 646-bed hospital — the largest in the Sacramento area — will have a total of 675 to 700 inpatient beds when the project is complete in 2030.

Enloe is newest Cancer Care Network affiliate

As the newest affiliate of the UC Davis Health Cancer Care Network, Enloe Health can now open innovative clinical trials with the full support of UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center. The affiliation brings the latest discoveries in cancer care to Enloe Regional Cancer Center without its patients leaving their local health system. In May, Enloe Health held a groundbreaking for its new Gonzales Comprehensive Cancer Center, a 97,000-square-foot facility expected to open in 2026 and replace the Enloe Health Regional Cancer Center. The new center will serve Northern California between Colusa County and the Oregon border with expanded care space, advanced treatment options, enhanced equipment, integrated supportive therapies and more.

Creating a model temporary surge facility

To help hospitals better prepare for patient surges, UC Davis Health in collaboration with the Department of Defense has created a model for a temporary structure to respond to a future public health emergency. The project, formally called Improving Modular Patient Admission Capacity Through Scalable Solutions or IMPACTS, is a pilot in partnership with the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) and Defense Health Agency, funded through a DOD grant. The team designed and created a 56-bed modular surge facility, or MSF, and deployed a sample at UC Davis Medical Center. Further testing will take place in a military setting at Travis Air Force Base, and the team will create a manual and training curriculum.



Expanded care for complex kidney stones

UC Davis Health has expanded its capacity to treat complex kidney stone cases with the addition of **Kaitlan Cobb M.D.**, a skilled endourologist with advanced training in kidney stone disease using endoscopic techniques. Cobb joins **Noah Canvasser, M.D.**, an endourologist who has been with UC Davis Health since 2017. Canvasser is an associate professor and Cobb is an assistant professor with the UC Davis Health

Department of Urologic Surgery. More than half a million people go to emergency departments each year because of painful kidney stones, and UC Davis Health is the only multi-disciplinary kidney stone center in the Sacramento region. Now with two full-time endourologists, UC Davis Health is well equipped to provide comprehensive care to the large number of kidney stone patients seen throughout Northern California.

Robotic-assisted surgery now offered at UC Davis Children's Hospital

A robotic-assisted surgery program is now available at the UC Davis Children's Surgery Center. The program is directed by pediatric general surgeon **Payam Saadai, M.D.**, who worked for the past year with the adult robotic surgery team to expand this minimally invasive approach to pediatric patients in the Sacramento region.

Saadai, who was previously trained in robotic-assisted surgery during a pediatric surgery fellowship, worked alongside bariatric surgery expert **Shushmita Ahmed, M.D., F.A.C.S., D.A.B.O.M.** — experienced in performing robotic surgeries at UC Davis — to perform the first pediatric robotic-assisted procedure in the Department of Surgery.

Saadai said robotic surgery offers the same benefits of a minimally invasive approach — including reduced pain and discomfort, faster recovery, minimal scarring and shorter hospital stays — but also confers a degree of visualization and depth that traditional laparoscopy lacks, as well as improved instrument articulation. The ideal application is in areas where it has traditionally been difficult to reach with conventional open surgery or even laparoscopy, he said, such as the deep pelvis.

To read a Q&A with Saadai, visit ucdavis.health/3W30pWe



New NICU unit cares for the smallest of premies

UC Davis Children's Hospital is proud to announce the birth of its new small baby unit. Located within the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), the small baby unit is specifically equipped for babies who are born less than 27 weeks gestation or weigh less than 2.2 pounds. The team has taken care of infants born as young as 22 weeks. The small baby unit provides care for up to six babies at one time, and includes dedicated equipment such as special breathing machines and beds to create a stable thermal microenvironment. National survival rates of infants born at 22 weeks are around 20-25%; the survival rate at UC Davis is double the national average. The unit is supported through a planned gift from local residents Victor and Phela Vesci through the Vesci Family Trust.



Pediatric neurological surgery team expands



UC Davis Children's Hospital is now home to the region's first comprehensive neurosurgical care program. The Pediatric Neurological Surgery program has expanded to provide 24/7 neurosurgical care by three fellowship-trained specialist physicians and four specialized advance practice providers (APPs). By combining the subspecialty expertise of all three surgeons on the team, the hospital can offer treatment for the full breadth of pediatric neurosurgical disorders.

The surgical team includes **Marike Zwienenberg, M.D., Julia Sharma, M.D., F.R.C.S.C., F.A.A.N.S.**, and **Cameron Sadegh, M.D., Ph.D.** The APPs, **Teresa Gonzalez, N.P., Tram James, N.P., Max Caudle, P.A.,** and **Peggy Jung, N.P.**, are nurse practitioners and physician assistants specially trained in pediatric neuro-surgery. The support of the APP team increases access to services and helps with the transition from inpatient to outpatient care.

Same-day, in-home urgent care now available to cancer patients

People being treated at UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center are the latest UC Davis Health patients to benefit from urgent care delivered to their home. The program aims to increase access to care and decrease emergency department visits. UC Davis Health has partnered with DispatchHealth, the nation's first comprehensive in-home medical care provider, to roll out the new program. DispatchHealth assigned two vehicles within a 25-mile radius of UC Davis Medical Center. Care will be furnished by a nurse practitioner or physician assistant, and a trained medical technician. A board-certified emergency department physician is also available virtually, as needed. UC Davis Health patients can request access to the new at-home urgent care by contacting their oncologist, primary care provider, advice nurse or UC Davis Health's Express Care.



NEW ADOLESCENT MEDICINE PROGRAM EXPANSION

UC Davis Health has expanded its adolescent medicine program to include two new providers for a total of three. The providers, who are medicine-certified adolescent pediatricians, have the ability to provide in-person care for adolescents and young adult patients in the local community including Folsom, Roseville, Rocklin, El Dorado Hills, Granite Bay, Davis, Elk Grove and Rancho Cordova. Service types offered through the program focus on holistic treatment of developmental-based specialties such as reproductive care, substance abuse, high-risk behavior, eating disorders and all outpatient services. Patients who see the providers in this program retain the relationship with their primary care provider.

NEW PHARMACY SHARED SERVICE CENTER OPENS

UC Davis Health recently opened a new state-of-the-art Pharmacy Shared Services Center (PSSC), expanding capabilities and capacity. It offers home delivery services for chronic and specialty medications and a dedicated space to support patients needing infusion care. The URAC-accredited UC Davis Specialty Pharmacy also provides patient education and clinical management of specialty therapies by highly trained clinical pharmacists, with home delivery available and 24/7 available pharmacist phone support. Service areas include cardiology, dermatology, endocrinology, gastroenterology, hepatology, infectious diseases, neurology, oncology, pulmonology, rheumatology and transplant. The PSSC — a leading-edge facility spanning 80,000 square feet — will house the supply chain warehouse, the specialty pharmacy, home delivery pharmacy, home infusion services, and offices.

Helping lung disease patients cope with wildfire smoke



A multidisciplinary UC Davis Health team has developed a real-time action plan to help patients with lung disease cope with wildfire smoke, and is calling on health systems to create wildfire preparedness action plans to support patients with preexisting respiratory diseases. Their article, published in the *Journal of the COPD Foundation*, identifies the needs of high-risk populations when affected by wildfire smoke, which has been shown to exacerbate diseases of the lungs, heart, brain and nervous system, skin and other major organs.

UC Davis Health's targeted wildfire preparedness action plan uses a population health approach, with steps such as identifying at-risk patients, providing air quality health education, personalizing outreach, distributing "go-bags" of supplies, and partnering with community organizations.

New procedure, clinic to treat resistant hypertension

UC Davis Health cardiologists recently performed the institution's first renal denervation procedure to treat hypertension, a significant advancement in cardiovascular care for the region. Outside of clinical trials, UC Davis Medical Center is the first hospital in Northern California to utilize the minimally invasive procedure, performed here by associate professor of cardiology **Surabhi Atreja, M.D., F.A.C.C., R.P.V.I.**

Recently approved by the FDA, the procedure uses a catheter to deliver ultrasound energy to over-active nerves in the renal arteries that contribute to elevated blood pressure. Clinical trials have demonstrated significant and sustained blood pressure reductions in patients who undergo it.

UC Davis Health has also introduced a specialized resistant hypertension clinic for patients with uncontrolled blood pressure. Patients are offered comprehensive care, including remote blood pressure monitoring, investigations of the cause of their hypertension, and learn whether they are candidates for these new innovative procedures. Among people with high blood pressure, twenty percent have resistant hypertension.



Transplant Center surpasses first-year liver transplant goal, launches live donor program

In September, the UC Davis Transplant Center celebrated the one-year anniversary of its first liver transplant in 2023. During this first year the center performed 41 liver transplants, surpassing its initial year goal of 12-14. The team had a perfect 100% patient survival rate and a graft survival rate of 100% — well above the national average of 83% according to the United Network of Organ Sharing (UNOS). Additional milestones included being certified as a liver transplant program by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), which means the program can accept potential liver transplant patients insured by Medicare or Medi-Cal.

UC Davis Health has also launched a live donor liver transplant program, said **Lea K. Matsuoka, M.D.**, section chief for liver transplantation and hepatobiliary surgery in the Division of Transplant Surgery. During this procedure, a portion of the liver from a healthy, living person

is removed and placed into someone whose liver is no longer working properly.

Lydia Aye, D.O., medical director of transplant hepatology; Sophoclis Alexopoulos, M.D., UC Davis Transplant Center medical director; and Lea K. Matsuoka, M.D., section chief for liver transplantation and hepatobiliary surgery.



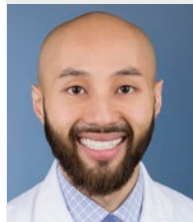
UC Davis Health is first in the region to deploy a new state-of-the-art mobile 3D CT imaging system to catch lung cancer earlier by pinpointing potentially cancerous growths for more precise biopsies.

New imaging technology to catch lung cancer earlier



Chinh Phan, D.O., Director of the Interventional Pulmonology Program, and UC Davis pulmonary doctors paired the Cios Spin, made by Siemens Healthineers, with a breakthrough robotic-assisted bronchoscopy system called the Ion, made by Intuitive. Cios Spin creates real-time 3D images, while the Ion allows doctors to precisely examine air passages. This real-time visualization means shorter procedures, improved accuracy, safer biopsies, and earlier detection.

After a year of using this system, Phan and his team are seeing more lung cancers diagnosed much earlier when they're more treatable; for the first time, he said the UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center is seeing more lung cancers diagnosed at stage 1 as compared to late stage.

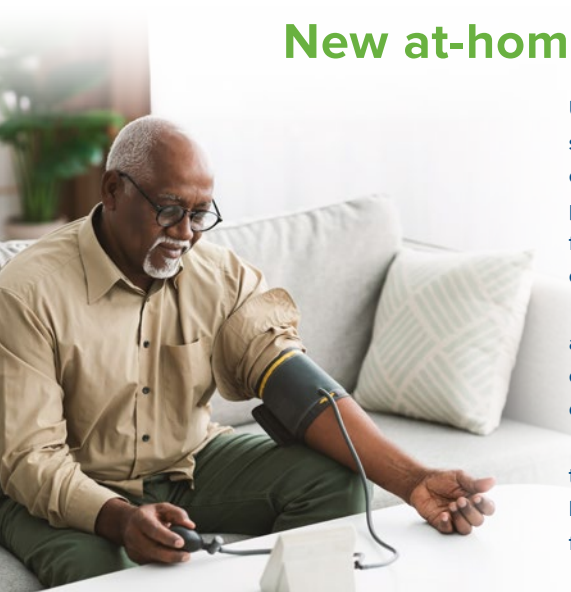


COLORECTAL SURGERY EARNS SURGICAL QUALITY PARTNER HONORS

The American College of Surgeons (ACS) and the National Accreditation Program for Rectal Cancer (NAPRC) designated the colorectal surgery program at UC Davis Health a Surgical Quality Partner. The award is given to programs that excel in quality of care, preventing complications, saving lives and reducing costs. UC Davis Health was one of the first institutions in the country to receive the designation, and remains the only university-based NAPRC accredited program in Northern California as of press time, according to program leaders.



New at-home monitoring program for hypertension



UC Davis Health has launched a new program that monitors patients with high blood pressure at home. To support this initiative, the health system is working with Best Buy Health’s care-at-home platform, Current Health. Patients will use connected devices including blood pressure cuffs and scales. Readings from the devices will be sent to the Current Health platform and transferred to the patient’s UC Davis Health electronic medical chart, where they can be accessed by the UC Davis Health Connected Care Center in real time.

The care center team includes a physician, pharmacist, registered nurse and medical assistant who work with patients to keep their blood pressure within a healthy range. The care center team will also be able to remotely monitor patient vital signs, symptoms, and other health indicators.

In coming months, UC Davis Health and Best Buy Health plan to expand the collaboration to support patients with additional chronic diseases. In the past year, the medical center has also created remote patient monitoring programs for patients suffering from heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and post-angioplasty care.

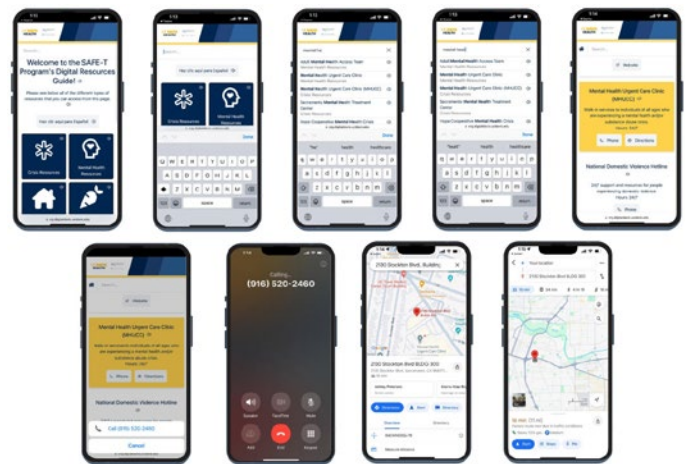
Digital program to support people after incarceration

People reentering communities after incarceration face multiple challenges, including homelessness, substance use disorders and mental health problems. These risk factors increase the likelihood of poor outcomes such as overdose, premature mortality and a high rate of emergency department visits. The UC Davis Health Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and UC Davis Health’s Digital CoLab have partnered to create Digital SAFE-T, a digital support program for patients with mental health and substance use disorders after their release from jail.

The new program is an extension of the SAFE-T (Sub-Acute Facilitated Engagement and Transitions) Program, which connects participants with eligible benefits and services. Digital SAFE-T provides technological

tools to individuals enrolled in SAFE-T such as a digitally accessible “street sheet” of resources and automated texts from WellSpace Health and Sacramento County with important reminders and check-ins. It also allows for easy communication with case workers from WellSpace Health, who coordinate the individuals’ care.

Enrolled participants access the Digital SAFE-T Program on free smartphones provided by UC Davis Health through a collaboration with Verizon Business to address digital health equity and inclusion. In addition to smartphones, the program also provides tablets and hot spots to help patients access telehealth and social services.



Digital SAFE-T provides tech tools such as a digitally accessible ‘street sheet’ of resources

Funding for the new program was made possible through the efforts of Congresswoman Doris Matsui, who helped include Digital SAFE-T in the fiscal year 2023 Omnibus Appropriations bill, which provided a \$1.5 million congressional grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Telehealth program aims to reduce health care disparities for Black patients giving birth



Ijeoma Uche



Jennifer Rosenthal

A new telehealth program at UC Davis Health aims to reduce health disparities for Black patients giving birth, and has received a Telehealth Equity Catalyst Award from the Association of American Medical Colleges for \$27,000. The program will expand the use of video visits for prenatal and postnatal care for Black patients over a 12-month period. Throughout that time, researchers will track completed and failed video visits. The project is co-lead by **Ijeoma Uche, M.P.H.**, and **Jennifer Rosenthal, M.D., M.A.S.** Uche is an ARC-MD honors pathway student at UC Davis and co-founder of Birth By Us, an app for Black people focused on pregnancy and postpartum care. Rosenthal is the Center for Health and Technology faculty director of digital health equity and process improvement, associate professor of pediatrics and ARC-MD associate director. This is the third year in a row that UC Davis Health has received the Telehealth Equity Catalyst Award, which aims to recognize and highlight efforts to understand and address barriers to care associated with telehealth and health technology.



Sacramento's first comprehensive trauma recovery center opens

UC Davis Health opened the first comprehensive trauma recovery center in Sacramento. The UC Davis CAARE (Child and Adolescent Abuse Resource and Evaluation) Diagnostic and Treatment Center established the new center, thanks to a nearly \$1.2 million grant from the California Victim Compensation Board. The CAARE Center will collaborate with the UC Davis Health Wraparound Program, a hospital-based violence intervention program, and the UC Davis Violence Prevention Research Program to provide trauma recovery services for victims of crime from infants to those age 30 years old. The center will make trauma-informed, culturally responsive and evidenced-based mental health treatment available. It also fills the gap in services for underserved and vulnerable young adults who experience violent crime. These victims will receive timely care as well as longer-term mental health services when needed.



A road map to diversify the health care workforce

UC Davis Health, recognized by *Forbes* as a “Best Employer in California,” has developed a road map for increasing workforce diversity across the industry. While California banned the consideration of race or ethnicity in hiring at public institutions in 1996, UC Davis Health has since come up with a holistic outreach and local recruitment plan that has proven effective. The approach received global attention through a case study published in *New England Journal of Medicine Catalyst's* January 2024 issue.



The case study provides a step-by-step guide for medical centers and institutions to diversify their workforces, and presents some of UC Davis Health's successful recruitment efforts as a community-anchored institution. An Anchor Institution Mission (AIM) for community health represents UC Davis Health's commitment to leverage its economic and human power to improve the local community's health and well-being, and UC Davis Health aims to employ 20% of its employees from AIM communities.

Achieving this requires mission-based, community-partnered hiring practices such as ongoing support for an inclusive work environment, programs to enhance sense of belonging, more career development and mentorship for entry-level employees, and more opportunities for staff to create and maintain meaningful connections with their local communities.



Casey Harrell weeps with joy at the results of his first attempt to speak using a new brain-computer interface (BCI) developed at UC Davis Health. Harrell's speech is otherwise severely impaired due to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS).

‘Something like this technology will help people back into life and society’

New brain-computer interface technology developed by UC Davis Health restores interpersonal communication with a transformative level of accuracy — allowing a man with ALS to ‘speak’ again.

A new brain-computer interface (BCI) developed at UC Davis Health translates brain signals into speech with up to 97% accuracy — the most accurate system of its kind.

The researchers implanted sensors in the brain of a man with severely impaired speech

due to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). The man was able to communicate his intended speech within minutes of activating the system.

A study about this work, “An Accurate and Rapidly Calibrating Speech Neuroprosthesis,” was published Aug. 14 in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease, affects the nerve cells that control movement throughout the body. The disease leads to a gradual loss of the ability to stand, walk and use one’s hands. It can also cause a person to lose control of the muscles used to speak, leading to a loss of understandable speech.

The new technology is being developed to restore communication for people who can’t speak due to paralysis or neurological conditions like ALS. It can interpret brain signals when the user tries to speak and turns them into text that is “spoken” aloud by the computer.

“Our BCI technology helped a man with paralysis to communicate with friends, family and caregivers,” said UC Davis neurosurgeon David Brandman, M.D., Ph.D. “Our paper demonstrates

the most accurate speech neuroprosthesis (device) ever reported.”

Brandman is the co-principal investigator and co-senior author of this study. He is an assistant professor in the UC Davis Department of Neurological Surgery and co-director of the UC Davis Neuroprosthetics Lab.

When someone tries to speak, the new BCI device transforms their brain activity into text on a computer screen. The computer can then read the text out loud.

To develop the system, the team enrolled Casey Harrell, a 45-year-old man with ALS, in the BrainGate clinical trial. At the time of his enrollment, Harrell had weakness in his arms and legs (tetraparesis). His speech was very hard to understand (dysarthria) and required others to help interpret for him.



The brain-computer interface (BCI) translates brain signals into speech with up to 97% accuracy — the most accurate system of its kind.



David Brandman, left, and Sergey Stavisky.

“The first time we tried the system, he cried with joy as the words he was trying to say correctly appeared on-screen. We all did.”

NEUROSCIENTIST SERGEY STAVISKY

before he had ALS. The voice was composed using software trained with existing audio samples of his pre-ALS voice.

At the first speech data training session, the system took 30 minutes to achieve 99.6% word accuracy with a 50-word vocabulary.

“The first time we tried the system, he cried with joy as the words he was trying to say correctly appeared on-screen. We all did,” Stavisky said.

In the second session, the size of the potential vocabulary increased to 125,000 words. With just an additional 1.4 hours of training data, the BCI achieved a 90.2% word accuracy with this greatly expanded vocabulary. After continued data collection, the BCI has maintained 97.5% accuracy.

The new BCI breaks the communication barrier

In July 2023, Brandman implanted the investigational BCI device. He placed four microelectrode arrays into the left precentral gyrus, a brain region responsible for coordinating speech. The arrays are designed to record the brain activity from 256 cortical electrodes.

“We’re really detecting their attempt to move their muscles and talk,” explained neuroscientist Sergey Stavisky, Ph.D. Stavisky is an assistant professor in the Department of Neurological Surgery, co-director of the UC Davis Neuroprosthetics Lab, and co-principal investigator of the study. “We are recording from the part of the brain that’s trying to send these commands to the muscles. And we are basically listening into that, and we’re translating those patterns of brain activity into a phoneme — like a syllable or the unit of speech — and then the words they’re trying to say.”

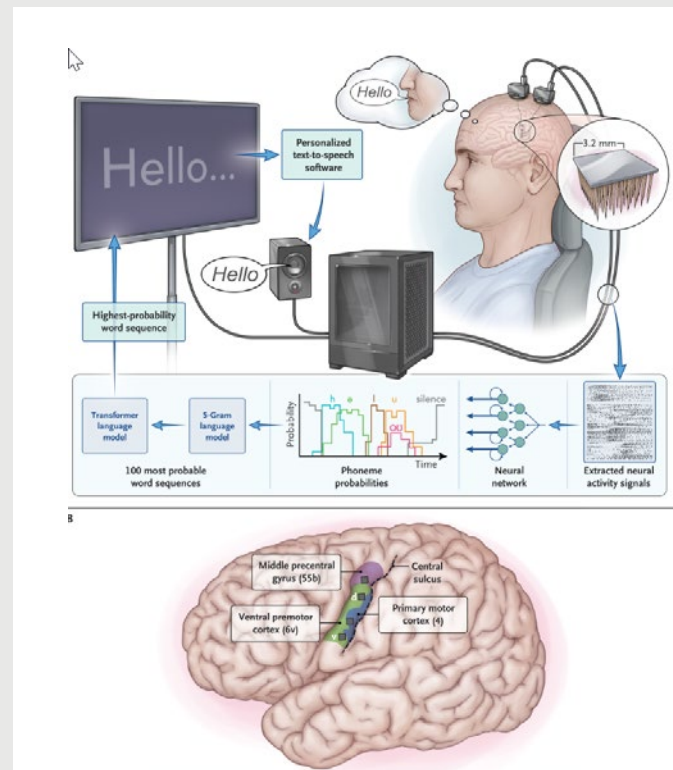
Despite recent advances in BCI technology, efforts to enable communication have been slow and prone to errors. This is because the machine-learning programs that interpreted brain signals required a large amount of time and data to perform.

“Previous speech BCI systems had frequent word errors. This made it difficult for the user to be understood consistently and was a barrier to communication,” Brandman explained. “Our objective was to develop a system that empowered someone to be understood whenever they wanted to speak.”

Faster training, better results

Harrell used the system in both prompted and spontaneous conversational settings. In both cases, speech decoding happened in real time, with continuous system updates to keep it working accurately.

The decoded words were shown on a screen. Amazingly, they were read aloud in a voice that sounded like Harrell’s



This graphic from the NEJM study (“An Accurate and Rapidly Calibrating Speech Neuroprosthesis”) shows the brain-to-text speech neuroprosthesis (panel A) and the approximate locations of microelectrodes in the participant’s brain. Read the study at ucdavis.health/readthestudy.

Card et al., An Accurate and Rapidly Calibrating Speech Neuroprosthesis, NEJM©2024. Reprinted with permission.

97% accuracy

“At this point, we can decode what Casey is trying to say correctly about 97% of the time, which is better than many commercially available smartphone applications that try to interpret a person’s voice,” Brandman said. “This technology is transformative because it provides hope for people who want to speak but can’t. I hope that technology like this speech BCI will help future patients speak with their family and friends.”

The study reports on 84 data collection sessions over 32 weeks. In total, Harrell used the speech BCI in self-paced conversations for over 248 hours to communicate in person and over video chat.

“Not being able to communicate is so frustrating and demoralizing. It is like you are trapped,” Harrell said.

“Something like this technology will help people back into life and society.”

“It has been immensely rewarding to see Casey regain his ability to speak with his family and friends through this technology,” said the study’s lead author, Nicholas Card, Ph.D. Card

“Not being able to communicate is so frustrating and demoralizing. It is like you are trapped.”

CASEY HARRELL, PATIENT WITH ALS AND A PARTICIPANT IN THE BRAINGATE2 BCI TRIAL

but to help us develop a system that will restore communication and mobility for other people with paralysis,” said co-author and BrainGate trial sponsor-investigator Leigh Hochberg, M.D., Ph.D., a neurologist and neuroscientist at Massachusetts General Hospital, Brown University and the VA Providence Healthcare System.

Brandman is the site-responsible principal investigator of the BrainGate2 clinical trial. As of mid-August, the trial was enrolling participants. To learn more about the study, visit braingate.org or contact braingate@ucdavis.edu. A complete list of coauthors and funders

is available in the article. Caution: Investigational device. Limited by Federal law to investigational use.

Postdoctoral scholar and study lead author Nicholas Card getting the BCI system ready with Harrell.



is a postdoctoral scholar in the UC Davis Department of Neurological Surgery.

“Casey and our other BrainGate participants are truly extraordinary. They deserve tremendous credit for joining these early clinical trials. They do this not because they’re hoping to gain any personal benefit,

In the media:

“Yet the results surpassed expectations, the researchers reported on Wednesday in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, setting a new bar for implanted speech decoders and illustrating the potential power of such devices for people with speech impairments.”

Aug. 14 *New York Times* story “A.L.S. Stole His Voice. A.I. Retrieved It.” ucdavis.health/mediaclip1

“The technology is still in the early stages of testing, but already it’s much faster than more traditional assisted devices — like the one Stephen Hawking famously used — that track muscle, facial or eye movements to slowly type out words.”

Aug. 14 *NBC News* story “New technology allows man with ALS to communicate using brain implant and AI voice” ucdavis.health/mediaclip2

“(My daughter) hadn’t had the ability to communicate very much with me for about two years. Now that is very different. I can help her mother to parent her. I can have a deeper relationship with her and tell her what I am thinking. I can simply tell her how much I love her.”

Patient Casey Harrell, speaking about communicating with his kindergarten-aged daughter, in a Aug. 14 *Scientific American* story “Brain-to-Speech Tech Good Enough for Everyday Use Debuts in a Man with ALS” ucdavis.health/mediaclip3

“I am about half of the speed of a normal person who’s talking, and that is good enough for now to keep up with the flow of conversation. And this is important because communication is the lifeblood of life.”

Harrell, speaking in the *New England Journal of Medicine* “Intention To Treat” podcast episode 36, “Restoring Lost Speech” ucdavis.health/mediaclip4

“I would love to get to the point where I can walk up to a patient and say, ‘I’m really sorry that you’ve been diagnosed with ALS. Your brain-computer interface surgery is scheduled for next week. We’ll get you communicating in no time.’ ”

Neurosurgeon David Brandman, in the *ALS Association* blog post “Advances in Brain-Computer Interface Technology Help One Man Find His Voice” ucdavis.health/mediaclip5

Learn more:

- braingate.org or email braingate@ucdavis.edu
- 5-minute video: ucdavis.health/fiveminutevideo
- Read the study: ucdavis.health/readthestudy

A new family medicine residency training site cares for underserved patients in West Sacramento

Partnership between UC Davis Health and CommuniCare+OLE benefits residents, patients and the FQHC pipeline

Lizbeth Guillen moved to California from Mexico at the age of 12. She learned English in middle school. Whenever she'd get sick, her family couldn't easily access a primary care doctor. For a while, she was undocumented.

Today, Guillen is a UC Davis Health family medicine resident physician. She cares for patients with a similar background to hers at the nonprofit CommuniCare+OLE's Vida Family Health Center in West Sacramento. About 60% of her patients are Spanish-speaking immigrants.

"I can relate to them because I was in their position, too," Guillen (M.D.) said in her clinic office. "To me, it's a privilege to work here and make a difference in people's lives, because I know how difficult it can be."

Guillen is one of four, first-year residents from the UC Davis Health Department of Family and Community Medicine assigned to work at CommuniCare+OLE. The nonprofit has clinics in Napa, Solano and Yolo counties, including Vida.

The Vida Family Health Center will eventually host a total of 12 residents at any given time through an arrangement in which UC Davis Health plays a major role: Every resident at Vida is from UC Davis, and their physician supervisors are part of the residency program – whether they are employed by UC Davis or CommuniCare+OLE.

The successful partnership between UC Davis Health and CommuniCare+OLE has been growing for years, and this latest collaboration with Vida will celebrate its first anniversary this summer. It's one of the newest examples of a "win-win" for both the health clinic and the residency program: Residents gain experience with a diverse patient base and patients gain greater access to culturally sensitive providers.

Embedded in the community

The CommuniCare+OLE partnership is modeled after the family medicine residency clinic at One Community Health in Sacramento, which started nearly three years ago.

For decades, family medicine residents cared for patients almost exclusively at the UC Davis Health campus in Sacramento, whether in the hospital or at an outpatient clinic. But now residents can see patients with a wider range of social determinants of health, ailments and socioeconomic backgrounds at the off-campus community health centers.

"All of our residents are embedded in community clinics serving a majority of Medi-Cal, or underinsured, or uninsured folks," said Micaela "Mika" Godzich, M.D., M.S., the UC Davis family medicine residency program director.

Lizbeth Guillen, a Mexican immigrant and first-year resident with UC Davis Health, trains at Vida Family Health Center in West Sacramento where 60% of her patients are Latino.





For decades, family medicine residents cared for patients almost exclusively at the UC Davis Health campus in Sacramento, whether in the hospital or at an outpatient clinic. But now residents can see patients with a wider range of social determinants of health, ailments and socioeconomic backgrounds at the off-campus community health centers.

“They are working in the community and learning how to care for historically marginalized and underserved populations so that they can feel comfortable providing that care when they graduate from residency and serve the population of California,” added Godzich, an associate clinical professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine.

Continuity clinic: A benefit for residents

The CommuniCare+OLE and One Community Health assignments are considered continuity clinics for UC Davis residents, a key component in a training program. It means the trainees can spend the majority of their three-year residency in a single place, seeing the same patients on a regular basis.

The continuity model allows Guillen to build meaningful relationships with her Latino patients, who range from infants to adults in their 80s. Research shows that patients who have good relationships with their providers experience better health outcomes.

“The patients really feel comfortable with a physician who looks like them, or speaks the same language,” Guillen noted.

Other trainees often choose UC Davis for family medicine residency because they’re eager to care for patients from vulnerable and marginalized populations, such as the immigrants and refugees at Vida.

“Caring for this population allows residents to build the skills needed to be really good primary care clinicians,” said Upal Sarker, M.D., the Vida clinic director and a UC Davis Health assistant clinical professor. “The residents really want this kind of experience,” added Sarker, who is also site lead for residents at CommuniCare+OLE.

Contributing to the FQHC physician pipeline

Vida Family Health Center sits at the busy corner of Jefferson Boulevard and Sacramento Avenue, in an aging strip mall anchored by a grocery store where Latino shoppers cash checks and pay utility bills. The clinic is across the street from a large church for West Sacramento’s growing Russian population.

CommuniCare, as the Yolo County health care organization was known before recently merging with Napa-based OLE Health, has been in the mall intermittently since 1988. But, as with other Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), new physician recruitment has been challenging. Most new doctors opt for higher paying jobs elsewhere. Or they may start their career in an FQHC that qualifies them for federal or state loan repayment, then leave when they’ve met their contractual obligation.

But with the new program, clinic leaders say, the formal UC Davis Health partnership could be a helpful recruitment tool. After all, numerous community-minded UC Davis residents are routinely hired at clinics they passed through as part of their training. Sarker, a family medicine physician, trained temporarily at CommuniCare clinics in Woodland and West Sacramento during his UC Davis residency eight years ago, in a much less formal arrangement than exists today.

“So many of our physicians are UC Davis grads, both from the medical school and the residency,” exclaimed W. Suzanne Eidson-Ton, M.D., M.S., the chief medical officer for CommuniCare+OLE and a clinical professor at UC Davis Health. “Being involved in a pipeline with UC Davis and having long-term relationships with learners is wonderful for our patients as well as our organization,” she said.

“The experience we provide residents in our clinic encourages many of them to work for us or other FQHCs after graduation, and we are proud of our contribution to the physician pipeline for underserved communities,” Eidson-Ton added.

Guillen, the resident who started in July, after graduating from the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine, can envision working at Vida or a similar clinic when she completes her training in about two years. “Ever since I’ve been here, I have nothing but a great experience with my patients,” she said.

And the feeling is mutual — her patient load is growing by word of mouth. “This work is very, very rewarding. It takes me back right to when I came to this country and didn’t know how to speak English, and I still have a lot of family who don’t speak English,” she said. “I’m just so grateful to be here.”

Alumni Association updates

Reconnecting and reminiscing



Doug Gross (M.D. '90)

President

*UC Davis School of Medicine
Alumni Association*



Lisa Dicce

*Director of Alumni Engagement
279-386-6317 mobile
ladicce@ucdavis.edu*

Alumni Weekend is always a special event, and September's program was no different. Thank you to everyone who joined us! We enjoyed reconnecting, reminiscing, and hearing many wonderful stories about your time on campus. We hope you enjoy the photos in this issue as much as we do.

In addition to catching up, we were proud to honor remarkable 2024 School of Medicine Alumni Association (SOMAA) Alumni Award recipients at this year's event. Read on for more information about the inspiring recipients.

We hope you will join us for next year's Alumni Weekend. Whether you are an M.D., residency, or fellowship graduate, in a reunion year or not, join us! The 2025 event also celebrates grads with class years ending in "5" and "0." If you are part of a reunion class, let us know how we can make your reunion memorable.

In the meantime, we hope you will help us identify outstanding alumni who deserve recognition through our annual awards. The nomination process is simple. Visit the SOMAA website (health.ucdavis.edu/medalumni), click the awards tab, and submit a nomination. Self-nominations are welcome.

There are many other ways to stay connected. You should be receiving a monthly newsletter with news and events. If you are not, please share your current email with us.

We are grateful to have you in the UC Davis School of Medicine Alumni Association and want to celebrate your accomplishments. When you have news, please send us a class note through our website (under the Connect tab) or contact us directly.

We are glad to have you in the UC Davis School of Medicine Alumni Association and want to hear from you. Please reach out with your feedback and updates or just to say hello! You can contact us via the SOMAA website, email (medalumni@ucdavis.edu), or phone (916-734-9410).

Thank you for being an important member of our community. We hope to hear from you soon!



- 1 Members of the Class of 1994 look back on their class photo, reflecting on the memories and accomplishments from their time together.
- 2 Ben Mandac (M.D. '84), Richard Hays (M.D. '84) and Raquel Hays and students share some laughter as they look through a class composite.
- 3 Kimie Hirabayashi (M.D. '84) participates in the olive oil tasting at the Sensory Theater, Robert Mondavi Institute.
- 4 Class of '94 members Zenja Watkins, Mina Sebastian, David Lin, Candace Lawson, and Darin Latimore at the awards presentation.

5



5 Members of the Class of 1974 enjoy lunch together.

6 Sky Hanka, an integrative chef and culinary nutritionist, shares a healthy recipe with alumni.

7 Students lead alumni on a tour of the Sacramento campus, showcasing the latest developments.

8 Alumni head out to tour the Sacramento campus.

7



8





9 Alumni and friends gather for a farewell breakfast at the Courtyard Marriott Sacramento Midtown.

10 Members of the Class of 1984 and friends enjoy breakfast in the company of their former classmates and friends.

11 Susan Murin (M.D., M.Sc., M.B.A.), with 2024 UC Davis School of Medicine Alumni Award recipients Peter Igarashi (R.S. '84, left), and Saul Levin (R.S. '89, right) at Alumni Weekend 2024. Fellow awardee Dr. Sophia Fang could not join in person and accepted via video.

Alumni Awardee Mini Profiles



SOPHIA FANG, M.D., is the recipient of this year's Humanitarian Award. Fang is a board-certified ophthalmologist at Child Eye Care Associates, serving the greater Portland, Oregon

area. She specializes in caring for children with vision-threatening conditions such as amblyopia, cataracts, and glaucoma, as well as children and adults with strabismus. Fang studied biomedical engineering at the University of Southern California, where she spent six years working on innovative medical technologies, including microsurgical instrumentation, the Argus II retinal prosthesis, and stem cell engineering. Fang earned her master's and medical degrees from UC Davis, where she also completed her ophthalmology residency. She completed two fellowships at the Moran Eye Center at the University of Utah: pediatric ophthalmology and adult strabismus and global ophthalmology outreach. Fang has cared for patients in underserved areas in the U.S., including the Navajo Nation, and around the world, including Mexico, Honduras, Haiti, Trinidad, Peru, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, India, Nepal, Myanmar, and the Federated States of Micronesia. She has been deeply committed to building sustainable programs in these settings through teaching, mentoring and advocacy that empowers local communities with the long-term ability to provide effective eye care on their own.



PETER IGARASHI, M.D., was recognized as the Distinguished Alumnus Award recipient. Igarashi is a Professor of Medicine and the Knapp Dean of the Renaissance School of

Medicine at Stony Brook University on Long Island, New York. Igarashi studied biomedical sciences at UC Riverside and earned his M.D. from the UCLA School of Medicine. He completed an internal medicine residency at UC Davis, followed by a nephrology fellowship at the Yale University School of Medicine where he began his career in academic medicine. As an internationally recognized nephrologist and active NIH-funded physician-scientist with research interests in polycystic kidney disease, Igarashi has received more than \$25 million in NIH grant support. He has published more than 130 articles and chapters and served on numerous editorial and scientific advisory boards. In addition to being elected to the American Society for Clinical Investigation and the Association of American Physicians, Igarashi is the recipient of an Established Investigator Award from the American Heart Association, an NIH MERIT Award, and the Lillian Jean Kaplan International Prize for Advancement in the Understanding of Polycystic Kidney Disease. As Knapp Dean, Igarashi has expanded biomedical research at Stony Brook and improved care to patients and communities on Long Island.



This year's Transformational Leadership Award was granted to SAUL LEVIN, M.D.

Levin was born in South Africa and educated at University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa's School of Medicine. He began an internship at South Rand Hospital, but left South Africa due to the apartheid. He completed his internship at UC Davis, followed by a residency at UC Davis Medical Center. As a medical student, he started the first hospice in South Africa, and later was part of the team that started the UC Davis Medical Center Hospice. Levin received his Master's of Public Administration from Harvard University and served as CEO and Medical Director of Medical Education for South African Blacks, a non-profit organization which helped fund scholarships for more than 20,000 students to enter health care professions in South Africa. He also served as the CEO and Medical Director of the American Psychiatric Association. During his tenure there he spearheaded many key initiatives, including helping the association create a mental health registry to foster data collection to further research and clinical care advancements. He retired earlier this year and serves as the Secretary General of the World Psychiatric Association, representing over 126 psychiatric associations worldwide.



In memoriam

JOE TUPIN died September 8, 2024 in Davis, California.

In the words of the great Willy Nelson, Joe was a “walking contradiction, partly truth and partly fiction.” His tales of growing up in Comanche, Texas, were legend and ranged from working at his dad’s gas station, to an unfortunate incident involving chewing tobacco and roller-skating, to the Boy Scout Jamboree. His potential was recognized early in life when the local newspaper featured an article about Joe’s Spanish class presentation entitled “The Past, Present, and Future of the Toothpick.”

Highlights of his days at the University of Texas, Austin, include being selected as the “Best Boy” by the Fathers’ Club; staging a fake raid of the local brothel compelling clients to escape by leaping out the windows; getting “promoted” to flag bearer instead of clarinet player in the university band; and meeting his future wife, Betty Thompson.

After completing his undergraduate degree at UT Austin, Joe pursued a medical degree at UT Galveston followed by training in psychiatry at UCSF and the National Institute of Health.

Dr. Tupin began his first faculty job at UC Davis in 1969 excited to be at “a new school with new ideas,” and eager to update the medical school curriculum. He went on to become the Director of Research in the Department of Psychiatry, and later, he became Assistant Dean and Associate Dean in the School of Medicine. He accomplished groundbreaking research on the beneficial effects of lithium and succeeded in getting the first FDA approval for its use. In 1975, Dr. Tupin rose to become Chair of the Psychiatry Department, and later parlayed his skills into becoming Chair of the Quality of Care Committee and Medical Director for the UC Davis hospital, a role he would retain until his retirement in 1992.

In a lifetime of accomplishments, one of Joe’s proudest moments was when he was conferred a named professorship by UC Davis Health. He felt that all of his hard work was recognized and rewarded. As he said many times, “I may not be the smartest, but I work the hardest.”

Joe was bright, serious and a “go-getter,” but he was also charming, funny, patient and willing to be silly. Several Davis residents remember seeing him “fishing” with son John in the local drainage ditch on Covell. And many witnesses will attest to his ten-minute, interactive conversation at daughter Rebecca’s sorority house that consisted of only two words: “Oh” and “Wow.” When son Paul cut holes in the doors of Joe’s Mercedes for new speakers, Joe focused on the improved sound system, not the destruction.

Joe had two great loves in his lifetime: Betty Thompson and Ruth Kinsella. He and Betty were married for 53 years, raised three children, and shared many adventures together. Ruth was his constant companion over the last seven years of his life.

In addition to UC Davis Health, Joe was an avid supporter of the Aggie Football team, the Mondavi Center and the Davis Democrats. Until his death, Joe enjoyed good company, fine wine, and music well-played. He is survived by Ruth; children Paul, Rebecca and John; and grandchildren Heather, Andrew, Maddie, Emma, Ashley, Faith and Hailey.

In memoriam

MARY MARTHA HEWES TUPPER, born October 30, 1921, died peacefully July 14, 2024.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, she grew up there, and in San Diego and Colorado. She attended San Diego State, joined the Alpha Phi Sorority and met the love of her life, C. John Tupper. She worked at Consolidated Aircraft Corporation for money for school, supporting the WWII war effort with drawings of the B-24 bomber. Mary and John married in 1942 and moved for John to attend medical school at the University of Nebraska, Omaha. Mary supported them by working as a draftsman at HDR Engineering. In the late 1940s they moved to University of Michigan for John's internship, residency, and employment. Daughter Libby and son John were born there.

In 1966 came the move to University of California, Davis for John to found the School of Medicine. Mary's parents, John's mother, and John's sister Grace Blossom (Licursi) and family lived in Sacramento, creating a strong circle of family. Mary was active in the local art scene, helped found the Davis Pence Gallery, and became a docent and board member for the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento. She continued to paint in her own studio, and collected works of local artists. She had personal friendships with well-known artists Wayne Thiebaud, Gregory Kondos, and Larry Welden, to name a few.

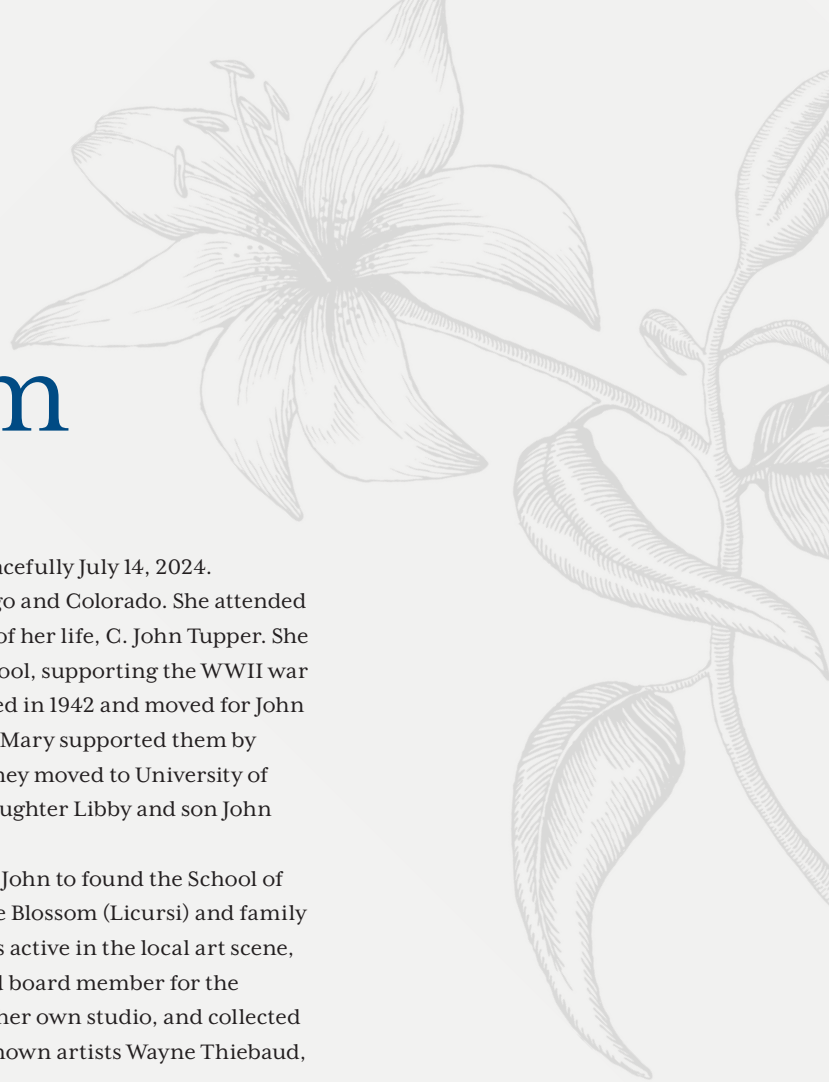
Meanwhile, John's medical career included his participation in the California Medical Association and American Medical Association, serving as president of both organizations. He traveled the world as their representative, with Mary by his side.

John Tupper passed away suddenly in 1998. Heartbroken, but resilient and independent, Mary had many friendships at El Macero, Niners Golf, bridge groups, dinner and luncheon get-togethers. She was active tending her garden. She lived independently in her home until shortly after her 100th birthday. A broken hip in 2021 led to a move into a lovely apartment at the University Retirement Community. She developed deep friendships with many people there.

Mary is survived by daughter Libby and son-in-law Tom Smith, son John and daughter-in-law Heather, grandchildren Stephenie Carlson (Dennis), Lucas Taber (Jobie), Lena Tupper Orello (Ray), Francie Tupper, and Auggie Tupper. Step-grandchildren Kris (Franca), Jenny, and Jason (Shannon) Smith were welcomed in and much beloved by her. Great-grandchildren include Cassie, Sweden, and Finn Carlson; Sydney, Mallory, and Nate Taber, Stella, Leo, Dylan, Wyatt, and Maddy Smith.

The family planned a private graveside service and a celebration of life luncheon. Donations are welcomed in lieu of flowers to the University Retirement Community Employee Scholarship Fund (assists staff members who wish to further their education) or to the UC Davis Geriatrics Program Fund. Checks for University Retirement Scholarship can be made out to URC, with a note that it is for the Scholarship Fund and mailed to 1515 Shasta Dr. Davis CA 95616. For UC Davis, payable to UC Davis Foundation, noting "UC Davis Geriatrics in memory of Mary H Tupper," and mailed to: Health Sciences, P.O. Box 160186, Sacramento, CA 95816.

Excerpted from Sacramento Bee



An update from Stephen Cavanagh, dean of the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis



Stephen Cavanagh, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N.

Growing together to advance our mission

This fall, I find myself reflecting on the exciting path ahead as we advance the mission of the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis. Together, we are committed to bold system change and health equity—a charge we do not take lightly as we work to make a lasting impact on the future of health care and the communities we serve.

Our school continues to ride the waves of change with resilience, keeping our eyes steadfastly on our mission and vision. We seize opportunities to innovate, growing into an institution that builds the next generation of health care leaders, practitioners and researchers. In this pursuit, we have relied on the strength of our UC Davis partnerships and community connections, recognizing that true success is only achieved when we work together.

Our alumni, students, faculty, staff and donors all share our commitment to optimal health and health care equity for all, and I am immensely grateful for the collaboration of our UC Davis Health partners as we grow together to advance our mission. We are proud of our innovative graduate programs and the generations of equity-minded nurses, nurse practitioners and physician assistants we are shaping. We are

excited by the recent successes of our doctoral students, research faculty and their lifechanging work.

To meet the needs of the health system and the state of California, we launched new programs that prepare mental health practitioners state-wide and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists for patients in the UC Davis Health catchment area and beyond. Their contributions fill workforce gaps in new ways for California.

It is through these collaborations that we see the real, lasting change we strive for: a health care system that reflects our values of inclusion, leadership and innovation.

These practitioners, along with all graduates of our five degree programs, go on to serve their communities with the highest levels of care and compassion. Their successes are a testament to the dedication of everyone in our school.


We are recognized as a top-25 nursing school and as leader in health care education diversity — awards that reflect hard work and stand as symbols of the impact we are having in nursing science and health care. Yet, our mission does not end with accolades; it is an ongoing commitment to serve UC Davis Health, contribute to our wider UC Davis community and advance health care.

Our research continues to grow, driven by the complexity of the health care world around us. We are expanding our collaboration with the health system becoming an indispensable partner in achieving mutual goals. Our strong partnerships in the community enable the School of Nursing to lead in the health system's efforts to "believe in better." Experts from our Family Caregiving Institute complement older adult care in the UC Davis Health Healthy Aging Clinic through caregiving consultations. It is through these collaborations that we see the real, lasting change we strive for: a health care system that reflects our values of inclusion, leadership and innovation.

As I shared earlier this year at commencement, the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing lies at the intersection of humanity, innovation, empathy, diversity and leadership. It is through these guiding principles that we have flourished. I urge each of you to embrace the opportunities ahead with the spirit of our co-founder, Betty Irene Moore, as your guide. Her legacy inspires us to push boundaries and challenge conventions as we strive for a better tomorrow.

Thank you for your continued partnership. Together, we will build a future where health equity is not just an aspiration but a reality.

Documentary highlights how UC Davis nursing school creates equity-minded nurses



Aron King, an assistant nurse manager at UC Davis Medical Center and Doctor of Philosophy student at the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis, shares his experiences on screen during a local showing of the documentary “Everybody’s Work.”

‘Everybody’s Work’ includes personal stories about nurses who advance diversity on the job and in the community

Rejecting structural racism is everybody’s work. That’s the perspective of a new documentary exploring racism in the health care industry and, especially, through the lens of its largest workforce — nurses.

“Everybody’s Work: Healing what hurts us all,” which was shown at a private screening recently in Washington, D.C., reveals racism’s harmful effects on patients and nurses alike. The film was funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF),

one of the nation’s largest health care foundations.

The filmmakers chose to focus on the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis and UC Davis Health because of their national reputation for advancing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) through nursing education and employment.

“The Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing and UC Davis Health are nationally recognized for their tangible efforts and financial investments to equip the teaching and clinical workforce to deliver equitable care,” said Jann Murray-García, M.D., M.P.H., professor emeritus at the School of Nursing. “These programs take strong leadership at the highest levels of the school. The film also highlights the unique work of our diverse set of alumni who continue to serve our institutional and regional community.”

Murray-García, a physician, has spent her career as a social activist promoting cultural humility, combatting social inequities and teaching on the social determinants of health. These determinants are the non-medical factors that affect one’s health, such as economic stability, access to quality education and neighborhood environment.

“The filmmakers chose to focus on the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis and UC Davis Health because of their national reputation for advancing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) through nursing education and employment.”

In the film she discusses narratives that persist in education and health care today. What she calls “scripts” are stories that perpetrate biased views and sub-conscious and conscious actions toward people of color. She, along with nurses, students, alumni and faculty, illustrate what’s being done to dismantle barriers to health equity and combat racial bias.

“Through their own experiences working and living in these systems, the nurses featured in ‘Everybody’s Work’ share not only what it will take to create change but who it will take. And we all need to take action,” said Beth Toner, RWJF’s director of program communications.

Personal stories behind the numbers

The United States has more than 4 million registered nurses (R.N.s) and nearly 1 million licensed practical and vocational nurses. A 2023 survey by the RWJF examined nurses’ experiences and perceptions of racism and discrimination in both health care settings and nursing schools. It found that nearly eight in 10 nurses have experienced or seen racism from patients or co-workers.

Based on nursing data and experiences, “Everybody’s Work” delves into the intricate issue of structural racism in nursing by focusing on personal narratives. Through the voices of nurses, educators, leaders and advocates nationwide, the documentary sheds light on their efforts amid challenges.

“If we focus on storytelling that embraces shared values, highlight stories where people see reflections of themselves and lead with grace,” explained Chad Tingle, the film’s director, “we can build a broader coalition of anti-racist nurses.”

One of those stories highlights Aron King, M.S., R.N., an assistant nurse manager at UC Davis Medical Center and second-year Doctor of Philosophy student at the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis. He is among the 12% of men in nursing and fewer than 1% of Black male nurses in the nation.

“It was super cool knowing that they somehow found the things that I was doing valuable enough to be put in the documentary,” recalled King, who was interviewed for an hour. “It was exciting seeing my colleagues on screen and having my story and perspective shared to a captive audience. As a Black nurse, I have taken a collaborative impact approach to diversifying the nursing workforce. I’m demonstrating what can be done beyond the bedside.”

King attended the film’s screening in Washington, with Murray-Garcia. In the film, he discussed how it wasn’t until he attended the School of Nursing for its master’s-degree leadership program in 2017, that he learned about social deter-

“Through their own experiences working and living in these systems, the nurses featured in ‘Everybody’s Work’ share not only what it will take to create change, but who it will take.”

BETH TONER, ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION

minants of health, how race impacts outcomes and the disparities seen in certain communities.

Tonja Copeland, M.S.N., R.N., P.H.N., was drawn to the School of Nursing because of its focus on a diverse student body. Having already been a Licensed Vocational Nurse for 23 years, and her wealth of personal experience, including hardship, made her an even more attractive candidate for the Master’s Entry Program in Nursing, which she completed in December. Now an R.N., Copeland never imagined she would end up on the big screen. But that’s exactly what happened: She shares her journey and serves as a role model for other Black girls and women who may not see themselves in a health care profession.

“I tried to be a voice for all generations to never give up your dreams to be a nurse — no matter the challenge —

because there is a way. I hope that by taking part in this documentary that I can help pave the way for equal care, equal recognition and proper patient-centered care,” explained Copeland.

Continual engagement for patients and students

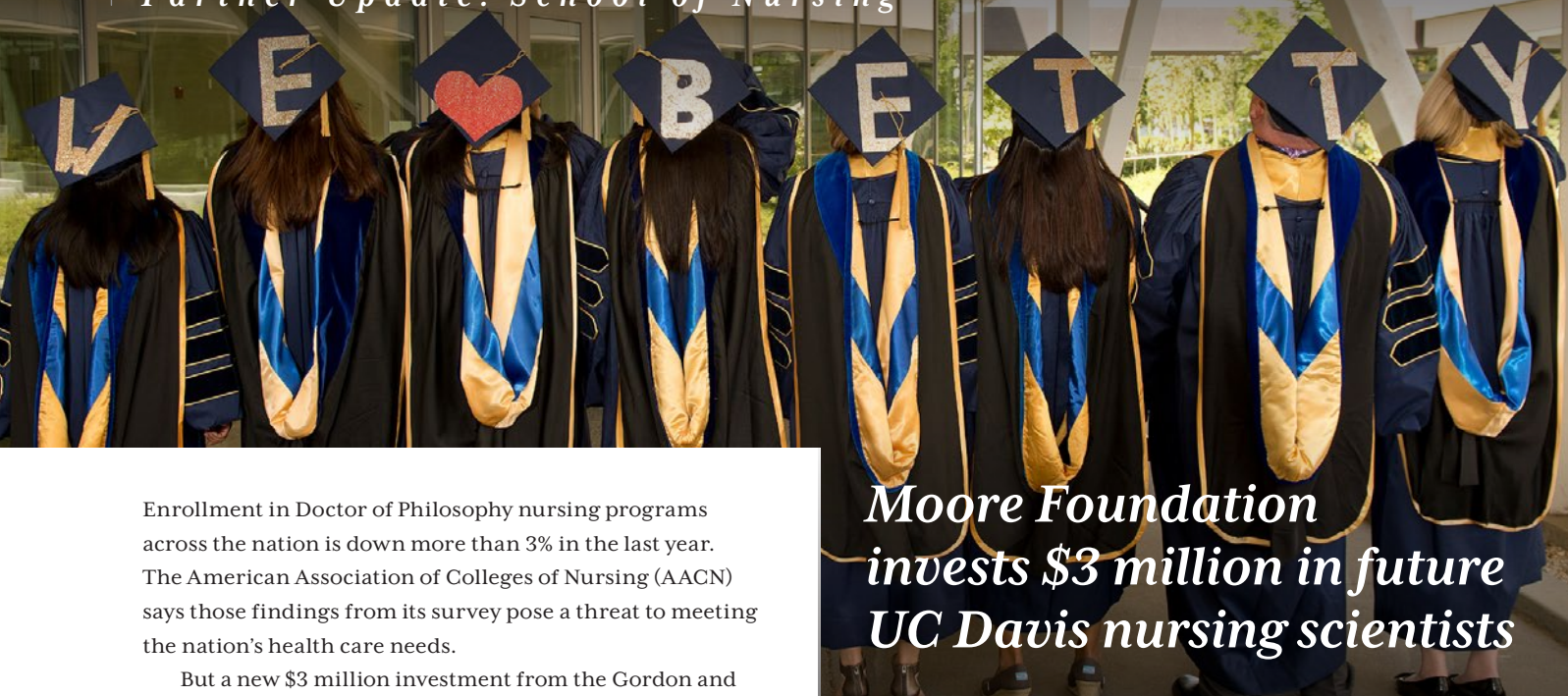
The film questions the idea that racism only exists if personally encountered. It encourages viewers to understand how racism keeps all people from benefitting from the talents and contributions of those around them.

“It should go without saying that the several dozen or so faculty, staff and administrators employed specifically to lead equity efforts at UC Davis Health

cannot possibly do this work without the meaningful engagement of each one of us,” Murray-Garcia explained after the film. “Everybody who represents our health system must continually engage with our fellow employees in the way we would want to be treated. We must continually provide what each patient or student needs, to the extent we are able, in the way we would treat those most highly prized in our lives.”

“Everybody’s Work” is the second documentary from SHIFT Nursing, an online community for nurses that launched in 2020 with a podcast and has evolved to include a variety of storytelling mediums.

The School of Nursing hosted a Sacramento screening this past summer. For more information on the film and locations, visit www.shiftnursing.com/everybodys-work.



Enrollment in Doctor of Philosophy nursing programs across the nation is down more than 3% in the last year. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) says those findings from its survey pose a threat to meeting the nation's health care needs.

But a new \$3 million investment from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation aims to reverse that downward trend. It offers to lower the cost for students in the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Nursing Science and Health-Care Leadership Program at the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis.

"We are grateful that the same foundation that launched this school continues to invest in the future of our students and programs," said School of Nursing Dean **Stephen Cavanagh, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N.** "To advance nursing practice, shape health policy and improve health, rigorous scientific inquiry is needed. And it's needed from a diversity of students and perspectives."

With many Ph.D.-prepared faculty members retiring, there is an urgent need for incoming Ph.D. graduates to fill these positions. Nursing programs face a faculty shortage

Moore Foundation invests \$3 million in future UC Davis nursing scientists

of nearly 9%, a percentage expected to grow. In addition to fewer faculty, a 2019 report expressed concerns about the future of the profession: if nursing research fails to sufficiently inform clinical practice, the report stated, not only are patients' health outcomes jeopardized, but the very professional identity of nursing is also at risk. Fewer than 1% of nurses have earned a Ph.D.

"Ph.D.-prepared nursing scientists are essential in developing the evidence base that informs clinical practice, evaluating and enhancing current nursing interventions, and innovating new approaches to enhance the quality of life for individuals across the lifespan," said program director **Sheryl Catz, Ph.D.** "We must also create a diverse community of nursing scholars to teach future generations of nurses."

NURSE RESEARCHER NAMED AMERICAN ACADEMY OF NURSING FELLOW

Lori Kennedy, Ph.D., R.N., A.C.N.P.-B.C., director of the Center for Nursing Science at UC Davis Health and School of Nursing alumna, is among the new cohort of fellows of the American Academy of Nursing and the first health system employee to earn the F.A.A.N. (Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing) credential. The academy recognizes nurses who make extraordinary contributions to improve health locally and globally through the generation, synthesis and dissemination of nursing knowledge. Kennedy leads nursing and interdisciplinary research and evidence implementation in a range of clinical settings.

NIH supports students' equity research

UC Davis nursing professor **Leigh Ann Simmons, Ph.D., M.F.T., F.A.A.H.B.,** has received a \$1.25 million NIH grant to focus on health equity. The Ruth L. Kirschstein Institutional National Research Service Award is a training grant known as a T32 — the first such award for the School of Nursing — and will fund a program titled "Research to Advance Connected and Community Health Equity (ReACH Equity)." The goal is to train a new generation of scientists to use advanced, multidisciplinary, multi-level methods to improve health equity, with Simmons' goal being to train 26 predoctoral fellows in the school's Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Nursing Science and Health-Care Leadership Degree Program. Simmons leads the Perinatal Origins of Disparities Center (POD) at the School of Nursing.

High school program earns national STEM award

draws from a diverse pool of high-school and community college students in and around Sacramento, who get hands-on experience to see if nursing, or other health care professions such as physician assistant, might be a fit for them. They also learn skills such as interviewing and writing techniques, get tips for applying to college, and are mentored by nurses of color and PA students. The third year wrapped up in June bringing total alumni to 113.



The Summer Health Institute for Nursing Exploration and Success (SHINES) Program at the School of Nursing received the 2024 Inspiring Programs in STEM Award from *Insight Into Diversity* magazine. The program is one of 83 hosted by universities recognized for encouraging students from underrepresented groups to enter STEM fields. SHINES is a two-week summer program that

ASSOCIATE DEAN NAMED NBNA TRAILBLAZER

Piri Ackerman-Barger, Ph.D., R.N., C.N.E., A.N.E.F., F.A.A.N., associate dean for Student Affairs and Health Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at the School of Nursing, was awarded the 2024 Trailblazer Award from the National Black Nurses Association (NBNA). She is recognized for being “an individual who has taken risks.” Piri leads the school’s efforts to create a diverse and welcoming setting in which to learn, work and collaborate. She also designs initiatives, so the school’s learning environments, workforce, programs, services and partnerships are more diverse and inclusive. Awardees lead their community, state and the nation in nursing, business, philanthropy, communications, government, education or the arts.

DOCTORAL STUDENT NAMED NATIONAL DIVERSITY SCHOLAR, EARNS NBNA SCHOLARSHIP

Shontaya Carrico, M.S.N., A.P.R.N., A.C.N.S.-B.C., C.P.H.Q., a second-year Doctor of Philosophy student at the School of Nursing, is named a 2024 Policy and Politics in Nursing Scholar from the AcademyHealth Diversity Scholars Program, which aims to support professional development of underrepresented racial/ethnic minority groups in health services research. Carrico was also awarded a \$5,000 United Health Foundation Scholarship from the National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) to help reduce ongoing disparities in health conditions, experiences and outcomes, and address persistent workforce representation challenges. Carrico’s research focuses on diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging and antiracism in health care.

DOCTORAL CANDIDATE AWARDED NIH FELLOWSHIP

Kurt Anthony David, A.O.C.N.S., B.M.T.C.N., a Doctor of Philosophy candidate at the School of Nursing, was awarded an F31 fellowship through the NIH National Institute of Nursing Research. The National Research Service Award for predoctoral researchers (F31), supports a mentored experience for promising predoctoral students. David’s “Examining Health Disparities in the use of Hematopoietic Cell Transplants for HIV-related Lymphoma” seeks to characterize social determinants of health that influence hematopoietic cell transplants (HCT) utilization in patients with HIV-related lymphoma, and determine if supportive measures are needed to address differences in care outcomes based on HIV status.

ALUMNI PANEL GUIDES STUDENTS FOR POST-GRADUATION OPTIONS

The Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing’s Graduate Health Professionals Council student representatives hosted: “What comes next after graduation?” to share experiences and advice. More than 60 current master’s-entry nursing and physician assistant students attended to hear six alumni panelists, including PA alumni, entry-level nursing program representatives, and a professional expert.

UC Davis Health

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*Vice Chancellor of Human Health Sciences
Chief Executive Officer, UC Davis Health*

Susan Murin, M.D., M.Sc., M.B.A.
Interim Dean, UC Davis School of Medicine

Stephen Cavanagh, Ph.D., M.P.A., R.N., F.A.C.H.E., F.A.A.N.
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UC DAVIS HEALTH magazine is published by the Department of Public Affairs and Marketing. For more information about UC Davis Health and the UC Davis School of Medicine, visit health.ucdavis.edu or health.ucdavis.edu/medschool, or contact the department at 916-734-9040, hs-publicaffairs@ucdavis.edu or 4900 Broadway, Suite 1200, Sacramento, CA 95820.

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Three babies in the UC Davis NICU dressed as Dalmatians for Halloween.

Ranked among America's **best children's hospitals**

UC Davis Children's Hospital has been recognized as a 2024–2025 Best Children's Hospital by *U.S. News & World Report*. The publication's annual rankings, now in their 18th year, assist parents and caregivers — along with their physicians — in how to choose the best possible care for serious illnesses or complex medical needs. UC Davis Children's Hospital is nationally ranked among the nation's 50 best in five specialty care areas:

- 23rd in **nephrology**
- 26th in **neonatology**
- 32nd in **pediatric orthopedics**, 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
- 36th in pediatric **pulmonology & lung surgery**
- Top 50 in pediatric & adolescent **behavioral health**



Regionally, UC Davis Children's Hospital ranked 7th in California and 8th in the Pacific Region, which includes Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington.