

Happy summer! We hope that you have been enjoying the season!

We've had some great recent successes that we are excited to share with you.

- Our Children's Surgery Center has been reverified a Level 1 Children's Surgery Center by the American College of Surgeons. UC Davis Children's Hospital was the first hospital on the West Coast to earn this distinction nearly a decade ago! We are proud to continue to provide this level of surgical excellence to the children we are privileged to serve.
- Our new small baby unit in our NICU is now open! The unit provides a dedicated space 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.
- Our Cardiac Catheterization unit exceeded 350 procedures from 2023–2024.
- Our new Panda Cares Center of Hope will be opening in mid-August and we are so grateful to be able to provide this new play space to meet the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual needs of our hospitalized children. A big thank you to our partners at Panda Express for raising funds to bring this vision to life.

Thank you for reading,

Satyan, Shinjiro and Brenda



From left to right: Shinjiro Hirose, Satyan Lakshminrusimha and Brenda Chagolla

UC Davis Children's Hospital is 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 comes from the ACS Children's Surgery Verification Quality Improvement Program. It 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.



The ACS program was developed to improve the quality of children's surgical care. It creates a system that allows for a match of every child's individual surgical needs with a care environment that has optimal pediatric resources.

The level 1 verification — the highest of three — was first awarded to UC Davis Children's Hospital in 2016 after an extensive site visit by an ACS team of surveyors. The survey team consisted of experienced children's surgeons, anesthesiologists and nurses. They reviewed the hospital's structure, processes and clinical outcomes data.

"I would like to congratulate our team for this incredible achievement," said [Shinjiro Hirose](#), surgeon-in-chief at UC Davis Children's Hospital. "The American College of Surgeons' Children's Surgery Verification program validates our work and places us with the best hospitals providing surgical care for children. I would also like to thank all of our colleagues and partners for their hard work and dedication to the care of children. Without everyone's help and teamwork, none of this would be possible. I feel privileged to work with such amazing people and look forward to advancing children's care here in Sacramento." [READ MORE »](#)

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 the smallest babies — those 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.

"Infants born less than 27 weeks are a unique patient population with specialized needs, especially those born at 22 to 24 weeks," said [Steven McElroy](#), chief of neonatology at UC Davis Children's Hospital. "This new unit provides dedicated, coordinated care for these tiniest patients in one space."

The small baby unit provides care for up to six babies at one time. The room received a full makeover earlier this year, with new paint and a host of dedicated equipment — including special breathing machines and [Giraffe Omnibeds](#) — to create a stable thermal microenvironment. Dim lighting and low noise help babies adjust to their new space. [READ MORE »](#)



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



Jennifer Rosenthal and Ijeoma Uche co-lead the project.

Black patients at UC Davis Health and nationally attend [fewer postpartum care visits](#) compared to those of other races. Health care access inequities, particularly during the critical six-week period after birth, contribute to disparities for Black patients, including increased risk of complications and even death.

A new [telehealth program](#) at UC Davis Health aims to reduce these disparities. The project has received a [Telehealth Equity Catalyst Award](#) from the [Association of American Medical Colleges](#) for \$27,000.

“We are thrilled and proud to receive this award and look forward to leveraging technology to reduce disparities and improve perinatal outcomes for Black people giving birth,” said Ijeoma Uche. Uche co-leads the project and is co-founder of [Birth By Us](#), an app for Black people focused on pregnancy and postpartum care. She is also a medical student in the [UC Davis ARC-MD](#) honors pathway, which includes a focus on research. [READ MORE »](#)



Treating nephrocalcinosis in newborns: A primer for clinicians

As many as [40% of preterm infants](#) in the U.S. suffer from nephrocalcinosis, a condition that deposits excess calcium in kidneys. Unfortunately, it’s often underdiagnosed. Neonatologists don’t always check for nephrocalcinosis, even though it can be serious. Sometimes nephrocalcinosis is found incidentally while investigating other concerns.

Two UC Davis pediatric nephrologists concerned about nephrocalcinosis in newborns are raising awareness about it through a recently published journal [review](#). [Lavjay Butani](#) and [Gia Oh](#) wrote in the journal *NeoReviews* about the disease’s natural history and offered tips to help clinicians identify nephrocalcinosis and treat it successfully.

“Nephrocalcinosis is often under-recognized because it can be asymptomatic,” Butani said. “Nephrologists are familiar with it, but neonatologists in the neonatal intensive care unit may not be as aware. We wanted to demystify the condition and make people aware that it is fairly common. Clinicians should know when to look for it, how to look for it and, if they find it, how to begin treatment.” [READ MORE »](#)

Research findings could help children reduce exposure to radiation after cervical spine injury

While cervical spine injuries (CSI) are uncommon in children, they can be potentially devastating. CSIs can result in paralysis or the ability to feel anything in part or most of the body.

Detecting CSIs in a clinical setting often requires imaging such as X-rays and computed tomography (CT) scans. Both expose children to radiation, which is a risk for cancer.

In a [study](#) published in [The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health](#), researchers in the [Pediatric Emergency Care Applied Research Network](#) (PECARN) created a highly accurate cervical spine injury prediction rule. When applied, the rule decreases the use of CT by more than 50% without missing clinically significant injuries or increasing normal X-ray use.

[Nathan Kuppermann](#), chair of the UC Davis Health [Department of Emergency Medicine](#), was the senior investigator of the study. [Leah Tzimenatos](#) served as the site investigator. [READ MORE »](#)

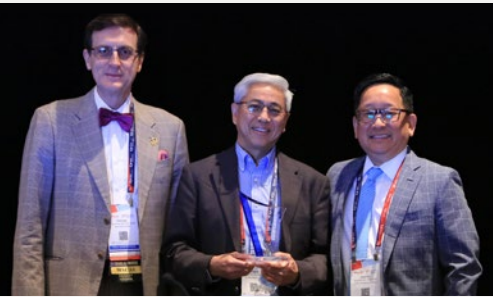
Surgery may benefit macular edema from Coats disease

Surgery may benefit patients with Coats disease who do not improve with standard treatments, according to a new case study. The rare eye disorder is often diagnosed in childhood.

Those findings come from a new case study by ophthalmologists at the UC Davis Ernest E. Tschannen Eye Center published in the *Journal of VitreoRetinal Diseases*.

“For some patients with macular Coats disease that does not improve with standard treatments like laser injections and intraocular injections, surgically draining the large cysts may be a viable alternative,” said Glenn Yiu, first author of the paper and a professor and board-certified vitreoretinal specialist and surgeon at UC Davis. [READ MORE »](#)

Chief of pediatric cardiology receives lifetime achievement award



Frank Ing, middle, holds award next to SCAI president George Dangas, left, and SCAI faculty member Dennis Kim, right.

The chief of pediatric cardiology at UC Davis Children’s Hospital has received national recognition from the [Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions \(SCAI\)](#).

[Frank 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.

“I was actually surprised I was selected for this award because I had submitted two other names for consideration,” Ing said. “When I think of those who received the award over the years, I am both humbled and honored, but also a little sad because I think these awards are usually reserved for those near the end of their career. This recognition encourages me to continue to contribute to our field and community.” [READ MORE >](#)



INNOVATION

Sacramento’s first comprehensive trauma recovery center to open at UC Davis Health

Funding for center provided by the California Victim Compensation Board

[UC Davis Health](#) is opening the first comprehensive trauma recovery center in Sacramento. The [UC Davis CAARE Diagnostic and Treatment Center](#) will establish the new center this summer, thanks to a nearly \$1.2 million grant from the [California Victim Compensation Board](#). CAARE stands for Child and Adolescent Abuse Resource and Evaluation.

Trauma recovery centers play a vital role in helping communities support victims of crime. They help manage cases and provide trauma-informed mental health care to crime victims from underserved communities. Many of the people they help are not eligible for victim compensation, and may be fearful of reporting a crime to law enforcement.



The center will provide the following services:

- Timely bedside patient engagement at [UC Davis Medical Center](#) for mental health services
- Coordinated case management to support recovery
- Safety planning for crime victims and families
- Assertive outreach and collaboration with community partners to provide community services to victims of crime

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Pediatric Heart Center finds new home on Cadillac Drive

A colorful new clinic location for pediatric cardiology patients has opened in the Campus Commons neighborhood of Sacramento. The clinic was formerly located at the Glassrock building.

Led by co-directors and physicians [Frank Ing](#) and [Gary Raff](#), the [Pediatric Heart Center](#) offers comprehensive care including pediatric cardiology, echocardiography, preoperative clearance, cardiac surgery pre op/post op care, pulmonary hypertension and the adult congenital heart disease program. With patients ranging from birth to adulthood, care caters to diverse patient needs.

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Newsweek names UC Davis 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.

The ranking is based on a nationwide online survey of hospital managers and medical professionals as well as publicly available data from hospital surveys addressing the patient experience. Data on hospital quality metrics was provided from several sources, including nonprofit hospital accreditation organization [The Joint Commission](#), [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#) and the [Health Resources and Services Administration](#).

“Congratulations to our dedicated team of doctors, nurses and staff for the excellence they provide to every mother and baby,” said Brenda Chagolla, associate chief nursing officer at [UC Davis Health](#). “Our labor and delivery team provides the highest standards of care to all who are on their pregnancy journey, and we are proud to receive this recognition.” [READ MORE »](#)

Q&A with OB-GYN physician Yan Zhao

What’s your average day like?

My typical week encompasses a variety of activities and clinical responsibilities. Several days a week, I work at my Roseville outpatient clinic. I see patients with a multitude of gynecologic and obstetric issues, ranging from contraception and pregnancy to menstrual irregularity and menopausal symptoms. Other days, I am on Labor and Delivery, working with medical students and residents, managing a diverse patient population. My week also includes teaching medical students in a clinical and classroom setting.

What’s the most rewarding part of your job?

There are many fulfilling aspects of my job. However, if I had to choose one, it would be the privilege to make a positive impact in each stage of someone’s life. This job allows me to provide medical treatment to alleviate ailments, bring happiness with the birth of a new life, and comfort someone at their most tragic life event. There is a sense of purpose guiding my patients through some of life’s challenges. Building deep connections and trusting relationships that brings different generations of women within the same family to my care is very rewarding.

What’s the experience like for a patient at a hospital-based birth center?

As a patient, you will be treated with not only expertise and evidence-based medicine, but also respect and compassion. No matter if you are admitted for pregnancy complications, induction, C-section, or routine labor, you will be well cared for. Pregnancy and the process of giving birth can bring many unexpected hurdles, but we strive to provide an experience

of shared decision, which allows patients to feel like they are an active participant in their care. Diagnosis and treatment protocols are established through tedious efforts to ensure patient safety. Our physicians and ancillary staff are trained to provide care for patients with low- and high-risk pregnancies, complex chronic illnesses, and life-threatening medical issues. Subspecialties, such as neonatologists, obstetric anesthesiologists and gynecologic oncologists, are readily available to provide their expertise. We are available 24/7 to provide routine and emergent care through our triage area, operating and birthing rooms.



Yan Zhao with her two children.

What do you think sets UC Davis apart from other hospitals and birth centers?

UC Davis provides high-quality care with emphasis on patient safety, compassionate care, and evidence-based medicine. Our patient-centered facility allows for both open communication and engagement of patients in their care plan. At UC Davis, your treatment plan is multidisciplinary, which can include genetic counselors, maternal-fetal medicine doctors, pediatric subspecialists, neonatologists and social workers. We provide a level of high-acuity care through services such as our fetal care and treatment center, which offers complex fetal diagnostic procedures and interventions. Our renowned experts perform fetoscopic procedures, fetal interventions for twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome and ex-utero intrapartum treatment (EXIT) procedures. We are a tertiary care center that has been trusted by our patients and our medical colleagues due to our consistent work to achieve excellence in quality and safety.

Heart-shaped pillow blankets warm hearts of childhood cancer patients

Maita Subaru and The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society — Central Valley brighten the day for kids with cancer

Life is a little rough for 9-year-old Emmanuel “Manny” Goff, a cancer patient at [UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center](#). For more than six months, he has been coming all the way from Redding to get chemotherapy. It is a long drive and the pediatric infusion room is often chilly.

That’s why a soft, heart-shaped pillow that turns into a blanket was a welcome gift.

He responded with a huge smile when asked if it was cuddly.

As part of a national [Subaru Loves to Care](#) campaign, [Maita Subaru](#) joined with the local [Leukemia & Lymphoma Society](#) (LLS) to donate 80 navy-blue plaid pillows to the cancer center. The center then gave the pillows to pediatric cancer patients.

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Emmanuel “Manny” Goff with Marcio Malogolowkin, division chief of UC Davis pediatric hematology-oncology.

PATIENT MILESTONES

She was too sick to attend prom. So we brought prom to her.

Hospital staff put together a prom in 24 hours for 17-year-old cancer patient

As a disco ball spun rays of light around her, 17-year-old Addison Ryker stepped into the room on crutches. She wore the red strapless lace gown that she had chosen months ago for this special occasion. Her hair fell over her shoulders in soft, cascading waves. It felt like a dream.

This was Junior Prom.

But for Addison, prom wasn’t at a hotel ballroom or high school gym. Hers was in the [teen lounge](#) at [UC Davis Children’s Hospital](#), where she was hospitalized.

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6-year-old girl gets lifesaving care after collision with semi-truck

It happened so fast. Megan Pitts and her then 6-year-old daughter, Jaelyn, were driving to school one morning in December 2018. They had just gotten on Highway 99 outside Corning on their way to Chico. A three-axle utility truck suddenly merged into their lane, pushing their car into oncoming traffic — and the path of a semi-truck. The truck hit Jaelyn’s side of the car. Pitts’ only child’s life hung in the balance.

“At first I was a mess and felt like I was drowning,” Pitts said. “I was so scared.”

Jaelyn was lifeflighted to the local hospital in Chico. Once she was stable, she was flown to [UC Davis Children’s Hospital](#) and admitted to the [Pediatric and Cardiac Intensive Care Unit \(PCICU/PICU\)](#).

Pitts had her own injuries to deal with — a fractured collarbone, a concussion and an injured wrist — but waited to address them so she could get to her daughter.

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