

## Happy 2025

We hope that you had a wonderful holiday season!

This month, our Children's Hospital Annual Report will be released and we are excited to share the highlights and successes we have experienced over the past year. 2024 was another monumental year of teamwork and collaboration and we thank our teams for all of their contributions.

We also want to encourage you to keep up with our children's hospital news through this newsletter as well as our social media channels, including Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

And for our teams, please feel free to drop us a line if you have any story ideas that you would like us to include in a future newsletter.

In the meantime, we wish you and your family all the best in 2025!

Thank you for reading,

Satyan, Shinjiro and Brenda



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

## UC Davis Medical Center recognized for exceptional care for patients on life support

[UC Davis Medical Center](#) has received national recognition for providing exceptional care to patients on life support.

The medical center was given the Gold Level ELSO Award for Excellence in Life Support from the Extracorporeal Life Support Organization (ELSO). The organization praised the medical center for its Extracorporeal Life Support Program, which provides lifesaving support for failing organ systems in infants, children and adults.



The ELSO award is valid for a three-year period — from Jan. 1, 2025 to Dec. 31, 2027.

The award recognizes programs worldwide that have processes, procedures and systems in place that promote excellence and exceptional care in providing extracorporeal membrane oxygenation to patients. [READ MORE >](#)

## 2-year-old lives his best life after groundbreaking CuRe trial

Tobi looks like your typical 2 year old. He loves to swim, climb, jump on the trampoline and ride his green tractor. He is able to walk independently.

You would never guess this active little boy was diagnosed with [myelomeningocele](#), also known as spina bifida, before birth. But for the past 30 months, he has been part of the [CuRe clinical trial](#), the world's first stem cell treatment for spina bifida delivered during fetal surgery at UC Davis Health. Spina bifida occurs when spinal tissue fails to fuse properly during the early stages of pregnancy, leading to a range of lifelong cognitive, mobility, urinary and bowel disabilities. It affects 1,500 to 2,000 children in the U.S. every year.

But to Michelle Johnson and Jeff Maginnis, Tobi's parents, the CuRe trial has given Tobi the very best shot at life and that has made all the difference. [READ MORE >](#)





## Asthma may place children at risk of memory difficulties, new UC Davis research finds

Asthma is associated with memory difficulties in children, and early onset of asthma may exacerbate memory deficits, according to a new study from the University of California, Davis. The study, the first of its kind to connect asthma to memory deficits in children, was published in [JAMA Network Open](#).

“This study underscores the importance of looking at asthma as a potential source of cognitive difficulty in children. We are becoming increasingly aware that chronic diseases, not only asthma but also diabetes, heart disease and others may place children at increased risk of cognitive difficulties,” said lead author [Simona Ghetti](#), a professor of psychology in the [UC Davis Center for Mind and Brain](#) in the [College of Letters and Science](#). “We need to understand the factors that might exacerbate or protect against the risks.”

[Nicholas Kenyon](#), study co-author, professor of medicine and director of [UC Davis Asthma Network](#), added that asthma is an inflammatory disease that can affect many conditions, including memory loss in adults.

“But this is the first time that asthma has been linked with cognitive changes in children. It is important that asthma be evaluated and diagnosed properly at all ages to minimize lifelong complications,” Kenyon said. [READ MORE »](#)

## Community partners key to success of vaccine clinic focused on neurodevelopmental conditions

COVID-19 and flu PATH vaccine clinic at UC Davis MIND Institute featured in the journal *Pediatrics*

A new paper shows how partnering with the community can lead to more inclusive health care, especially for individuals with autism and other neurodevelopmental disabilities. [The article, published in \*Pediatrics\*](#), details the success of a unique COVID-19 and flu vaccine clinic at the [UC Davis MIND Institute](#).

The clinic team includes developmental-behavioral pediatricians, [child life specialists](#), nurses, psychologists, social workers and staff trained to help families navigate health care. The goal is not only to administer vaccines, but to help patients build skills needed to successfully complete medical procedures for the rest of their lives. [READ MORE »](#)

**ACADEMIC  
MEDICINE**  
Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges

## Success of a mission-aligned funds flow model

Academic medical centers struggle with the high cost of care, reduced reimbursement, intense competition and low profit margins. UC Davis Health implemented an aligned funds flow model to create a mission-aligned model in which all departments had financial margins to optimize recruitment, retention, research and teaching.

The three-year experience with this model at UC Davis Health saw physician compensation and recruitment and profit increases. This was published in the *Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges*.

Co-authors were Satyan Lakshminrusimha, Susan Murin, Joseph Galante, Zisham Mustafa, Noel Sousa, Stanley Chen, Debbie Aizenberg, Elizabeth Morris and David Lubarsky.



# Three faculty 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 in January.

The Western Association of Physicians, the California Thoracic Society and the Western Section of the American Federation for Medical Research will host the conference in Carmel in January. The UC Davis Health honorees are:



[Daniah Beleford](#), 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. This award is given to a young faculty member performing outstanding research in the area of pediatrics.



[Satyan Lakshminrusimha](#), 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. This award is presented to recognize outstanding achievement in pediatric education and mentorship and is nominated by one's peers and former mentees.



[Geoanna Bautista](#), assistant professor in the Department of Pediatrics, receives the 2025 Western Section of the American Federation for Medical Research Young Investigator Award.

Beleford, Lakshminrusimha and Bautista will receive a cash prize and are invited to attend the Joint Plenary session on Jan. 17, 2025, where they will be honored. [READ MORE »](#)



## INNOVATION

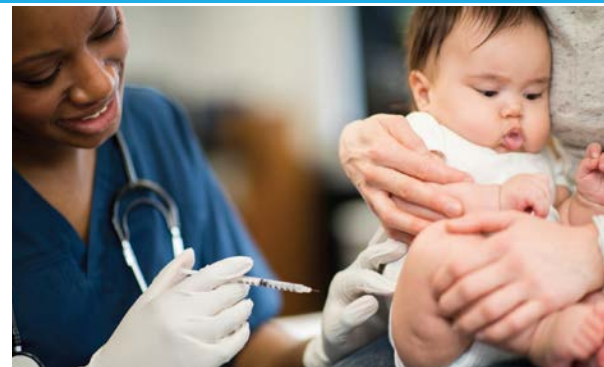
# Comfort Commitment: Procedural pain and comfort management

Tests and procedures may be needed for the medical team at UC Davis Health to better understand a clinical picture or to provide needed treatment. These experiences can be distressing for children. This is why the team at UC Davis Health created the Comfort Commitment to increase a child's coping during procedures and to focus on equity. Each child deserves the best care.

### The Comfort Commitment is a four-step approach:

- 1. Ask:** Learn about a child's prior procedure experiences and build from these. These may be positive or negative — this information helps inform the plan.
- 2. Share:** Prepare children and families for what to expect. When everyone understands the steps involved, this promotes coping.
- 3. Plan:** Build the coping plan with the child and family. The coping plan includes environmental considerations, planned distraction, comfort positioning with a caregiver, and medicine and numbing options.
- 4. Do:** Follow through on the plan and adjust as needed. This step is crucial to build trust between patients and their medical teams.

"Each procedure experience can be growth promoting for children," said Emily McDaniel, certified child life specialist at UC Davis Health. "When children know what to expect for procedures and are included in the process, they can gain a sense of mastery. This mastery can help them cope from one procedure to the next. If we can help children have positive associations with their health care experiences, they are more likely to receive necessary care throughout their lives."



"If we can help children have positive associations with their health care experiences, they are more likely to receive necessary care throughout their lives."

[Learn more about the Comfort Commitment »](#)

# 17-year-old Roseville girl nearly dies of walking pneumonia

Teen reunites with UC Davis Health team that saved her life



It was a happy homecoming for 17-year-old Callie McCune, who returned to [UC Davis Children's Hospital](#) in October, two months after her hospital stay.

She was walking and talking, beaming with excitement to thank the team who saved her life.

“Her recovery has been so inspiring,” said UC Davis pediatric critical care physician [Kate Phelps](#). “It was wonderful to see Callie again doing so well.”

It was a 180-degree transformation from her time in the [Pediatric Intensive Care Unit \(PICU\)](#), fighting for her life.

Callie had a cold in August, but her cough lingered and wouldn't quit.

Callie didn't have a history of breathing problems, but when her coughing led to vomiting, her mother took her to the nearest emergency room. She learned then that Callie had [mycoplasma pneumonia](#), a bacterial pneumonia that is also called “walking pneumonia.” [READ MORE »](#)

## GIVING BACK

# Costco donates over \$1.2M to UC Davis Children's Hospital

[Costco](#) team members across inland Northern California raised \$1,250,382 for local pediatric patients during the annual Month of Miracles in May. The 2024 campaign for [Children's Miracle Network \(CMN\) Hospitals](#) (CMN) supports [UC Davis Children's Hospital](#), the area's only CMN Hospital.

A total of 19 area warehouses from Redding to Tracy asked members to make a donation at checkout. The Costco Business Center, Central Fill Center and Depot also took part in the fundraising effort, relying on team members and business partners, rather than customers. All funds raised locally stay local to help children in UC Davis Health's 33-county service area.

“It's so heartwarming to see the Costco associates' excitement for the campaign. It inspires the customers and just makes the entire shopping experience fun for everyone,” said Michelle Tafoya, program director for Children's Miracle Network at UC Davis. “When the campaign ends and the totals come in, our hospital teams are always amazed at the tremendous generosity and we are even more proud that the money stays local to help our patients.”

Costco has raised close to \$500 million for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals since 1987. Donations support a full range of children's services including research, education, equipment and clinical care and all funds raised locally stay local. [READ MORE »](#)



## Walmart, Sam's Club and Neighborhood Market donate nearly \$630,000 to UC Davis Children's Hospital

Walmart, Sam's Club and Neighborhood Market stores throughout inland Northern California teamed up this summer to fundraise for UC Davis Children's Hospital. The annual Children's Miracle Network Hospital's (CMN) campaign raised \$629,490.17 through register, self-checkout or online donations from shoppers. A "Round Up" feature also allowed customers to round up purchases to the nearest dollar and donate the difference.



All funds raised at the 50 local Walmart/Neighborhood Market and six local Sam's Club locations from Anderson to Tracy stayed here in the region to help sick and injured children treated at UC Davis Children's Hospital. Funds raised this year brought the total donation to [CMN at UC Davis](#) to more than \$10.7 million over the lifetime of this partnership.

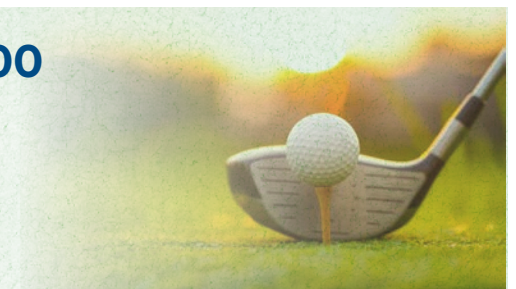
"Helping kids is a way of life for us and the customers and associates help make that possible," said Michelle Tafoya, program director for Children's Miracle Network at UC Davis. [READ MORE »](#)



## Golf tournament raises more than \$114,000

Our mighty Children's Miracle Network Hospitals team at UC Davis Children's Hospital held its annual golf tournament this fall and raised more than \$114,000 — a new record!

Special thanks to ATI Restoration, LLC for their miracle sponsorship and to all of the sponsors and supporters who helped make this event an incredible success!



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 [facebook.com/ucdavischildrenshospital](https://facebook.com/ucdavischildrenshospital) has **15,919** likes!

 [instagram.com/ucdavischildren](https://instagram.com/ucdavischildren) has **5,840** followers!



Share your patient story!