



International Care Right in Our Neighborhood

For the past nine of the 36 years he has been with UCLA Health System, Nels Christianson has been helping our international patients with their healthcare needs, from coordinating referrals to escorting them to appointments.

What personal traits make you perfect for your job?

I speak Spanish, Portuguese, some French and Sign Language and love meeting people from around the world. At the end of the day, I go home happy, knowing that my patience, good listening skills and compassion might have brought hope and resolution to patients whom I have helped. It is sometimes difficult to coordinate patient care, securing the earliest possible appointments for the most appropriate referrals and treatments at UCLA, but the whole UCLA family always helps me with the most unusual referrals.

Tell me more about your role in International Relations.

I am usually the first contact an international patient from Europe, Canada or Latin America will meet at UCLA. I collect medical reports from the patient, forward them to the appropriate specialist, obtain a treatment plan, prepare a letter of estimated charges, collect the required deposit and sometimes translate. I also coordinate appointments, verify insurance coverage, reconcile accounts, make hotel reservations, provide tours of the hospital, and most importantly, give encouragement.

What is your background?

I grew up with two brothers, two sisters and a lot of relatives in my terrific hometown of Merced, California. My maternal grandmother was from Spain and only spoke Spanish, which gave me a great opportunity to learn a foreign language and second culture at a young age. My mother was a native Spanish speaker and my father was a native Norwegian

speaker and also spoke Spanish and French. When I was 12, I worked all summer at the Mexican Bracero camp kitchen that my father administered and helped serve food to the men working there. At UC Santa Barbara, I majored in political science and Latin American Studies and spent the summer of 1972 in an intensive Portuguese language course at Georgetown. I also received a Rotary Foundation scholarship to Brazil in 1976 and studied there for 18 months. I have returned to Brazil 12 times since then, to visit friends and to travel.

Two Marias International Children's Fund, for which I am the administrative coordinator. The 6-year-old was very homesick and teary through the whole flight. I was touched that the 12-year-old completely cared for him and comforted him, making the job I had to do very easy, even though they had just met for the first time at the airport in Guayaquil. It reinforced what I frequently experience working at UCLA: In the face of adversity, patients, families and strangers connect and find comfort in their common humanity.

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Which patient experiences have touched you the most?

There have been so many. A famous Golden Era actress winked at me once and I used to meet a lot of movie stars as a patient liaison in the former Wilson Pavilion. But seriously, in the early 1980s, I visited a Brazilian inpatient and his wife a few times on 6 West and as we became friends, I gave them my home telephone number. One night the wife called, frantic because someone was trying to break into her hotel room. She barely spoke English, so I called to alert the hotel staff and then drove right over to pick her up and insisted she sleep at our home for her own peace of mind. Both she and her husband were very grateful and we have remained close friends.

Then there was the time I escorted two boys from Ecuador to Los Angeles. They were coming to receive cardiac services under our

What are your personal hobbies?

Hobby is my middle name! I collect stamps, postmarks and Zuni carved fetishes. I enjoy ceramics, photography, travel, hiking and gardening. I have more than 500 cacti and succulents, most growing in my handmade pots. I have traveled to most of the countries of Latin America. I'm the newsletter editor for our Westside cactus club of 100 members. I'm a published poet and was recently invited by a poet friend to be a judge at the Madera County Poetry Out Loud recitation contest in Oakhurst. The event was sponsored by the California Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts. It felt good to support poetry and to encourage high school students to recite in public. I have four cats, three ducks and 13 chickens and, yes, I do get a lot of fresh eggs!

news SHORTS

wellness INITIATIVES

COMPLETE YOUR CONFIDENTIAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT (HA), AND GAIN INSIGHT ON:

- Health risks you may currently have but don't know about
- Information about topics like weight management, tobacco cessation and cholesterol
- Tools to help you make positive health behavior changes

Log on to StayWell at <https://uclivingwell.online.staywell.com> to complete your HA and receive a \$100 gift certificate. Spouses will receive a \$50 gift certificate for completing the HA. Deadline for completing the HA in order to receive the incentive is April 15, 2009.

For eligibility information visit: <http://hr.healthcare.ucla.edu/wellness/programs.html>

HEALTHWORKS FOR KAISER MEMBERS

Complete the Kaiser Permanente health assessment and be automatically entered in a quarterly drawing for a \$500 gift certificate to spafinder.com or a sporting goods store and six chances to win a 80GB iPod*. Visit: <http://my.kp.org/cal/universityofcalifornia/healthworks/>



live life well.

"MARCH FOR BABIES" EVENT

Saturday, April 25, 2009

SAVE THE DATE. The mission of March of Dimes is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. Join the UCLA Health System team online at <http://www.marchforbabies.org/638376>



Rabbi Pearl Barlev

Spiritual Care Featured in Film

Rabbi Pearl Barlev, one of the hospital chaplains in the Department of Spiritual Care, was recently featured in the documentary "Where the Ocean Meets the Sky." The film explores the annual Buddhist ritual of Lantern Floating, where lanterns bearing lit candles and the names of the deceased are released into the ocean at night from a beach in Honolulu. This unique ritual serves to memorialize lost loved ones and brings hope, comfort and healing to those who are grieving.

"This film is an example of the interfaith collaboration that supports our Department of Spiritual Care's multi-faith approach and of the power of ritual. We hope it will inspire those who have lost loved ones to draw on its possibilities. It speaks to the connection across faith traditions and addresses the humanity of us all, Rabbi Barlev says.

To view video, visit www.uclahealth.org/spiritualcare

Successful VAD Certification



Congratulations to our cardiac transplant and ventricular assist device team for their amazing work and for receiving full certification from the Joint Commission's Cardiac Ventricular Assist Device (VAD) certification survey recognizing UCLA's innovative program and outstanding patient care.

Volunteers Make a Difference



Tell your family and friends to join our dedicated UCLA Health System team to help patients as a volunteer! The commitment is just one four-hour shift per week. Mornings and afternoons are available. Early risers beginning at 6 a.m. are also needed for our greeter program.

For more information, call (310) 267-8180. On the web: www.uclahealth.org/volunteer

NEW CANCER OFFICE

A new community hematology-oncology practice opened in Westlake Village to bring UCLA-caliber care to patients in their own backyards. Patients can receive ongoing chemotherapy and other related cancer treatments. The new office is located at 1250 La Venta Drive, Suite 202.

For more information, call (805) 496-5153

UCLA Health System

UCLA Health System Employee News

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Employee News



Debbie Ceasar, R.N., Marcella Bernstein, R.N., and Maureen Rooney, R.N.

UCLA Nurses Benefit Community

About a dozen nurses from SMUCLA and RRUCLA donated their time and talents at the Northern Trust Open at the Riviera Club in Pacific Palisades to staff an emergency first-aid station. During the five-day golf tourney, they treated spectator injuries such as cuts, sprains and strains and distributed UCLA Health System promotional items.

Thank you, nurses, for your commitment to community outreach!

On the web:

Urology website launched

The UCLA Department of Urology provides treatment for kidney cancer, prostate cancer and urological conditions of all kinds. For more information, visit www.urology.ucla.edu



Human Resources website

UCLA Health System Human Resources serves to provide employees with an outstanding work experience matched by highly competitive pay, benefits and professional resources to reach your full potential.

To learn more, visit <http://hr.uclahealth.org>

Move over, “Biggest Loser!”

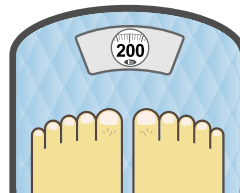
“Fiona’s 12-Week Weight-Loss Challenge” is creating quite a buzz in Santa Monica.

Lose some weight, gain some cash! That’s how it works and 27 people are vying to become the winning loser. Each participant paid \$39.99 to enter the challenge, with \$10 of that amount being donated to the Foundation for Prevention of Childhood Obesity (www.gofitkids.org). The remainder went into a jackpot that will be paid to the biggest losers — of pounds and inches!

Fiona Angus, interim director, Women’s and Children’s Services at SMUCLA, created the

challenge to help her co-workers and other hospital employees lose weight and get healthy. She provides participants with weekly talks on nutritional and wellness topics, body-composition evaluations and group support to help them overcome obstacles to weight loss. So far, the results are impressive. One nurse lost almost nine pounds in one week. Another weighed in six pounds lighter.

Who will win by losing? You’ll have to weight and see.



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UCLA Staff Inspires “ER”

The stars of television’s acclaimed “ER” team up this month with Camp del Corazon staff and children to film an episode devoted to the story of children with heart disease. The show will air on Thursday, March 26, on NBC.

While training as a resident in emergency medicine at UCLA in 1988, “ER” writer/executive producer Joe Sachs, M.D., met pediatric cardiology nurse Lisa Knight and began a friendship and a mutual dream of helping children, especially those with cardiac conditions. As “ER” went into its final season this year, Dr. Sachs proposed a story about Camp del Cora-



Lisa Knight, R.N., and Kevin Shannon, M.D.

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fun-filled days on Catalina Island. “The camp was inspired by a young patient of mine who had undergone heart surgery but who felt very embarrassed by his scars,” Dr. Shannon says. “I felt that if he could spend time with other children who had heart surgery, he’d be less self-conscious. I found a camp in Louisiana for children with heart disease, but it was too far away. So instead, we came up with the idea of creating a camp locally that would cost nothing and where counselors, nurses and physicians would all volunteer their time to help these special kids.”

Fifteen years later, the camp has gained national recognition. More than 450 children from around the country will attend the camp’s three sessions this summer—all paid by corporate and



Camp del Corazon participants wait to film ER episode.

individual sponsorships raised by the Camp del Corazon Foundation.

Camp del Corazon will celebrate its 15th anniversary with a fundraising gala on April 25. Dr. Joe Sachs will be honored “for his sensitive portrayal of families affected by congenital heart disease, and for his unwavering support of the camp,” Lisa says. Brian Reemtsen, M.D., chief of congenital and pediatric cardiac surgery at Mattel Children’s Hospital UCLA, will also be honored, and Tom Arnold will emcee.

MOTomed letto device provides physical fitness for inpatients

Imagine being able to exercise while you sleep! In the liver transplant and oncology Intensive Care Units (ICUs), a device called a MOTomed letto allows patients to exercise in bed — sometimes even when they are asleep.



“I’m really grateful for this machine because I work with a lot of patients who are in the hospital for prolonged periods, so it’s critical to keep them active both physically and emotionally,” notes Demetrios Wilson, UCLA physical therapist. “It makes me feel like I’m doing my best to challenge patients while also protecting their extremely vulnerable conditions.”

“Over the last several months it has been used by 15 to 20 patients and we have had very positive results. We hope to move it into the medical and neuropsychiatric ICUs soon,” says Cindy Jaeger, inpatient physical therapy/occupational therapy manager, RRUCLA.

The device slides over the foot of the bed where two pedals can be adjusted to fit the patient. A physical therapist sets controls on either a passive or active-assist mode, depending on the condition of the patient. A computer monitors how long and how hard the patient exercises and indicates which side of the body is weaker. The exercise breaks the monotony of the day and makes patients feel they are making progress and heading toward rehabilitation.

Shirley Tse and Demetrios Wilson

UCLA Health System Earns Green Light for Focus on People, Quality and Service

In our continual efforts to provide leading-edge healthcare, UCLA hospitals have implemented a “dashboard” process that compares performance in key areas to internal benchmarks and to state and national quality goals.

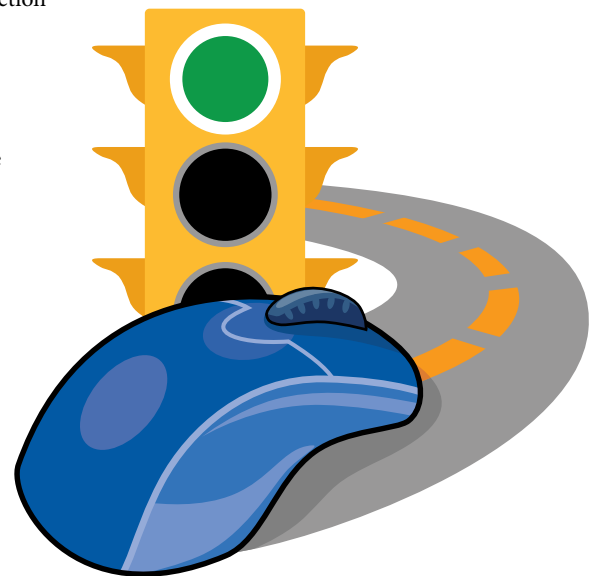
Measurement tools include employee/staff satisfaction, clinical care delivery, operational effectiveness and patient satisfaction. The dashboard is based on a simple stoplight color scheme, with “green” indicating excellent work to be maintained, “yellow” signifying a need for additional focus, and “red” indicating a need for intervention and improvement.

The process seems to be paying off. Staff turnover rates have dropped below target levels in response to facility, operational and training initiatives designed to help UCLA hospitals rank among the nation’s best places to work. Clinical care improvement efforts to reduce complications such as infections have reduced catheter-associated blood stream

infections to 0.8 infections per 1,000 central venous catheter days, which represents approximately a 67 percent decline from two years ago and compares favorably to national benchmarks. In addition, patient satisfaction has improved markedly during the past two years. Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center ranks in the 92nd percentile nationally in customer satisfaction, up from the 38th percentile two years ago, with some units, such as 8 North, ranking in the 99th percentile nationally. Similarly, patients rank the Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center and Orthopaedic Hospital Emergency Department and *fastER* services in the 92nd and 99th percentiles in the nation, respectively.

“Our vision for care delivery is no less than to heal humankind, one patient at a time. Improvements in our dashboard demonstrate that the hard

work of our team is appreciated and our patients are truly singing our praises,” states Amir Dan Rubin, Chief Operating Officer, UCLA Hospital System.



Checks-and-Balances System Improves Revenues



Anton Loman in his office.

Anton Loman, appeals manager, UCLA Faculty Practice Group (FPG), the Patient Business Office (PBO) and the Managed Care Contracting office have implemented an online database software program, Medical Present Value (MPV), to provide UCLA with financial tools to automate underpayment recovery and streamline payor contract management. The new system has resulted in increased revenue, better-performing contracts and improved cash revenue flow.

“Along with MPV, our office has been able to more effectively identify, appeal and recover underpaid claims, which can account for up to 16 percent of our claims,” states Anton.

Prior to MPV’s automated system, department representatives manually checked short pays and generated insurance appeals. With MPV, insurance payment verification and official appeals are now generated with a quick push of a button, resulting in a 90 to 95 percent increase in operational effectiveness, increased collections and more than \$2 million in recovered appeals since September of 2007.

“We now have a great checks-and-balances system to make sure we are collecting the correct reimbursements, not being underpaid for our services, and providing our patients the best service at every level, from the time they are first seen, to when the last bill is processed,” Anton says.

Eating Disorders Program Expands

The Eating Disorders Program at the Resnick Neuropsychiatric Hospital at UCLA, established in 1962, has now expanded to treat adults.

“The social context of eating disorders — anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa or binge eating — is not the same for adults as for adolescents, and the different nature of relationships with family members and intimates must be addressed,” says Michael Strober, Ph.D., director, UCLA Eating Disorders Program.

Both the adolescent and adult programs offer two levels of care, delivered by a multidisciplinary team: Inpatient hospitalization for the most acutely ill patients and transitional day treatment. Individual therapy, group therapy, family therapy, nutrition counseling, recreation therapy, and, if indicated, medication are part of the program. An outpatient group program for adults convenes twice a week.

“At each level of care,” says Cynthia Pikus, Ph.D., associate director, UCLA Eating Disorders Program, “there is a dual emphasis on restoring healthy eating patterns and physical well-being, and addressing the psychological underpinnings of the disorder and helping patients develop more adaptive ways of managing anxiety and stressors.”

For more information, visit www.eatingdisorders.ucla.edu



COMMUNITY PHYSICIAN NETWORK DELIVERS PRIMARY CARE CLOSE TO HOME

For thousands of families in Los Angeles, receiving primary care from world-class UCLA physicians is as convenient as visiting one of nine medical offices that comprise UCLA's Community Physician Network (CPN), a component of the award-winning UCLA Medical Group. Through the CPN, approximately 40 UCLA physicians — including pediatricians, family practitioners and internists — handle more than 200,000 visits annually for adults and children of all ages in medical offices located in Brentwood, Malibu, Manhattan Beach, Santa Monica, West Los Angeles and Culver City.

In addition to fast, convenient access, CPN patients also benefit from innovations including automated appointment reminders, electronic prescribing and, in the near future, online patient health records and appointment requests. Additionally, the highly trained, multi-skilled office staff performs blood draws, vaccines, X-rays and other services on site so patients can receive all primary care services in one setting. To enhance care coordination and continuity, many CPN providers care for their patients in the hospital when inpatient treatment is required, and refer patients to UCLA specialists as needed.

“Our goal is to bring the high quality of care offered on the UCLA campus to medical offices conveniently located in patients' neighborhoods,” says Mark Grossman, M.D., chief medical officer of the UCLA Community Physician Network. “Our offices function as patient-centered medical homes, with each patient establishing a one-on-one relationship with his or her physician.”

The CPN office staff also works to establish long-term relationships with patients, explains Donna Robinson, manager of the Brentwood office. “The staff is remarkable at welcoming patients, making them feel at home, and answering all of their questions,” says Donna. “When patients come in, the staff knows them and their families, remembers the births of their babies and watches their kids grow up. It makes patients feel more comfortable.”

For more information regarding CPN or other medical offices, physicians and services at UCLA, please call (800) UCLA-MD1 or (310) 825-2631, or visit www.uclahealth.org