



Diana Farmer and Satyan Lakshminrusimha

## Welcome, new residents

We are pleased by the results of this year's resident match. We will welcome the arrival of 13 highly qualified new pediatric interns in June as the result of a very successful Match Day.

Our interns come from California, Oregon, Nevada, Washington, Texas, Wisconsin, Ohio, Iowa, Rhode Island, Hawaii and New York.

Thank you to Dr. Su-Ting Li, our residency program director, and the intern applicant committee who reviewed applicants to our competitive residency program.

We are also proud to welcome Dr. Sheryl Boon to our pediatric rheumatology service. She has a medical degree from UC Irvine and a master's degree in public health from UCLA. Her clinical interests include lupus and other forms of vasculitis and in nutritional issues in patients with rheumatologic disease.

We are also excited that we have hired more pediatric specialists, who will be joining us this summer. We will share more in the next issue! Until then, take care and be well.

Thank you,

**Satyan and Diana**



Patient Everly Jacobsen with members of the pediatric hypertension team: Brian Goudy, Rory Kamerman-Krezmer and nurse practitioner Callie Brecek.

## Cellular therapy improves signs and symptoms of Duchenne muscular dystrophy

### Clinical trial results promising for people with the debilitating disorder

A clinical trial at UC Davis Health and six other sites showed that a cellular therapy offers promise for patients with late-stage [Duchenne muscular dystrophy \(DMD\)](#), a rare genetic disorder causing muscle loss and physical impairments in young people.

The therapy appears to be safe and effective in stopping the deterioration of upper limb and heart functions. It is the first treatment to lead to meaningful functional improvements in the most severe cases of DMD patients.



"HOPE-2 is the first clinical trial to test systemic cell therapy in DMD," said [Craig McDonald](#), the trial's national principal investigator and lead author on the study. McDonald is professor and chair of [physical medicine and](#)

[rehabilitation](#) and professor of pediatrics at UC Davis Health. "The trial produced statistically significant and unprecedented stabilization of both skeletal muscle deterioration affecting the arms and heart deterioration of structure and function in non-ambulatory DMD patients."

Findings from the trial were published in [The Lancet](#).

[READ MORE ABOUT THE STUDY »](#)

## UC Davis Health offers new, dedicated Pediatric Pulmonary Hypertension Program

Children diagnosed with pulmonary hypertension (PH) often spend many days each month in a doctor's office, along with their families, due to the multiple specialists involved in their care.

Fortunately for these families, [UC Davis Health](#) now has a pediatric pulmonary hypertension outpatient clinic that provides a one-stop shop experience. This novel, multidisciplinary approach is unique in the Sacramento region.

Now, a patient and their family may go to an appointment and see multiple

physicians, a respiratory therapist, registered dietitian and a social worker — all within a single visit.

"We're taking a patient-centered approach so families aren't juggling multiple appointments on different days," said Brian Goudy, a pediatric critical care physician and director of the pulmonary hypertension program. "This streamlined approach saves time for families and allows providers to collaborate and discuss the patient's needs as a team."

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## Research spotlight

### Global study shows need for changes in cancer care for teens and young adults



While cancer survival rates have improved for pediatric patients and adults over the age of 40, outcomes for certain types of cancer have lagged among the age groups in between. That includes what is known as adolescent and young adult (AYA) cancer patients. In fact, cancer remains a leading cause of non-accidental deaths among 15- to 39-year-olds.

Pediatric oncologist [Elysia Alvarez](#) is advocating for changes in how cancer care is provided for this age group after leading a study that looked at the global burden of cancer on AYAs. The [research](#) was published recently in the prestigious medical journal *The Lancet Oncology*.

Alvarez, a UC Davis assistant professor of clinical pediatrics, was lead author of the global study involving 730 collaborating scholars. She said approaches to clinical care often fail to acknowledge the unique physical and emotional needs of people in this age group who are engaged in transition from childhood to adulthood.

The study found that adolescents and young adults not only develop certain cancers that are common among children but also some types of cancers more typical among adults. In addition, AYAs are more susceptible than younger or older individuals to specific types of cancers, including [Hodgkin's lymphoma](#) and [testicular tumors](#). As a result, adolescent and young adult cancer patients may have difficulty finding care that is optimal for their cancer type and their age-related treatment and support needs. [READ MORE »](#)

### Medical student receives funding to study global oncology care in youths



Third-year medical student Samantha Wong has been awarded the [Daniel T. O'Connor, M.D., Memorial Research Grant](#). The grant is designed to

support deserving medical students whose research and passion for academic medicine reflect the values and interests of O'Connor: high-quality translational work that emphasizes a multi-disciplinary, collaborative, "bench to bedside" approach.

For next year's research project, Wong will focus on learning about adolescent and young adult oncology care in Latin America. Her mentor will be [Elysia Alvarez](#), assistant professor of pediatric hematology/oncology.

Alvarez, a global oncology researcher, looks forward to the relationship with her mentee. Alvarez believes the results of Wong's anticipated research will have the potential to "substantially impact" the clinical care and outcomes of adolescent and young adult patients with cancer around the world.

"Samantha has an impressive track record that demonstrates she is on the right trajectory to becoming a successful physician-scientist," Alvarez added.

Wong is eager for her research year, which begins in June. [READ MORE »](#)



### Barton Health and UC Davis Health expand partnership to improve trauma care for children

[Barton Memorial Hospital](#) was chosen to participate in an ongoing clinical trial by [UC Davis Health](#), aimed at improving trauma care for children in the region. The study was designed for pediatric trauma patients who require a transfer to a higher level of care. Prior to transfer, a virtual connection via telehealth is established with the team at UC Davis to allow greater communication with patients and their families and to facilitate communication between medical teams. The clinical trial evaluates the added value of a pre-transfer telehealth visit for patients and their families.

The telehealth platform is called a Virtual Pediatric Trauma Center (VPTC). It is utilized when pediatric patients are being considered for transfer to [UC Davis Children's Hospital](#), a Level I Pediatric Trauma Center. The VPTC introduces parents to a liaison at UC Davis prior to a patient's transfer. This visit not only improves communication between the families and the hospital, but also helps reduce patient and family distress during the transfer process.

"The ability of our nurses and doctors to actually see the patient and discuss the best plan for the patient and family is invaluable,"

said James Marcin, director of the Center for Health and Technology at UC Davis Health. "With this program, we are able to talk via video with the parents and family members to prepare them for what will happen following the transfer to UC Davis. This process can be very scary and overwhelming, especially given the number of nurses and doctors that surround the injured child after their arrival. We believe that preparing the family and talking about the steps that will be taken can help reduce stress, anxiety, and questions regarding the pediatric trauma care process." [READ MORE »](#)



## Awards and honors

### Emergency medicine chair receives prestigious mentor award



[Nathan Kuppermann](#), chair of the [Department of Emergency Medicine](#), has received the [Maureen Andrew Mentor Award](#) from the [Society for Pediatric Research](#). This national award honors one academic pediatrician annually who has an outstanding record of mentorship and leadership.

Established in 2003, the award honors the contributions of Maureen Andrew, a past Society for Pediatric Research president whose work advanced the field of child health research.

"I am honored to receive this award for mentoring many physicians who have gone on to be leaders in pediatric emergency care," said Kuppermann. "Throughout my own career, I have been incredibly fortunate to have received outstanding mentorship. I have strived to 'pay it forward' and encourage, teach and guide those whom I have served as mentor." [READ MORE »](#)

### Surgery Chair Diana Farmer receives national award for work on spina bifida

UC Davis Health [Department of Surgery](#) Distinguished Professor and Chair [Diana Farmer](#) is one of 11 recipients of the 2022 Harrington Scholar-Innovator Awards.

The awards are given by the [Harrington Discovery Institute at University Hospitals \(UH\)](#) of Cleveland, Ohio.

The scholar awards support a diverse set of drug discovery projects, including new treatments for pulmonary diseases, COVID-19, multiple cancers, corneal disease, hepatitis, and acquired spinal cord injuries. They include grants of at least \$100,000, with the opportunity to qualify for up to \$1.1 million. [READ MORE »](#)



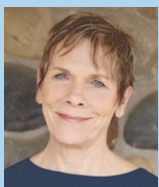
### Robot researcher receives EDGE in Tech Initiative Athena Award



Veronica Ahumada, director of the Technology and Social Connectedness Lab at UC Davis, was honored with the Early Career Award at the [2022 EDGE in Tech Initiative Athena Awards](#). They were presented virtually during the annual [Diversity in Tech Symposium](#). The event celebrates innovators and explores the experiences of women and underrepresented groups in a tech-related field.

"I'm honored to receive this award that recognizes that diversity drives innovation. Women make up only 25% and Latinas less than 1% of the STEM professoriate in the UC system. Change is desperately needed," Ahumada said. "I am excited to continue working towards increasing our representation in tech-related fields." [READ MORE »](#)

### Employee inducted into Child Passenger Safety Hall of Fame



Cathy Morris, community health program supervisor with the [UC Davis Trauma Prevention and Outreach Program](#), was recently inducted into the [Child Passenger Safety Hall of Fame](#) by the Manufacturers Alliance for Child Passenger Safety (MACPS).

She was one of 10 honorees to be added to the Hall of Fame, which recognizes those who have contributed to child passenger safety locally or nationally each year. Honorees include car seat manufacturers, specialists from the government and public and private agencies, advocates, designers, researchers and

others. Members of the child passenger safety community recommend them for their leadership in design, manufacturing, education or advocacy.

"For the past 30 years, child passenger safety has been a passion of mine. From educating parents to educating colleagues, my No. 1 goal has always been to ensure safe travel for all children," Morris said. "I want to thank the Manufacturers Alliance for Child Passenger Safety for inducting me into their Hall of Fame. I am truly honored to be a part of this distinguished group of child passenger safety experts." [READ MORE »](#)

## Awards and honors (continued)

### UC Davis telehealth leader selected as Fulbright U.S. Scholar



[James Marcin](#), director of the [UC Davis Center for Health and Technology](#), vice chair for pediatric clinical research and professor of pediatrics, has been selected as a [Fulbright U.S. Scholar](#) for 2022-2023.

The Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program offers more than 400 awards in more than 130 countries for U.S. citizens to teach, conduct research and carry out professional projects around the world.

Marcin will work with the [Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland \(RCSI\)](#) and

[Children's Health Ireland \(CHI\)](#) to advance pediatric health care in Ireland as a new children's hospital integrates novel telehealth and digital health technologies.

Marcin plans to collaborate in the design, implementation and research of telehealth services provided to children in Ireland. In this project, he will share educational materials and provide lectures to students, researchers and clinicians on how to most effectively leverage telehealth technologies to improve care without lowering clinical standards. [READ MORE »](#)

### UC Davis surgery chair named president of the American Surgical Association

[UC Davis Department of Surgery](#) Distinguished Professor and Chair [Diana Farmer](#) has been named president of the [American Surgical Association \(ASA\)](#). She was sworn in as president at the organization's annual meeting held in Chicago on April 8th.

A highly regarded pediatric and fetal surgeon-scientist, Farmer is the first surgical leader from [UC Davis Health](#) named to the position and only the third woman elected to hold the title of president in the ASA's 142-year history.

"It is truly an honor to be selected for this position," Farmer said. "The ASA is the oldest and most prestigious academic surgical organization in the world and has played an important role in my development as a surgeon scientist. It's a career highlight to be president, and I am looking forward to serving in this leadership role." [READ MORE »](#)



### Amy R. Brooks-Kayal named Andrew John Gabor Presidential Chair

#### Endowed position will support research of breakthrough treatments in epilepsy and other seizure-related disorders

[Amy R. Brooks-Kayal](#), professor and chair of the [Department of Neurology](#), has been inducted as the inaugural holder of the Andrew John Gabor, M.D., Ph.D. Presidential Chair. It is named for [Andrew Gabor](#), a national leader in epilepsy research and chair of the UC Davis Department of Neurology from 1981 to 1991. Gabor passed away in 2016.

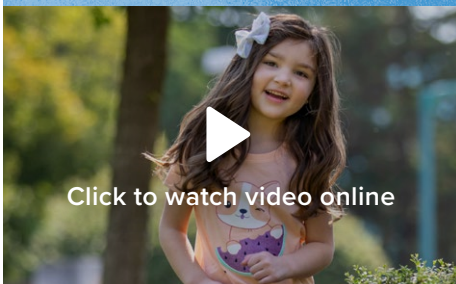
The endowed chair was created by Gabor's wife, Judith Bailey Gabor, along with her family, to support the research and development of breakthrough treatments in epilepsy and other seizure-related disorders. Judith Gabor worked at UC Davis Health as a systems analyst, programmer analyst and statistician before her retirement.

Endowed chairs are prestigious academic positions that come with funds to support innovative research.

"Thanks to extraordinary donors like the Gabor family, world-class scientists like Dr. Brooks-Kayal, and all our teams involved in these projects who have made advancements in epilepsy care possible, we will be able to do more research that will improve lives throughout Northern California," said Vice Chancellor of Human Health Sciences and CEO for UC Davis Health David Lubarsky. [READ MORE »](#)



### Children's Miracle Network at UC Davis announces local 2022 champion



Click to watch video online

Each year, [Children's Miracle Network \(CMN\) Hospitals](#) across the U.S. and Canada identify a "champion" in their local community to represent kids treated at the local children's hospital. This year, Orangevale resident Avery Cunha has been named the CMN champion for [UC Davis Children's Hospital](#).

As the face of CMN at UC Davis for 2022,

Avery and her family will support campaigns that benefit UC Davis Children's Hospital, the only CMN Hospital in the area.

Avery was 19 months old when she fell into a pool and [nearly drowned](#). She was transported via helicopter to UC Davis Children's Hospital, where doctors told her parents she might not make it. After months of care in the [Pediatric Cardiac and Intensive Care Unit \(PCICU\)](#) and comprehensive rehabilitation, Avery was discharged.

Now 5 years old, Avery has been able to live a full life with the help of CMN donors, her UC Davis Children's Hospital care team and her parents, Amber and Ben Cunha. They are excited their daughter is the 2022 champion. [READ MORE »](#)



### UC Davis employee honored with national fundraising award

UC Davis Assistant Director of Development Michelle Thompson was honored with the Victoria Enmon Award at [Children's Hospitals Week](#), the national Children's Miracle Network Hospitals conference which took place in April.

The Victoria Enmon Award recognizes the efforts of program directors across the country to support the [Extra Life program](#), a fundraising program that encourages the public to play video games to raise money for local Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. The Extra Life program launched to honor the memory of Victoria Enmon, a young girl and video gamer who lost her battle to cancer in 2008. Thompson was recognized for increasing fundraising, communications, local incentives, education and engagement for Extra Life.

"I was honored to receive this national recognition," said Thompson, who has managed the Extra Life campaign since 2013. "It has been a labor of love for me. I share this award with our players and teams in our region, who have turned their love of gaming into funds raised to support sick and injured children at our hospital."

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### Walmart/Sam's Club CMN Campaign June 13 – July 1 helps kids live better

This summer, [Walmart](#) and [Sam's Club](#) stores throughout inland Northern California will once again join forces to raise money for UC Davis Children's Hospital. Beginning Monday, June 13, associates will encourage customers to help kids live better by donating to Children's Miracle Network (CMN) at UC Davis.

Donations can be made at the register, self-checkout or online. There will also be a QR code available for shoppers to scan and donate through their phones. Plus, customers can "Round Up" at both stores. The "Round Up" portion of the campaign offers customers a simple and easy way to give by rounding up purchases to the nearest dollar and donating the difference. The Walmart.com and Walmart App will also have a Round Up option.

All funds raised at the 50 Walmart and six local Sam's Club locations stay local to help sick and injured children in UC Davis Children's Hospital's 33-county service area. Associates raised \$481,033.18 in 2021, bringing Walmart and Sam's Club's total donation to CMN at UC Davis to \$9,011,426.93.

U.S. and Canada stores have generated a billion dollars plus for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals since the Walmart partnership began in 1987. In 2021 alone, more than \$50 million was raised through fundraisers and register donations.

The CMN campaign at Walmart and Sam's Club stores runs June 13 – July 10.





### Specialized team expands into perinatal palliative care

Since 2014, the [Supportive Therapies and Enhanced Palliative Services \(STEPS\)](#) team at UC Davis Children's Hospital has improved the quality of life for patients with acute or chronic life-limiting illnesses and their families.

The team recently expanded to cover [perinatal palliative care](#) services for pregnant women whose fetuses have congenital anomalies.

"We are very excited to provide the extra layer of support to our patients and the teams that care for them," said [Theresa Murdock-Vlautin](#), professor of pediatric critical care and pediatric palliative care, and a member of the STEPS team.

The interdisciplinary team's goal is to help prevent, reduce and soothe symptoms associated with illness and strive for optimal quality of life. The team includes:

- physicians
- nurse practitioners
- social workers
- child life specialists
- care coordinators
- therapists
- chaplains
- support staff

[READ MORE »](#)

### Celebrating a milestone

Congratulations to labor and delivery nurse Joy Brewer for 38 years of nursing! Wishing her a happy retirement ahead!



### Patient born with organs outside of her abdomen receives transformative care



When Redding resident Brianne Jacobsen was 20 weeks pregnant, her ultrasound revealed that her unborn child's internal organs were sticking out of its abdomen. The birth defect, known as an [omphalocele](#), required the higher level of expertise of the [UC Davis Fetal Care and Treatment Center](#) team.

Omphaloceles occur in about one out of every 5,000 births. Jacobsen's daughter Everly was that one. Since it cannot be repaired until after the baby's birth, Jacobsen's medical team followed her through her pregnancy and were prepared for her child's delivery.

Everly was born full-term in February 2020. Her organs, covered in a thin, transparent skin, were larger than her head and continued to grow. It was classified as a giant omphalocele. At its peak, it was larger than her entire torso. Giant omphaloceles are associated with high mortality rates and a high risk of severe morbidity. [READ MORE »](#)

### Long-term national study of pregnant women finds increase in chemical exposure

Latinas had higher levels of many potentially dangerous chemicals



A [national 12-year study](#) that enrolled a highly diverse group of pregnant women, including women in the Sacramento region, found rising exposure to chemicals from plastics and pesticides that may be harmful to development.

"This is the first time we've been able to measure the amounts of chemicals in such

a large and diverse group of pregnant women — not just identify chemicals," said [Tracey J. Woodruff](#), senior author of the paper. Woodruff is a professor and director of the UC San Francisco Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment and co-director of the [UCSF EaRTH Center](#).

The results of the study, which included co-authors from UC Davis Health, were published May 10, 2022, in [Environmental Science & Technology](#).

Prenatal exposure to industrial chemicals can come from air, food, water, plastics, and other industrial and consumer products. Although these chemicals could be harmful to pregnancy and child development, few of these chemicals are routinely monitored in people. [READ MORE »](#)



## Patient milestone



### A new hip for a patient with rare neuromuscular condition

For the first time, a patient with spinal muscular atrophy has successfully received a hip replacement

It has only been one month since 16-year-old Malena had hip replacement surgery, but the operation has been a game-changer.

Prior to the surgery, Malena was bed-bound, suffering pain and problems with her joints like many teen and adult patients with [spinal muscular atrophy \(SMA\)](#). The rare genetic disease affects nerve cells and causes muscles to become weak.

When Malena developed arthritis between the ball and socket joint of her hip, she sought pain relief, as well as an increase in function and movement, through a complete hip replacement.

“Her left hip was so painful that it was difficult for Malena to transfer from her wheelchair, participate in regular activities or remain in an upright position for several hours a day,” said Nina Daya, Malena’s mother. “We were looking for the best solution, and Dr. Pereira made that happen for us.” [READ MORE »](#)



### Happy retirement wishes

Congratulations and happy retirement to NICU nurse manager Sheryl Ruth, who has done so much for her team as well as the patients and families in the NICU.



### UC Davis Health gives patient a second chance at life — twice

Bassem Mansour went out for a bike ride near his home and as he turned a corner,

a pickup truck sideswiped him and dragged him for 50 feet. He suffered 14 fractures, lost much of the skin on his lower body, and his left leg was nearly severed.

He endured a nine-week hospital stay at UC Davis Children’s Hospital, where he had 9 surgeries and faced many complex feelings and emotions. Mansour’s care team went above and beyond to provide him with the highest quality of care and resources to work through the trauma, both physically and emotionally.

“I will never forget the support I received, which went far beyond my medical care,” said Mansour, whose life was previously saved at UC Davis Children’s Hospital when he was diagnosed with neuroblastoma at 6 months old.

Mansour is giving back to our hospital by fundraising for our Child Life and Creative Arts Therapy Department to help other children during their hospitalization. [READ MORE »](#)



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 [facebook.com/ucdavischildrenshospital](https://facebook.com/ucdavischildrenshospital) has **14,364** likes!

 [twitter.com/ucdavischildren](https://twitter.com/ucdavischildren) has **4,865** followers!

 [instagram.com/ucdavischildren](https://instagram.com/ucdavischildren) has **4,902** followers!