Discover
Research by infection prevention director points way to effective new treatments for deadly hospital-borne staph infections.

Teach
UC Irvine's innovative iMedEd Initiative goes international and enters collaboration with rural Australian medical school.

Heal
UC Irvine Medical Center chosen best hospital in Orange County and becomes home to first West Coast surgical robot for spine surgery.
UC Irvine cancer center researchers make significant advancements

The American Association for Cancer Research has called attention to breakthroughs made by UC Irvine cancer researchers. Dr. Edward Nelson (pictured with 2009 Nobel Prize for Physiology and Medicine winner Elizabeth Blackburn), chief of hematology/oncology, with help of researchers Lari Wenzel and Kelly Biegler, presented findings on how chronic stress can accelerate cell mutations leading to cancer at the AACR's annual convention in April. Further, in the AACR journal Cancer Research, Dr. Dan Mercola and Michael McClelland of pathology and laboratory medicine revealed new genetic evidence showing changes in non-tumor prostate tissue that indicate a tumor's presence nearby. This could result in early detection and treatment of prostate cancer.

UC Irvine's Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center is Orange County's only National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center and is on the forefront of cancer prevention and treatment. The center is one of only six institutes in the country chosen by the NCI to lead a chemoprevention consortium. This novel approach aims to accelerate the development of safe and effective cancer-prevention drugs through active collaboration across a network of research institutions. More: www.cancer.uci.edu

Huang leading effort to prevent MRSA infections

Dr. Susan Huang – medical director of epidemiology and infection prevention and a UC Irvine Health Policy Research Institute affiliate – (pictured) is leading the fight against deadly hospital-borne staph infections. She is part of a prestigious $2 million Centers for Disease Control and Prevention grant to help prevent and treat microbial infections caused by MRSA (methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus) and other pathogens.

The grant came on the heels of a $10 million federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality award she received in 2010 to explore new methods to prevent staph infections in people who harbor MRSA bacteria when they're discharged from the hospital. More: www.medicine.uci.edu

Medical research is celebrated at campus festival

UC Irvine's cutting-edge research was on display May 24 at the first School of Medicine Clinical, Basic and Translational Science Festival. Keynote lectures by Hamid Said and Dr. Steven Cramer (pictured) accentuated a vast poster presentation in Sprague and Gillespie halls, highlighting the efforts of researchers from the Institute for Clinical and Translational Science, UC Irvine Medical Center, the VA Long Beach Healthcare System, CHOC Children's Hospital, Long Beach Memorial Hospital and Hoag Hospital. More than 224 scientific abstracts were submitted and more than 241 people attended the event. “Health research advances have been a UC Irvine hallmark, and this event shares our breakthroughs with the community,” said Dr. Paolo Casali, senior associate dean for research and graduate studies. More: www.icts.uci.edu
High school teens experience taste of medical school

The School of Medicine hosted 30 potential doctors on April 9 at its third High School Medical School Forum, a half-day program in which Orange County teens experienced what life is like for medical students. Participants toured the UC Irvine Douglas Hospital, shadowed physicians on patient rounds and spoke with doctors and medical students about careers in medicine. “Students are very excited and motivated to participate,” said Dr. Rimal Bera, clinical professor of psychiatry and human behavior, and the program’s director (pictured above). “Interest in this program continues to grow, and we are exploring how to develop it further.”

UC Irvine also hosts a more extensive two-week summer program for high school students interested in pursuing medical careers. Into its second year and led by Center for Future Health Professionals director Dr. Benoosh Afghani, the program has expanded, offering two summer sessions in which high schoolers get the experience of being a medical student.

These high school programs are emblematic of the school’s commitment to involve the community in medical education.


Medical students find Match Day residency successes

For UC Irvine’s graduating medical students, nothing matches Match Day – the day they learn where they will spend the next three to seven years pursuing postgraduate medical training and beginning careers as doctors. At this year’s festive Match Day event on March 17, 100 graduating medical students were placed in some of the most prestigious and competitive residency programs in the country, including ones at UC Irvine Medical Center. Among the Match Day participants, no one was more elated than Marco Angulo (pictured), who’s thrilled to be joining the UC Irvine family medicine residency program.

More: www.meded.uci.edu

Innovative iMedEd Initiative integrated in Australia

The School of Medicine has agreed to collaborate with Australia’s University of New England (UNE) to transform medical education through the use of digital technologies supported by Australia’s National Broadband Network. UNE’s School of Rural Medicine will integrate many aspects of UC Irvine’s innovative iMedEd Initiative in developing cutting-edge clinical training and distance-learning programs. As part of its iMedEd Initiative, the School of Medicine is reinventing the traditional curriculum for the 21st century, becoming the first in the nation to build a completely digital, interactive learning environment based on the iPad computer platform.

More: www.imeded.uci.edu
Breakthroughs made in robot-assisted surgeries

Dr. Nitin Bhatia (pictured) and Dr. Samuel Bederman conducted the first robot-assisted spine surgery on the West Coast in a patient who had undergone two previous procedures, including a spinal fusion to treat a degenerative disk. They utilized a robotics system called SpineAssist to increase the precision of spinal implant placement.

Recently, Dr. Amir Abolhoda performed Orange County’s first robot-assisted removal of a lung cancer using the da Vinci® surgical robot to excise the lower lobe of the right lung and sample lymph nodes in a patient with early-stage lung cancer.

More: www.healthcare.uci.edu

UC Irvine Medical Center chosen top OC hospital

U.S. News & World Report’s inaugural metropolitan-area hospital ranking recognizes UC Irvine Medical Center as the top caregiver in Orange County and fourth-best out of 44 facilities in the Los Angeles region. Citing UC Irvine’s excellence in eight specialties, the new roster complements the magazine’s annual list of America’s Best Hospitals, which has acknowledged UC Irvine for 10 consecutive years. UC Irvine is the only Orange County medical center included among America’s Best Hospitals in 2011.

More: www.healthcare.uci.edu

U.S. Justice Department honors UC Irvine’s efforts to prevent elder abuse

The U.S. Department of Justice honored Dr. Laura Mosqueda (pictured) and UC Irvine’s Elder Abuse Forensic Center with a 2011 Award for Professional Innovation in Victim Services. The center was among 10 organizations and individuals recognized nationally for outstanding work on behalf of crime victims. Mosqueda – director of UC Irvine’s geriatrics program, interim chair and professor of family medicine, and Ronald Reagan Chair in Geriatrics – and UC Irvine’s geriatrics faculty and staff spearheaded the country’s first Elder Abuse Forensic Center in 2003.

More: www.elderabuseforensic-center.com

New Ablative Oncology Center established here

UC Irvine has established a new Ablative Oncology Center that will provide patients with image-guided minimally invasive solutions to oncologic processes that have in the past been treated with traditional surgical procedures. Ablative treatment is administered by a needle to destroy unhealthy tissue using heat or cold. With the application of ablative technologies, cancer cures can be achieved with the lowest level of invasiveness, according to the center’s director Dr. Jaime Landman (pictured), chair of the Department of Urology.

Dr. Landman has extensive clinical expertise in laparoscopic renal and prostate surgery and endoscopic management of urinary tract pathology. He received his medical degree from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons and completed a residency in urology at Mount Sinai School of Medicine. He completed a fellowship in minimally invasive urology at Washington University in St. Louis.

More: www.urology.uci.edu
Shaping the Future of Healthcare

The UC Irvine School of Medicine depends on the support of its alumni, parents and friends to continue to grow and advance as one of the nation’s top-tier medical schools. Please visit www.ucdavis.edu/SchoolOfMedicine for e-giving opportunities and designations to your favorite fund. Naming opportunities are also available. Please contact Health Affairs Advancement at 949-824-0166 for more details.

Join the Alumni Association Today!

To join the School of Medicine Alumni Chapter, please fill out the form on this page and mail it to the School of Medicine Alumni Chapter, 101 Academy Way, Suite 120, Irvine, CA 92617, or fax it to 949-824-9056. For additional information please e-mail: MedicalSchoolAlumni@uci.edu or call Carley Fox at 949-824-9157.

Dr. Kammerman honored

Richard Kammerman, M.D. ’62, received the 2011 Physician Humanitarian Award by the Medical Board of California on May 6. Currently serving as School of Medicine Alumni Board co-president, Dr. Kammerman has been a dedicated supporter of UC Irvine for nearly half a century. He has had a long career as a physician, teacher, mentor, patient advocate and staunch supporter of community health programs.
As we approach summer, I would like to highlight some of the events during the recent months that have helped us shape our future at the UC Irvine School of Medicine as well as build momentum for our ongoing mission of Discover. Teach. Heal.

At our sold-out, second-annual Science Under the Stars gala on April 7, more than 500 people came together to honor Gavin Herbert and celebrate the groundbreaking of the Gavin Herbert Eye Institute at UC Irvine.

Gavin Herbert, the founder and former CEO of Allergan Inc., along with his mother, Josephine Gleis, made the initial $10 million naming gift in 2007 for the eye institute. Other benefactors include David and Juliana Pyott and the Allergan Foundation; Jim and Kelly Mazzo and Abbott Medical Optics; the Arnold and Mabel Beckman Foundation; Jim and Esther Cavanaugh; Bill and Marsha Link, and Geneva Matlock. At the gala, a $5 million gift from Julia and George Argyros to the institute was announced. This gift will establish the Julia and George Argyros Ambulatory Surgery Center in the newest and most state-of-the-art eye care and treatment facility to be built on the West Coast.

When completed in 2013, the $34 million, 70,000-square-foot Gavin Herbert Eye Institute building on the UC Irvine campus will have state-of-the-art patient exam and waiting areas, an outpatient surgery center, an optical shop, and faculty office and conference space.

Further, we are also making great strides with the iMedEd Initiative, thanks to the philanthropy of Kingston Technology CEO John Tu. His initial donation at the 2010 gala helped our school become first in the country to develop an iPad-based medical curriculum for incoming students, in which the entire first-year course is carried on the revolutionary tablet computer. Thanks to his continued generosity this year, the iPad program will be funded for four additional years.

At the gala, we also honored Dr. Brian J.-F. Wong, our first recipient of the Stanley van den Noort Mentoring Award, and Dr. Don Minckler, recipient of the first Thomas Cesario Clinician of the Year Award.

On another note, more than 130 employees and physicians provided leadership and committed a significant amount of time in the development of our UC Irvine Health strategic plan, and we are moving forward with our implementation stage. For more information go to http://strategy.healthaffairs.uci.edu.

As for patient-care firsts, in April, Dr. Nitin Bhatia and Dr. Samuel Bederman conducted the first robot-assisted spinal surgery on the West Coast using a Mazor Robotics’ SpineAssist surgical robotic system. Leaders nationally in robotic technology for patient care—especially in the areas of prostate, thyroid and gynecological cancers—UC Irvine was Orange County’s first medical center and among the first on the West Coast to employ the da Vinci Surgical System®. Dr. Thomas Ahlering is a world leader in robotic prostate surgery and removal, with more than 1,000 prostatectomies since da Vinci’s introduction. In 2010, Dr. Jason Kim became the first surgeon in the West to remove the thyroid gland with the robot using a transaxillary approach and thereby avoiding any neck incisions. And UC Irvine established the West Coast’s first robotic oncology center, which harnesses robotic technology to create better results for cancer patients.

We are so grateful for these shining “stars” as they are making extraordinary contributions to the mission, spirit and vision of the School of Medicine and UC Irvine through their leadership, generosity and academic and clinical excellence.

Sincerely,

Ralph V. Clayman, M.D.
Dean, School of Medicine
Professor of Urology