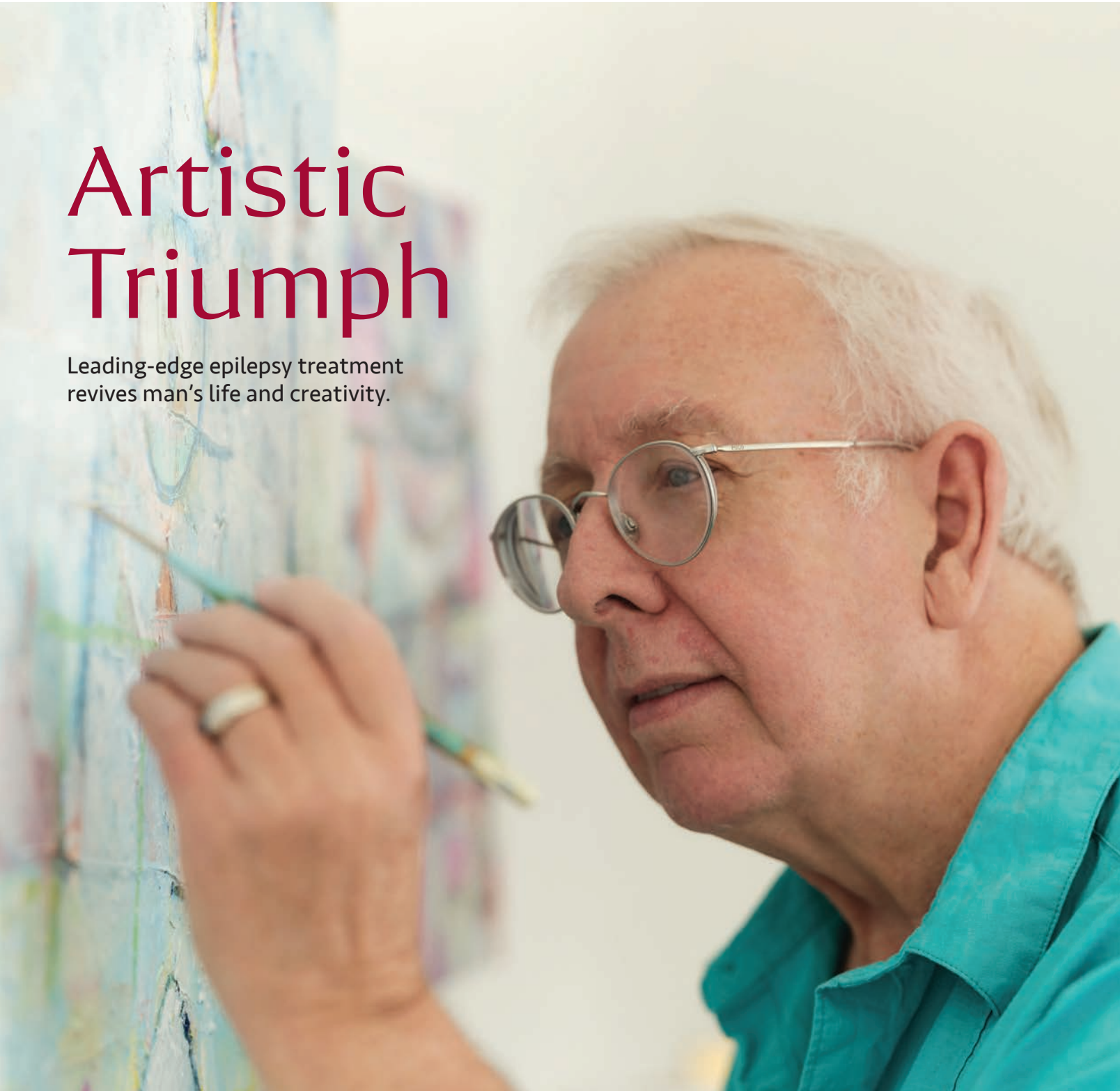


live well

SMARTER HEALTHCARE FOR SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Artistic Triumph

Leading-edge epilepsy treatment
revives man's life and creativity.



SEEING THE PERSON IN EACH PATIENT



This issue of *Live Well* highlights what I'm proud to say UCI Health providers do exceptionally well: We focus on the individual person before us.

As an academic health system, we pride ourselves on our scientific pursuit of knowledge and innovation to advance medicine. We also train the next generation of physicians and help set national standards for the highest quality care. But little of that matters if we do not see, hear and support the individual patients we meet every day — each one with their own fears, hopes, dreams and goals.

On page 6, learn how our top-rated epilepsy specialists helped an artist, whose seizure disorder had disrupted his life, when no one else could. Our doctors were driven to find a solution — one that has dramatically improved his condition and enabled him to return to activities he finds most meaningful: painting and creating music.

On page 12, we tell the story of a young woman newly pregnant with her first child who came to us for a clinical study of new mothers. Her participation led to the discovery of ovarian cancer. In treating her, our obstetrics and gynecologic oncology specialists addressed not only her long-term survival, but also a safe birth for her daughter and preservation of her ability to have more children.

In the "On My Mind" column on page 18, you'll read an essay from a man who endured the unthinkable: a car accident that killed his pregnant wife. UCI Health trauma and maternity specialists saved the baby's life and helped the shocked, grieving father learn to care for his premature infant while she recovered in our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. In doing so, these physicians and nurses helped him discover that he was fully capable of being an excellent dad.

Our Q&A on page 10 underscores the importance of treating each person seeking to lose weight as an individual who deserves care and support tailored to his or her own needs. Learn about the range of bariatric treatment options we offer and our rich roster of highly trained doctors, nurses and other health professionals who work together to meet all our patients' needs — medical, psychological, nutritional and social.

When you seek care at UCI Health, know that we see you and that you are our top priority.

Sincerely,

Chad T. Lefteris, FACHE
Chief Executive Officer
UCI Health

UCI Health

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Information in this magazine is not meant to
replace the advice of your physician.

SUPPORT UCI HEALTH

Few things in life matter more than your health. As Orange County's only academic medical system, UCI Health is pushing the frontiers of lifesaving research while improving health and wellness in our community and beyond.

We cannot succeed without you. Please consider becoming an active partner in charting our future path. With your support, we will make new medical breakthroughs, redefine patient care, educate the next generation of health professionals and promote physical and mental well-being in our communities.

To make a gift supporting the expansion of UCI Health, to thank a provider or honor the memory of a loved one, call 714-456-7350 or visit ucihealth.org/giving. Your gift also supports UCI's Brilliant Future campaign.

BRILLIANT FUTURE
THE CAMPAIGN FOR UCI

CELL THERAPY: TESTING A ONE-TIME TREATMENT TO RELIEVE PARKINSON'S SYMPTOMS

WRITTEN BY MELANIE ANDERSON

Advances in Parkinson's disease have mainly focused on managing the disease's symptoms. Now UCI Health researchers are part of a groundbreaking clinical trial to replace dopamine-producing brain cells destroyed by the progressive neurodegenerative movement disorder.

This next-generation stem cell therapy, which restored dopamine-producing function in animal studies, could have profound implications for the nearly 1 million Americans and 10 million people worldwide living with Parkinson's.

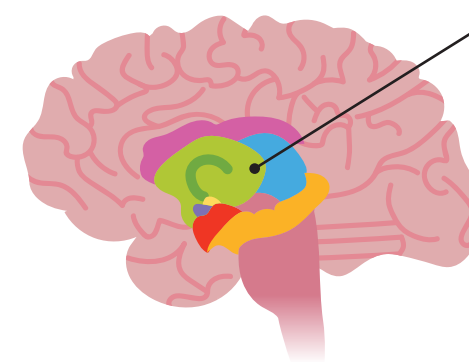
"Dopamine is a neurotransmitter and when it's lost, it causes the slowing, the lack of coordination, the stiffness and the tremors we see in Parkinson's patients," says Dr. Claire Henchcliffe, chair of the UCI School of Medicine's Department of Neurology and a principal investigator of the clinical trial.

Current treatments include medications to deliver dopamine or dopamine substitutes that provide relief from movement-related symptoms for a limited time.

"As the disease progresses, the medications become less effective and people end up tied to the pillbox," Henchcliffe says. "Even then, for people with advanced Parkinson's, the medicines don't last long enough."

The multisite, phase 1 clinical trial — which began at Henchcliffe's former institutions, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and Weill Cornell Medical Center — involves surgically transplanting dopamine-producing nerve cells into the putamen, an area of the brain that no longer produces dopamine. Trial participants will take immunosuppression medication for a year to help establish the transplanted stem cell-derived nerve cells.

"The hope is that these neurons will



The putamen is the part of the brain that regulates movement.

1. Patients undergo surgery to transplant dopamine-producing cells into the putamen.
2. Patients take medication to partially suppress the immune system, preventing the body from rejecting the transplanted cells.

create connections with the patient's nerve cells and deliver dopamine, relieving the symptoms of Parkinson's disease," says Henchcliffe, who was part of the group that began developing the clinical trial before joining the UCI School of Medicine in 2020. "We are hoping this will be a one-session, single surgical intervention that results in the implanted cells remaining present and functioning for the rest of the patient's life."

Establishing the treatment's safety and efficacy are the goals of this first-in-human trial, which is sponsored by BlueRock Therapeutics. Over the next two years, researchers will study whether the implanted cells survive and participants' motor functions improve.

"Although we got excellent safety and tolerability data from animal studies, it has never been tested in humans," says Henchcliffe. "A first-in-human study is always about making sure that a treatment is safe and does not cause unexpected side effects."

The surgery takes place at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City. UCI Health participants will be

followed by its Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorders Program in Irvine.

Rapid advances in stem cell technology over the last 20 years made this clinical trial possible, says Henchcliffe. "We've figured out how to make embryonic stem cells that can be grown in the laboratory in almost unlimited quantities. Now researchers, including the people I worked with at Memorial Sloan Kettering, have found a way to differentiate those cells into dopamine-producing neurons."

Previous clinical trials to restore dopamine function with cell transplantation showed promising but variable results, which Henchcliffe attributes to limitations of earlier stem cell sources. "You couldn't do quality control on the cells you were going to transplant. There simply weren't enough."

Henchcliffe is excited that this cell therapy trial, the culmination of decades of research efforts, is available to UCI Health patients.

"I started working in the Parkinson's field almost 25 years ago," she says. "With new technologies coming up, we foresee some really rapid advances for patients." ■

Learn more about this study at ucihealth.org/dopaminetrial



UCI HEALTH EARNS SAFETY, EXCELLENCE HONORS

UCI Health, Orange County's only academic health system, received its 15th consecutive "A" in the fall 2021 Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade. This biannual national distinction recognizes a health system's commitment to patient safety and achievements to prevent harm. The Leapfrog Group has the only ratings program based exclusively on hospital prevention of medical errors and harm to patients. The grading system is peer-reviewed, fully transparent and free to the public. Grades are updated twice annually, in the fall and spring.

UCI Health also has been recognized as a five-star hospital and top performer in the 2021 Bernard A. Birnbaum, MD, Quality



Leadership Annual Ranking by Vizient Inc. UCI Medical Center was ranked No. 9 of 101 Vizient members among comprehensive academic medical centers for excellence in delivering high-quality patient care based on the organization's Quality and Accountability Ranking. This ranking measures performance on patient care quality in five areas: safety, mortality, effectiveness, efficiency and patient-centered care. Vizient has conducted this ranking annually since 2005.

U.S. News & World Report also rated UCI Health "high performing" — the highest rating possible — among Best Hospitals for Maternity Care (Uncomplicated Pregnancy). This is the first time *U.S. News* has published a list of Best Hospitals for Maternity. To be recognized, hospitals had to excel on multiple quality metrics that matter to expectant families, including complication rates, C-sections, whether births were scheduled too early in pregnancy, and how successfully each hospital supported breastfeeding.

FOUNDATION GIVES \$30 MILLION FOR INNOVATIVE MEDICAL RESEARCH BUILDING

Supported by a \$30 million lead gift from the Falling Leaves Foundation, a state-of-the-art medical research facility planned for the UC Irvine campus will expand the global reach and impact of the campus's advanced cross-disciplinary teaching and translational research achievements.

The 200,000-square-foot Falling Leaves Foundation Medical Innovation Building will be one of the largest such facilities in the West. It will provide optimal space for core instruction and labs devoted to extending advances in medicine and health sciences. The foundation was established by Professor Robert A. Mah and Dr. Adeline Yen Mah in 2007.

"This exceptional gift recognizes UCI's preeminence in conducting basic, translational and clinical research dedicated to the discovery of new medical and scientific knowledge," says Chancellor Howard Gillman. "It will be a vital resource for exploring new frontiers and improving the lives of people in our community and beyond."

The new building will have well-equipped wet laboratories and meeting spaces to foster groundbreaking research and enhance the training of future scientific pioneers. Teams from diverse disciplines will collaborate to develop novel insights and treatments that help communities thrive.

This leading-edge facility also will allow students to learn alongside researchers and physician-scientists in the fields of cancer, neurosciences and drug discovery.



Pictured from left are Chancellor Howard Gillman, Robert Mah, Adeline Yen Mah and Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs Steve A.N. Goldstein.

Photo by Steve Zylus/UCI

GIFT SUPPORTS NEW IRVINE-BASED CANCER CENTER BUILDING

Longtime UCI Health donors Ralph and Sue Stern have expanded their legacy of lifesaving cancer care with another gift — this one for a new cancer center to be built in Irvine. In recognition of the family's latest gift and their lifetime giving of more than \$12.5 million to UCI Health, a floor in the Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center and Ambulatory Care building will bear their names.

In January 2021, UCI announced plans to build a medical complex at the north end of the UCI campus, including a 144-bed acute care hospital and emergency department, the cancer center and the UCI Health Center for Advanced Care. The first patients are expected in early 2023 in the Center for Advanced Care. The hospital and cancer center are set for completion by 2025. With 36 private exam rooms, the Ralph and Sue Stern cancer wing will integrate research, prevention and the most advanced diagnostics and treatments, as well as rehabilitation programs to offer patients the best possible care.

"The support of Ralph and Sue Stern has been instrumental to our mission of providing advanced cancer care rooted in scientific discovery and clinical innovation," says UCI Health CEO Chad Lefteris. "It is a privilege to continue our relationship as we expand access to lifesaving healthcare across the county."



Photo for UCI

UCI HEALTH: HOME TO PHYSICIANS OF EXCELLENCE

The Orange County Medical Association has named 187 UCI Health doctors to its 2022 Physicians of Excellence honor roll — more than any other health system in the region. The prestigious honors, announced in the January 2022 issue of *Orange Coast* magazine, are awarded by the volunteer physician organization as part of its mission to promote the public health and the betterment of the medical profession. To be eligible for recognition, the doctors must be certified by one of several medical boards, be in good standing, maintain a practice in Orange County for at least five years and have practiced within their specialty for the last five years.

UCI JOINS RARE DISORDERS NETWORK

UCI Health and Children's Health of Orange County (CHOC) have been jointly designated a National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD) Rare Disease Center of Excellence, a new and select group of 31 medical centers expanding research and access to advanced care for U.S. patients with rare diseases.

The NORD Center of Excellence program aims to foster the sharing of knowledge, to connect patients to appropriate specialists regardless of disease or geography, and to improve the pace of progress in rare disease diagnosis, treatment and research. The center will increase access for many rare disease patients and improve clinical care and research for patients of all ages and backgrounds across Southern California.

The NORD designation is a "wonderful and important opportunity" for CHOC and UCI Health to work together and build on each other's strengths to find creative ways to help patients with one of the 7,000 rare diseases with no treatment currently available, says UCI Health pediatric genetics specialist Dr. Virginia E. Kimonis, a professor of genetic and genomic medicine at the UCI School of Medicine's Department of Pediatrics.





Alan Powell's painting has flourished since he had surgery to control seizures.

Curing an Artist's Seizures

UCI Health epilepsy experts help artist reclaim his life's work.

WRITTEN BY VICTORIA CLAYTON
PHOTOGRAPHED BY MICHAEL BECKER

To call Alan Powell a Renaissance man is about right. The artist, who now lives near Joshua Tree with his wife, Nancy DeVore, had lived an extraordinary life until the strange bodily sensations he had occasionally experienced worsened, leading to long hospitalizations and leaving him unable to pursue his passions: painting and music.

Diagnosed with a seizure disorder that was resistant to standard treatment, Powell was referred to the UCI Health Comprehensive Epilepsy Center, home to Orange County's only academic epilepsy program and one of the leading centers in Southern California. It was there that Powell realized his medical team was determined not only to stop his seizures but also to restore his creativity and quality of life — outcomes he thought were unattainable.

"I was struck by how much the doctors cared about my art," says Powell, now 67.

"Their goal was always to have me come out in as good a shape as possible to continue to paint and make music. I could tell that this came straight from their hearts. They were truly concerned about me and what I could do with my life."

That is the ethos of the UCI Health epilepsy team, says Dr. Mona Sazgar, a nationally regarded neurologist and epileptologist. "Working together, we really can change lives. We can help people get back to work, to driving, to their lives and families. That's the most satisfying thing about our jobs."

"We work with the most difficult-to-treat patients, ones that a lot of other programs have given up on," adds Powell's neurosurgeon, Dr. Sumeet Vadera. "We don't give up."

Powell spent his childhood in the Missouri town of Creve Coeur — or "broken heart," as his mother would sometimes say. Later he attended UC



Dr. Mona Sazgar



Dr. Sumeet Vadera

Berkeley on a scholarship to study physics in the 1970s. “I was asked to leave almost as quickly as I got there,” he admits, saying he partied instead of attending class.

An accomplished musician whose guitars were always within reach, he was soon playing gigs with well-known musicians in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Ultimately, though, he chose his true love: painting. Powell studied at the University of Tennessee’s School of Art in Knoxville under several art world luminaries, including renowned artist Pam Longobardi.

After graduating, Powell made his way back to California, settling in Orange County and establishing a career as an artist and graphic designer. Yet something else was always lurking in the background. Since childhood, he’d occasionally have what he described as out-of-body experiences. It wasn’t until 2013, when he had these episodes more frequently — even suffering a serious fall during one — that doctors diagnosed Powell with epilepsy and prescribed dilantin, a common anti-seizure medication.

But it didn’t halt his seizures. Over the next few years, his convulsions progressed in frequency and severity despite increasingly stronger medications.

About a third of people with epilepsy don’t respond sufficiently to medication, Vadera says. Moreover, repeated seizures irritate the brain. Combined with heavy medications, seizure disorders can take a toll on patients.

Eventually, Powell couldn’t manage the complicated, ever-evolving computer programs he used in graphic design and digital video production. Nor could he

paint or play music. His seizures routinely landed him in emergency rooms and even intensive care for prolonged grand mal attacks, the most dangerous type.

In 2016, Powell and DeVore moved from Fullerton to the Joshua Tree area, where the landscape had always resonated with him. “Life with chronic seizures just looked bleak and scary though,” explains DeVore, who found her husband several times amid full-blown seizure episodes.

After one seizure landed Powell in Hi-Desert Medical Center and he had to be airlifted to a Palm Springs-area hospital, a neurologist there convinced him to consult with Sazgar at the nationally recognized level 4 epilepsy center. That’s when Powell’s life began to change. Sazgar, along with Vadera, evaluated him, eventually concluding that he was a good candidate for epilepsy surgery.

As one of the most respected epilepsy centers in the nation, the UCI Health team performs a significant number of surgical procedures each year to ameliorate seizures. Home to a state-of-the-art monitoring unit, the center’s doctors conduct tests to identify which parts of the brain are generating the seizures.

With Powell, the team decided first on an ultraconservative approach. Vadera performed a minimally invasive laser procedure guided with magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). The goal was to abrade or scrape the specific area in his brain where the seizures originated. The procedure went well, but Powell continued to experience worsening seizures.

A battery of assessments — including an MRI scan, an electroencephalogram (EEG) and a positron emission tomography (PET) scan — indicated that Powell’s

seizures were occurring in a deeper part of his temporal lobe. The team proposed another more difficult measure.

For Powell, that something else was removing his right temporal lobe — a section of the brain about the size of a baby’s fist that sits behind the eyes and extends to the ears. The medical team knew that this area of the brain is responsible for visual and spatial memory — both extremely important for someone with a fine arts background. But they determined that removing the damaged area would stop the seizures and that other parts of his brain could potentially compensate.

On Nov. 25, 2020, Vadera performed the right anterior lobectomy. “People have so many misconceptions and fears about surgery, but especially brain surgery,” he says. “So I give a lot of credit to patients for having the courage to go forward.”

Within weeks, Powell was functioning and thinking more clearly. “Best of all, the seizures stopped.”

Then the real miracle happened. After six years being unable to paint, Powell picked up his brushes again, feeling a surge in creativity that had been missing from his life for even longer.

“I’m painting prolifically right now,” he says, a year after his brain surgery. “The work I’ve done recently is by far the best of my lifetime. It’s good to be able to do what you love.”

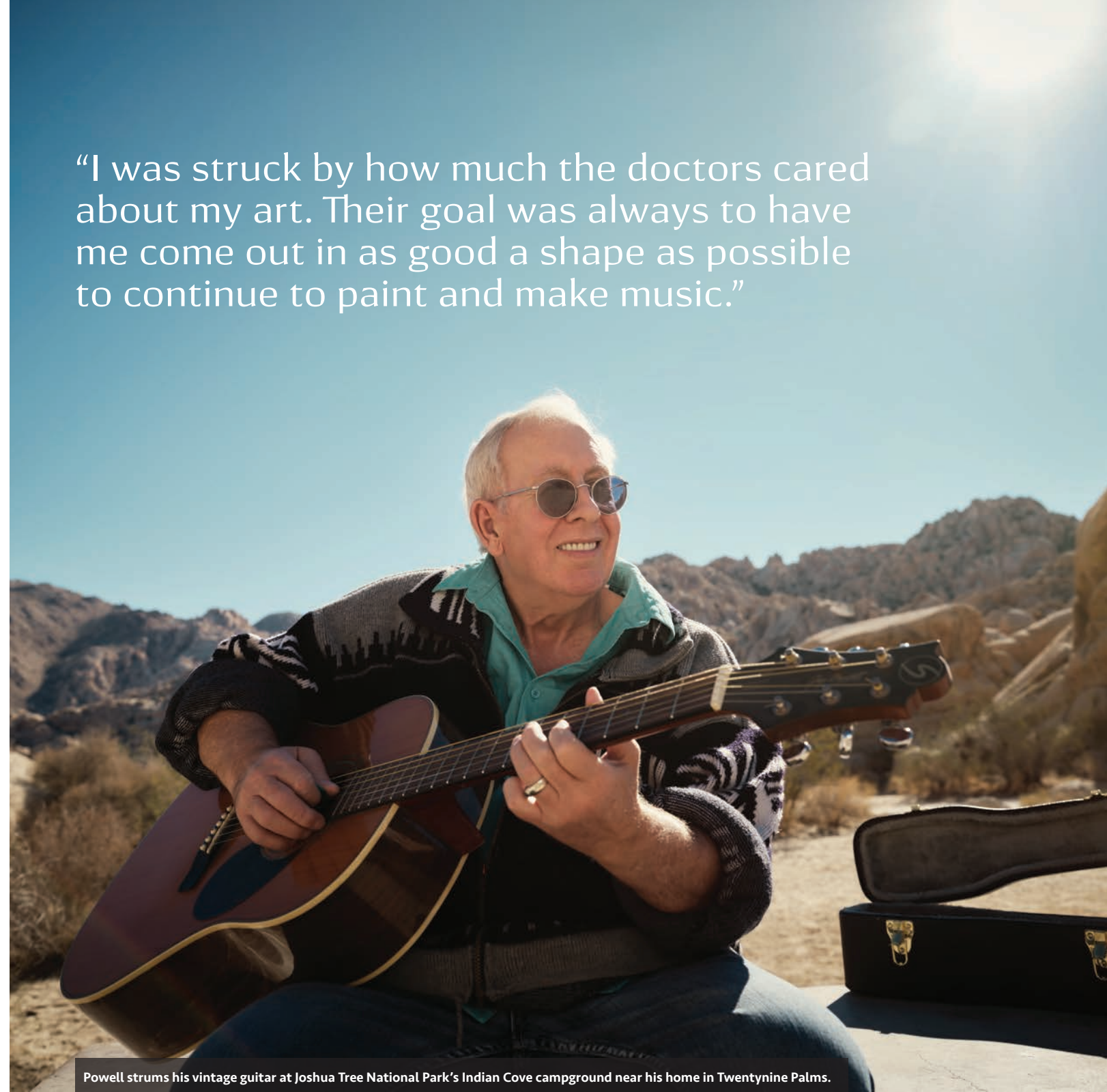
An inveterate jokester, he now tells people that if they are “ever fortunate enough” to be as sick as he was, there’s only one place to go: UCI Health.

“When I first got diagnosed, I remember telling a doctor friend that I didn’t want epilepsy,” Powell recalls. “He told me, ‘Well, you can’t get rid of it.’ But guess what? With UCI Health, Nan and I learned that you can.”

That’s exactly the message Sazgar and Vadera want to emphasize. The UCI Health team tailors its approach for each patient, with many treatments available to effectively eliminate or significantly reduce seizures. These include offering the latest medications, implanting devices to provide neurostimulation and other procedures like Powell’s.

Sazgar is also a nationally prominent expert in catamenial epilepsy, a seizure disorder associated with women’s hormonal

“I was struck by how much the doctors cared about my art. Their goal was always to have me come out in as good a shape as possible to continue to paint and make music.”



Powell strums his vintage guitar at Joshua Tree National Park’s Indian Cove campground near his home in Twentynine Palms.

changes. The disorder makes it difficult for women of childbearing age to navigate epilepsy through pregnancy and nursing.

“Sometimes I’ll meet people who have suffered with seizures for decades. They can’t drive; they can’t work. It really takes such a toll on their lives and their families,” she says. “I just wish everyone knew we are here. Our mission is to find ways to stop seizures — no matter your

age or however long you’ve had them.”

Powell still takes some medication as a precaution but he hopes to be completely free of the drugs in the near future. He hasn’t had a seizure in well over a year.

He’s not only painting with renewed purpose and inspiration, he’s indulging his interests in science, math and spirituality. In fact, his paintings aim to convey the idea that we may be spiritual beings

having a human experience.

“I’m as surprised as anyone to say this, but this is one of the most exciting times in my life,” he says. “It’s almost like I’m bumping into the real me for the first time.” ■

Learn more about epilepsy services at ucihealth.org/epilepsy





Dr. Brian R. Smith takes a comprehensive approach to weight loss with patients like Michael Feldman, right.

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH WEIGHT LOSS

The UCI Health bariatric program aims for great outcomes that last a lifetime.

WRITTEN BY SHARI ROAN | PHOTOGRAPHED BY MICHAEL DER

The COVID-19 pandemic has unexpectedly refocused Americans on obesity as a major health concern. About 70% of American adults are overweight or obese, and studies show that obesity heightens the risks for a poor outcome among people who contract the virus. Moreover, many people are coping with weight gain related to a year in which we stopped going to gyms, worked from home and couldn't partake in many of the physical activities we enjoy. *Live Well* asked Dr. Brian R. Smith, a board-certified UCI Health gastrointestinal surgeon, to talk about bariatric surgery for people who have been unable to lose weight with diet and lifestyle changes alone.

Why is bariatric surgery an important option to improve health?

Diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, joint damage, severe sleep apnea and gastroesophageal reflux disease are all serious

conditions linked to obesity. Over the last five years, patients considering bariatric surgery have become much better informed about these secondary health problems. Now it's less about looking better and more about improving overall health and eliminating weight-related medical conditions.

How long should you try lifestyle and diet modification before considering bariatric surgery?

Bariatric surgery should always be a last resort. But you may be a candidate for bariatric surgery if you have a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or higher — or 35 or higher in combination with such health problems as high blood pressure, high cholesterol or diabetes.

What's involved? Can you just show up one day for surgery?

Quite the opposite. Insurance carriers nowadays require patients to undergo up to six months of medically supervised weight loss

before approving them for surgery. This is to ensure patients are actively committed to losing weight and changing their lifestyles, a predictor of success long before surgery.

Is bariatric surgery typically effective?

Studies show that more than 90% of people who have bariatric surgery maintain at least 50% of the weight lost after the procedure. Patients who lose significant weight also experience a 60% to 80% improvement in obesity-related health problems. Type 2 diabetes can be put into remission about 70% of the time after sufficient weight loss.

What is bariatric surgery?

There are two mainstream options: sleeve gastrectomy and Roux-en-Y gastric bypass. The first procedure restricts the size of the stomach to reduce the amount of food you can eat. The Roux-en-Y also restricts the size of the stomach but it bypasses some of the digestive tract to limit calorie absorption as food passes through your intestines. Both are minimally invasive procedures. Cosmetically, they are indistinguishable. We also offer an endoscopic bariatric procedure that is not covered by insurance.

How do patients choose which procedure to have?

We also do perioperative evaluations to determine which procedure may be better for the patient. A sleeve gastrectomy, for example, may worsen a patient's gastroesophageal reflux disease. If the two procedures are equal, I educate the patient and allow them to choose.

What happens after surgery?

If a patient thinks of surgery like a diet — a short-term behavior change with an endpoint — they will lose weight then regain it. The operation isn't the only key to success. You need to think of success as a three-legged stool: the operation, regular exercise and making consistently good dietary choices. If you lack any one leg, the stool tips over.

What distinguishes the UCI Health bariatric program?

We have a truly comprehensive program. We offer nonoperative approaches, such as medical management, as well as endoscopic and surgical options. Our multidisciplinary team also includes a social worker who counsels patients through their continuum of care; a dietitian who meets with the patient at every visit to support their weight loss, as well as psychiatrists and psychologists who help evaluate patients before and after surgery. We also have support groups that connect patients with others who have or are going through the process.

Which patients do best?

The most successful ones find a physical activity that doubles as a hobby. For example, patients who take up biking often meet other people who bike regularly. They serve as good influences and new friends with whom to share their passion. I tell my patients to find an activity they love, something they look forward to doing. Then the weight loss will seem easy. ■



CHOOSING A BARIATRICS PROGRAM

UCI Health has created a bariatrics program recognized for quality and patient safety. We are:

- Certified by the American College of Surgeons' Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program as a Level 1 bariatric surgery center by the American College of Surgeons.
- A certified member of the Optum Centers of Excellence Program for bariatric surgery.
- Designated a Blue Distinction Center for bariatric surgery by the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association..
- One of only four U.S. bariatric programs designated a Boeing Center of Excellence.

Learn more at ucihealth.org/bariatric





A LUCKY TURN OF FATE

Joining a study for expectant moms likely saved two lives.

WRITTEN BY NANCY BRANDS WARD
PHOTOGRAPHED BY MICHAEL DER

When 22-year-old Tatum Miller learned about the NuMoM2b study being conducted by UCI Health, she thought participating would be a great way to have more ultrasounds to document her first pregnancy.

"I went for my first appointment thinking I would get a few more pictures of my baby," Miller says.

She never imagined that ultrasound in May 2011 would ultimately save her life and that of her baby girl — now a spunky, baseball-playing 10-year-old named Payton.

UCI Health sonographer Valerie Pham detected a mass on Miller's ovary and alerted Dr. Judith Chung, a UCI obstetrician specializing in high-risk pregnancies who was helping to conduct the study.

"I didn't have any symptoms," Miller recalls. "But when someone tells you there's something on your ovaries, you take it seriously."

The mass — a tumor nearly the size of a baseball — turned out to be granulosa cell ovarian cancer. This rare type of cancer accounts for only 2% of all ovarian tumors. Its symptoms can include vague bloating, discomfort in the pelvis or bladder, and bowel changes. Miller hadn't noticed anything.

Dr. Robert E. Bristow, then chief of

Tatum Miller and baby Evie look on as sister Payton and brother Easton tumble from a park slide.



Tatum Miller and Evan Rankhorn, right, enjoy an afternoon outing with Easton, 3, Evie, 6 months, and Payton, 10.

UCI Health gynecologic oncology, recommended surgery. The tumor was situated underneath the uterus, which meant he couldn't remove it using a minimally invasive laparoscopic technique. Instead, a month after the mass was first detected, he performed open surgery, gently pushing aside the uterus to remove the tumor and the ovary it was attached to.

There is some risk to the surgery, which in the best case is performed during the second trimester, but Bristow said the chance of the cancer worsening tipped the balance in favor of proceeding immediately.

"Going into the surgery, I was really nervous — there was a chance I could lose my child," says Miller, who was 16 weeks into her pregnancy. "Dr. Bristow made me feel really comfortable. He explained what would happen step-by-step. Afterward he came into the recovery room and told me the baby was safe."

"The ability to successfully intervene during pregnancy to take out the tumor and make sure it was in the early stages was key," says Bristow, a nationally

regarded gynecologic oncologist who now leads the UCI School of Medicine's Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology. "If we had to wait to remove the tumor until she delivered several months later, we risked it developing into a much higher stage cancer."

Had the expectant mother not chosen to participate in the study, Chung says the tumor may not have been detected until much later in the pregnancy, if at all.

"It's a miracle they found it," says Miller, her voice thick with emotion in retelling the story more than 10 years later. "I call Payton my miracle baby — she saved my life."

Because it was an early-stage cancer, she did not undergo other treatments such as chemotherapy. Ten years later, she remains free of cancer. Bristow says her risk of recurrence is very low, although she still needs to remain vigilant.

After Payton's birth, Miller believed she couldn't have more children. However, she and her partner, Evan Rankhorn, have been happily surprised by the arrivals of their son, Easton, now 3, and daughter Evie, now 6 months.

All three of Miller's children were brought into the world by Chung, who saw no evidence of cancer when she delivered Evie in July.

"I won't go to anyone else," vows Miller, who switched to Chung's care after her obstetrician at the time told her not to worry about the mass revealed by the UCI Health ultrasound. "Dr. Bristow was amazing, too. UCI is a fantastic hospital, and I will never go anywhere else. They saved my life."

Miller still participates in the NuMoM2b study, which now includes more than 100,000 U.S. women. It was launched in 2010 to identify markers or mechanisms underlying adverse pregnancy outcomes in participants with first-time pregnancies.

Says Chung: "Besides providing top-notch medical care, the research we are able to do furthers medical knowledge — and helps all our patients in the process." ■

Learn more about high-risk maternity services at ucihealth.org/highriskpregnancy



Breaking ground (from left to right): UCI campus architect James Pratt; UCI Medical School Dean Dr. Michael J. Stamos; UCI Vice Chancellor, Health Affairs Dr. Steve A.N. Goldstein; UC Regent John Pérez; UCI Chancellor Howard Gillman; UC Health Executive Vice President Dr. Carrie Byington; Irvine Mayor Farrah N. Khan; UCI Health CEO Chad Lefteris; and Brian Hervey, UCI vice chancellor for advancement.

SHOVEL READY

More than 100 community leaders, donors and officials gathered on Nov. 16, 2021, to break ground for a \$1.3 billion medical complex on the UC Irvine campus. It will be home to a 144-bed hospital and emergency room, the Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center and Ambulatory Care building, the Center for Children's Health and the Center for Advanced Care, an outpatient and specialty care facility. The Children's Health Center and Center for Advanced Care will open in early 2023, with the hospital and cancer center to follow in 2025.

HOCKEY FIGHTS CANCER NIGHT

The Anaheim Ducks and UCI Health celebrated Hockey Fights Cancer Night with special guest Sean Ramos, whose mantle cell lymphoma is in remission a year after receiving a bone marrow stem cell transplant through the UCI Health Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center. Ramos, 51, dropped the ceremonial puck to start the Nov. 18 game at the Honda Center in Anaheim. Fans, team members, the Ramos family, his doctors and even Ducks mascot Wild Wing raised placards in honor of loved ones for whom they will fight to cure cancer.



The Ramos family: Rebecca, Mikayla, Sean, Max, Luke and Liam



(Poised for the puck drop, from left to right, are Ducks center Ryan Getzlaf, Ducks President of Business Operations Aaron Teats, bone marrow transplant patient Sean Ramos, UCI Health CEO Chad Lefteris, Carolina Hurricanes center Jordan Staal.

HEALTH CLASSES

Improve your well-being and prevent disease with our health classes. Most are free, but some do have fees.

All classes are being held online via Zoom until further notice. Registration is required. All classes are one session unless otherwise noted.

Visit ucihealth.org/events or call 657-282-6357 for more information.

ACUPRESSURE FOR LABOR PAIN
Feb. 10, March 10, April 10, May 12, June 9 | 7-8 p.m.

ADVANCE DIRECTIVES
March 24, June 23, Sept. 22 | Noon-1:30 p.m.

BREASTFEEDING
Feb. 3, March 3, April 7, May 5, June 2, July 7 | 6-9 p.m.

HEALTHY LIVING
English: Feb. 8, 22, March 8, 22, April 5, 19, May 10, 24, June 7, 21 | 3-4 p.m.
Spanish: Feb. 8, 22, March 8, 22, April 5, 19, May 10, 24, June 7, 21 | 2-3 p.m.

JOINT REPLACEMENT, HIP OR KNEE
Every Thursday, except holidays | 11 a.m.-noon

LIVING WELL WITH HEART FAILURE
Feb. 8, May 10 | 4-5 p.m.

MEDITATION FOR HEALTH (four classes)
March 7, 14, 21, 28 | 6:30-7:30 p.m.

MEDITATION: BODY SCAN RELAXATION
April 11 | 6:30-7:30 p.m.

MEDITATION: BREATHING
May 9 | 6:30-7:30 p.m.

NEWBORN CARE
Feb. 10, March 19, April 14, May 12, June 9 | 6-8 p.m.

PREPARED CHILDBIRTH (five classes)
Mondays | 6-9 p.m.
June 6, 13, 20, 27, July 11



TUESDAYS | 6-9 p.m.
Feb. 22, March 1, 8, 10 (Thurs), and 15
March 22, 29, April 5, 7 (Thurs) and 12
May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31
Wednesdays | 6-9 p.m.
March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
April 6, 13, 17, May 4, 11
May 18, 25, June 1, 8, 15

PREPARING FOR SURGERY — MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT
First Monday of each month | Noon-1:30 p.m.

STROKE PREVENTION
English: March 30, May 25 | 4-5 p.m.
Spanish: March 29, May 24 | 4-5 p.m.
To register, call 866-STROKE-3 (866-787-6533).

TAI CHI FOR WELLNESS (six classes)
Feb. 18, 25, March 4, 11, 18, 25 | 11-11:30 a.m.
April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, May 6 | 11-11:30 a.m.
May 13, 20, 27, June 3, 10, 17 | 11-11:30 a.m.

MEDICARE EDUCATION CLASSES

If you will be eligible for Medicare in 2022, join a virtual class to learn the A, B, C & Ds of coverage.
Feb. 16, March 16, April 27, June 15 | 5:30-6:30 p.m.
Register at ucihealth.org/medicare or call 714-456-2210.

EVENTS

UCI Health and UCI are proud to sponsor community events that provide information about a variety of health issues. Due to COVID-19, most of our lectures and events are being held virtually.

NEWPORT BEACH LIBRARY "MEDICINE IN OUR BACKYARD" LECTURE SERIES

Feb. 28 | Preventive Cardiology: Strategies to keep you and your heart healthy, Andy Huang, MD
March 28 | Making colonoscopies smarter with artificial intelligence, William E. Karnes, MD
April 25 | Advances in gynecologic cancer care, Krishnansu S. Tewari, MD

Presentations begin at 7 p.m., but the virtual doors open at 6:50 p.m. Email kupshaw@nbplf.foundation or call 949-717-3818 for the Zoom link. A Q&A will follow the presentations.

GAVIN HERBERT EYE INSTITUTE COMMUNITY LECTURE SERIES

March 8 | Help for dry eyes, Olivia L. Lee, MD, and Matthew Wade, MD
April 5 | Prevention strategies for age-related macular degeneration, Andrew Browne, MD
May 10 | Double vision: Causes and treatments, Vivek R. Patel, MD
June 7 | Why your child's prescription changes frequently, Donny W. Suh, MD

Visit eye.uci.edu/lectureRSVP.html to register for these online presentations, which begin at 7 p.m. For more information, email ghei@uci.edu or call 949-824-7243.

SUE & BILL GROSS STEM CENTER COMMUNITY SEMINAR

March 18 | Synthetic Human Embryos and Synthetic Organs, Ali H. Brivanlou, PhD, The Rockefeller University
April 1 | ALS Disease Mechanisms and Therapeutic Targets Discovered With Patient Stem Cells, Justin Ichida, PhD, USC Stem Cell, Los Angeles

These free virtual community lectures are held from 11 a.m. to noon. For more information or to register, email stemcell@uci.edu or call 949-824-3990.

SUPPORT GROUPS

ADVANCED HEART FAILURE & VAD SUPPORT GROUP
714-456-7514

BARIATRIC SUPPORT GROUP
714-456-6185

BLADDER CANCER SUPPORT GROUP
714-456-2846

BRAIN INJURY SUPPORT GROUP
714-509-2524

BRAIN TUMOR SUPPORT GROUP
714-456-5812

BURN SURVIVORS SUPPORT GROUP
714-456-7437

CHRONIC LYMPHOCYTIC LEUKEMIA
tevens@cillsociety.org

DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP
949-755-8531

HEAD AND NECK CANCER SUPPORT GROUP
714-509-6311

INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE SUPPORT GROUP
714-456-7057

KOREAN WOMEN'S CANCER SUPPORT GROUP
714-456-8319

LOW VISION SUPPORT GROUP
949-824-9771

MULTIPLE MYELOMA SUPPORT GROUP
800-452-2873, ext. 233

NORMAL PRESSURE HYDROCEPHALUS (NPH)
714-456-6966

OSTOMY ASSOCIATION OF ORANGE COUNTY
714-637-7971

PANCREATIC CANCER SUPPORT GROUP
714-456-7057

STROKE SUPPORT GROUP
866-STROKE-3 (866-787-6533)

TRIGEMINAL NEURALGIA ASSOCIATION
714-944-3044

YOUNG ADULT CANCER SUPPORT GROUP
714-509-6311

To learn more about our support groups, call the numbers listed or visit ucihealth.org/events





James Alvarez and daughter Adalyn Rose

PHOTO BY TAMEKA JACOBS

GRIEF GIVES WAY TO PURPOSE, HOPE

Aug. 11, 2020, was a day of unimaginable horror for James Alvarez. Then 35, he was walking with his pregnant wife, Yesenia, in Anaheim on a pleasant summer evening. They were discussing the upcoming birth of their first child, a daughter they had already named Adalyn Rose Alvarez-Aguilar, who was due the following month.

Suddenly a car jumped the curb and struck Yesenia. The 23-year-old died that day at UCI Medical Center, but doctors saved the baby's life. Today, Alvarez, who works for a law firm, views his child as a gift that emerged from unspeakable tragedy. He volunteers with MOMS Orange County, a nonprofit devoted to the health of pregnant women and newborns. He teaches new dads what he knows best: how to lovingly care for a baby.

“ The sunset that evening was beautiful. We were walking when I saw a car coming straight at us on the sidewalk. It happened so fast. We froze. I grabbed her hand. Then I couldn't feel her hand anymore. She was trampled. It was the most traumatic thing I've ever experienced. All our dreams, goals and ambitions — they were just gone.

The ambulance arrived, and I told the paramedics she was 36 weeks pregnant. I said, 'Please try to save my wife. Please try to save my daughter.' A police officer said, 'If she has any chance of living, UCI Medical Center will be able to help her.' They couldn't save my wife, but they saved our daughter. Dr. Rebecca Coleman performed CPR and resuscitated my daughter. It was midnight when I finally saw her; she was covered with all these tubes. It broke my heart. She didn't deserve to come into the world this way.

I realized then, hey, I'm going to have to do this on my own. Going through the pregnancy, my wife and I were a team. We took the pregnancy very seriously. We wanted to be the best parents possible. Adalyn was in the UCI Health neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) for three weeks. I was preparing for my wife's funeral and preparing for my daughter's survival at the same time.

The nurses understood what I was going through and dedicated themselves to keeping me involved. They gave me the confidence to be able to say, 'Even though my wife isn't here, I can do this on my own.' UCI Health has been a blessing. Adalyn is now such a healthy, normal baby. She has helped me overcome my grief. She reminds me so much of my wife.

I am so happy to tell my story at MOMS Orange County. I want to help others. I want to show that my wife didn't die in vain. I have been able to use what I have learned. Society sometimes believes parenting is the woman's job. I want to show the world that fathers have a purpose too. Fathers can fill the same parenting roles. Men can have a beautiful bond with their children.

I would like to see our organization get the funding it needs to extend these classes. I believe having a brighter future starts with our children.

— James Alvarez

Learn more about neonatal care at ucihealth.org/nicu



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UCI Anti-Cancer Challenge

THE END OF CANCER BEGINS HERE.

When you ride, run or walk for the **2022 UCI Anti-Cancer Challenge** on **June 4**, you join a community dedicated to advancing innovative cancer research at the UCI Health Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center. Every dollar raised supports promising pilot studies and early-phase clinical trials to help prevent, treat and cure cancer — to save lives.

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT ANTI-CANCERCHALLENGE.ORG



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