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UCSF Fresno
Clinical Research Center offers new treatments and improved patient care

For nearly 40 years, faculty at UCSF Fresno Medical Education Program have conducted research aimed at better understanding and enhancing treatments for a wide variety of health conditions, particularly those that impact San Joaquin Valley residents. Among the research studies and clinical trials currently ramping up at UCSF Fresno are those aimed at enhancing the ability to diagnose and treat Valley fever, improving the diagnosis and treatment of venomous snakebites and improving pulmonary function in patients with motor neuron diseases. Up until now, however, faculty and staff members involved in research projects have been situated at various locations.

On Thursday, Oct. 10, 2013, UCSF Fresno will celebrate the opening of its Clinical Research Center, which will bring these faculty and staff under one roof. At 5 p.m., City of Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearengin will join UCSF Fresno’s Associate Dean Joan Voris, MD, and Chief of Medicine Michael Peterson, MD, for a ribbon cutting. Faculty, staff, community partners and friends of UCSF Fresno will take part in a reception and tours from 5 to 8 p.m.

The 3,300-square-foot UCSF Fresno Clinical Research Center, located on the third floor of the UCSF Fresno Center for Medical Education and Research in downtown Fresno (155 N. Fresno St.) consolidates more than 350 clinical research projects in one center.

“The new UCSF Fresno Center for Clinical Research allows us to provide space for investigators and research coordinators to work closely together, to see study subjects in a pleasant and well-equipped space, provide technical support for studies and provides the facilities to develop a tissue bank for future studies such as in Valley fever,” said Peterson. “Very few institutions have this type of facility that is focused on patient-based research. This facility is an excellent resource and offers many benefits to the people of Fresno and Central San Joaquin Valley.”

The new center enhances UCSF Fresno’s ability to offer a variety of research studies and clinical trials, which will make more treatment options available and improve patient care. For example, investigators at UC Merced, UCSF Fresno, Fresno State, Children’s Hospital Central California and health departments in Fresno, Kings, Tulare and Kern counties are coming together to develop a consortium focused on studying Valley fever. According to the Centers for Disease Control, researchers estimate that each year as many as 150,000 people are infected by Coccidioides, the fungus that causes Valley fever. Many of them are sick without knowing why or without being diagnosed.
Other research projects under way at UCSF Fresno include studies into amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), cancers of the breast, prostate, and thyroid, liver diseases such as cirrhosis and hepatitis C, Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension, stroke, pediatric and adult poisonings, and HIV/AIDS among many others.

The Clinical Research Center was established thanks to donations totaling more than $1 million from numerous local organizations and individuals, including major gifts from University Centers of Excellence/Central California Faculty Medical Group, the Van Gundy Family, The Waterford Foundation/Assemi Family, the late B.C. “Bing” Bingham and wife Wanda Bingham, American Ambulance and the Borba Families.

UCSF Fresno Medical Education Program, established in 1975, plays a substantial role in providing healthcare services to residents of California's San Joaquin Valley and training medical professionals in the region. A clinical branch of UC San Francisco (UCSF), the medical education program has trained approximately one-third of Central San Joaquin Valley physicians. Annually, UCSF Fresno currently trains approximately 245 medical residents in eight specialties, nearly 50 fellows in 14 subspecialties and about 250 medical students on a rotating basis.

UCSF Fresno faculty and medical residents engage in a broad spectrum of research addressing health issues pertinent to the Valley. UCSF Fresno faculty and residents also care for the overwhelming majority of the region’s underserved populations.

In addition, UCSF Fresno provides academic preparation programs for middle- and high school students interested in the health professions through the Doctors Academy and Junior Doctors Academy. UCSF Fresno is a key partner in the UC Merced San Joaquin Valley Program in Medical Education.

UCSF is a leading university dedicated to promoting health worldwide through advanced biomedical research, graduate-level education in the life sciences and health professions, and excellence in patient care. It includes top-ranked graduate schools of dentistry, medicine, nursing and pharmacy, a graduate division with nationally renowned programs in basic biomedical, translational and population sciences, as well as a preeminent biomedical research enterprise and two top-ranked hospitals, UCSF Medical Center and UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital.

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