According to an African proverb, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” This adage speaks well to the role UCSF Fresno plays in training and retaining physicians in California’s San Joaquin Valley and the partnerships required to carry out the mission.

UCSF Fresno was created as a graduate medical education campus of UC San Francisco in 1975 with support from the state legislature and Veterans Administration to address physician shortages in the Valley. Today, UCSF Fresno is the largest physician-training program between Sacramento and Los Angeles.

In line with UCSF’s mission of advancing human health, UCSF Fresno is focused on improving health in the region through excellence in medical education, providing outstanding patient care, conducting innovative clinical research, and giving back to the community.

Our success and growth over the past 43 years are a result of the dedication of our faculty and staff as well as the eagerness of our fellows, residents and medical students to learn and to provide care where it is needed most. Our success also is inextricably linked to the support and cooperation of our clinical partners, donors and friends of UCSF Fresno.

Training and patient care at UCSF Fresno are provided through a network of affiliated partners. We depend on our clinical partners for the training grounds and they depend on our faculty physicians and trainees to care for patients. More than 200,000 patients are treated each year by UCSF Fresno physicians at all clinical partner sites. Imagine if UCSF Fresno wasn’t here. At a minimum, the shortage of physicians in the region would be much worse.

Our goal at UCSF Fresno is to make a difference, care for the underserved, research Valley health issues and teach and inspire future generations of clinicians and patient advocates.

Still, the best health outcomes are the result of teamwork. Patients, physicians, allied health professionals, health care administrators, policy makers, legislators, community leaders and everyone in our community – working together to improve the status of health in our region.

As you read our inaugural annual report, I am confident you will agree: We are committed to recruiting and retaining the best and brightest physicians to care, heal, teach and discover. We remain focused on our shared goal of addressing the health care needs of our region and improving overall health outcomes in the Valley.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Peterson, MD, FCCP, MACP
Valley Medical Foundation Professor
UCSF Fresno Chief of Medicine
UCSF Vice Chair of Medicine
UCSF Associate Dean, UCSF Fresno
Simon Paul MD  
Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs

As assistant dean for Academic Affairs, I lead development of academic activities for all UCSF faculty at UCSF Fresno. Academic Affairs involves searching for and recruiting faculty and reviewing the academic progress of clinical faculty. In addition, Academic Affairs supports faculty development and mentoring. I recently implemented orientations for new faculty to help them understand and navigate the roles, responsibilities and resources at UCSF Fresno. The goal of Academic Affairs is to maintain the outstanding professional work, teaching, research and creative activities of faculty at UCSF Fresno.

Kenny Banh, MD, FACEP  
Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education (UME)

As assistant dean for UME, I oversee the training of medical student and other allied health programs at UCSF Fresno (e.g. physician assistant, nurse practitioner and oral and maxillofacial surgery). The goal at UCSF Fresno is to train students to care for our underserved patient populations while addressing health care disparities in the San Joaquin Valley. Under my leadership, UME has grown from less than 100 students rotating here on an annual basis to almost 400. The recent transfer of the San Joaquin Valley Program in Medical Education (SJVR PRIME) from UC Davis to the UCSF School of Medicine paves the way for a branch campus at UCSF Fresno. Beginning in 2019, students in the new UCSF SJVR PRIME will spend more than half of their medical school training at UCSF Fresno. To prepare for this significant milestone, we have grown clinical opportunities for students and increased our offerings in student services, community outreach as well as research opportunities. We also are working with regional partners to expand training opportunities and encourage trainees to consider careers in the Valley. Toward that goal, I have secured foundational funding for a mobile clinic and student learning experience.

Wessel Meyer, MD  
Assistant Dean for the VA Central California Health Care System (VACCHCS)

As assistant dean for VACCHCS, I play an integral role in ensuring that graduate and undergraduate medical education and veterans’ health care are served in a mutually beneficial manner. As assistant dean for UCSF Fresno and the Designated Education Officer at VACCHCS, I am committed to providing a high-quality medical education experience for the next generation of physicians in our community. In addition, as Chief of Staff at VACCHCS, I am dedicated to providing high-quality patient care and services to our veterans, a population with specialized needs as a result of their service and sacrifice for our nation. UCSF Fresno is crucial to the health and well-being of our Valley’s veterans. Faculty at UCSF Fresno who teach and practice at the VA, along with more than 150 UCSF Fresno learners who train and care for veterans at VACCHCS, are integral to providing inpatient and outpatient services in primary care, mental health, medical and surgical subspecialties and long-term care.

Lori Weichenthal, MD, FACEP, RYT  
Assistant Dean for Graduate Medical Education (GME)

As assistant dean for GME, I oversee the accreditation and growth of nine specialty and 17 sub-specialty graduate medical education programs at UCSF Fresno. The goal of GME at UCSF Fresno is to train competent, caring physicians who are interested in serving an underserved patient population while addressing health care disparities. At UCSF Fresno, we have a holistic approach to training future physicians that includes a strong emphasis on physician wellness and diversity and inclusion. As a result of the GME program at UCSF Fresno, almost half of our trainees stay and establish practices in the Valley, helping to address the shortage of physicians that exists in this region.
UCSF Fresno was established in 1975 and housed at the VA Central California Health Care System.

UCSF Fresno Center for Medical Education and Research opened in 2005, consolidating all UCSF Fresno residency program and administrative staff under one roof for the first time.

**Residency Programs**
- Emergency Medicine
- Family and Community Medicine
- Internal Medicine
- Obstetrics/Gynecology
- Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
- Orthopaedic Surgery
- Pediatrics
- Psychiatry
- Surgery

**Fellowship Programs**
- Acute Care Surgery
- Cardiovascular Disease
- Community Pediatrics
- Emergency Medicine Education
- Emergency Ultrasound
- Gastroenterology
- Head and Neck Oncology and Microvascular Reconstruction
- Hematology/Oncology
- HIV
- Hospice and Palliative Medicine
- Hospital Medicine
- Infectious Disease
- Interventional Cardiology
- Maternal Child Health
- Pulmonary Disease/Critical Care
- Sleep Medicine
- Surgical Critical Care
- Wilderness Medicine

**Physician Assistant Residency Programs**
- Acute Care/Trauma Surgery
- Emergency Medicine
- Orthopaedic Surgery

**Fast Facts**
- 9 Residency specialties
- 18 Fellowship subspecialties
- 3 Physician assistant residencies
- 300+ Physicians trained each year
- 14 Years average time to train a physician
- $190k Median education debt for medical school graduates in 2016
- 700 UCSF core and volunteer faculty in Fresno
- 50% Of UCSF Fresno trained physicians stay in the Central Valley to practice
- 300+ Research studies, clinical trials and public service projects
- 100% Match rate for all UCSF Fresno residency programs eight years in a row
- 200k+ Patients cared for annually at clinical partner sites
Partners and Affiliates

As a regional medical campus, UCSF Fresno carries out its training and patient care charge through a network of affiliated partners. Medical residents, fellows and students have the opportunity to work and train in a variety of primary training sites with an impressive list of specialists at major hospitals, health agencies and programs, clinics and physicians' offices. With the only Level 1 Trauma Center between Sacramento and Los Angeles, a regional burn center, acute care hospitals and numerous non-hospital programs, Fresno is the center of health care in the San Joaquin Valley.

UCSF Fresno’s Major Clinical Partners

- Community Regional Medical Center
- Clovis Community Medical Center
- Fresno Heart & Surgical Hospital
- Community Behavioral Health Center
- Community Cancer Institute
- Family HealthCare Network–Deran Koligian Ambulatory Care Center
- Family HealthCare Network – Disease Management Center
- Family HealthCare Network-Surgical Services Center
- VA Central California Health Care System
- Valley Children’s Hospital

Other Affiliated Health Care Institutions and Training Sites

- Advanced Laparoscopic Surgical Associates
- UCSF Fresno Alzheimer & Memory Center
- County of Fresno Department of Behavioral Health
- County of Fresno Department of Public Health
- Eye-Q Vision Care, Fresno
- Family First Health Center, Fresno
- Family Planning Associates, Fresno
- Fresno Surgical Hospital
- Hillblom Center on Aging at UCSF Fresno
- Hinds Hospice
- Kaiser Permanente Fresno Medical Center
- Kaweah Delta Health Care District (Visalia)
- Regional Hand Center of Central California
- Saint Agnes Medical Center
- Sequoia Surgical Pavilion, Visalia
- Sierra Pacific Orthopedics
- UCSF Medical Center
- UCSF Medical Center at Mount Zion
- University Centers of Excellence
- Central Valley Vein & Wound Center (Visalia)
- University Cardiovascular Center
- University Dermatology Associates
- University Diabetes & Endocrine Specialists
- University Gastroenterology & Hepatology Associates

- University Medicine Associates
- University Neurology Associates
- University Neurosciences Institute
- University Neurosciences Institute – Merced
- University Neurosciences Institute – Visalia
- University Obstetrics & Gynecology Center
- University Oncology Associates
- University Orthopaedic Associates (Clovis)
- University Orthopaedic Associates (Fresno)
- University Pediatric Specialists
- University Pediatric Subspecialties
- University Perinatal Associates
- University Psychiatry Associates
- University Pulmonary Associates
- University Sleep and Pulmonary Associates
- University Specialty Surgery Associates
- University Surgical Associates
- University Urology Associates
- University Women’s Specialty Center
- Valley Surgical Specialists
- Valley Vascular Surgery Associates

Rural Training Sites

In addition to traditional rotations in hospitals, the program also provides residents with substantial experience in rural and/or underserved communities through ambulatory rotations – care of patients in community clinics.

- Adventist Medical Center – Reedley
- Adventist Health Community Care – Reedley
- Children’s Health
- Adventist Health Community Care – Reedley Cypress
- Clínica Sierra Vista
- Elm Community Health Center
- Eye-Q Vision Care, Selma
- Golden Valley Health Centers, Merced
- United Health Centers
- Parlier Health Center
More than 100 physicians graduated from UCSF Fresno in 2018. Almost half are staying in the Valley. Some of the recent graduates overcame obstacles, found love and planted roots, literally.

**Andres Anaya, MD**, is a Fresno native, Hoover High School alum and graduate of the UCSF School of Medicine. Dr. Anaya completed a four-year residency in emergency medicine. As a medical student, Anaya conducted third-year rotations in obstetrics/gynecology and surgery at UCSF Fresno. After earning his medical degree, he returned in 2014 for residency training. Anaya’s path to becoming a physician was anything but typical. He is the eldest son of parents of Mexican descent, one, an immigrant and both of whom are deaf. His first language was American Sign Language. At the age of five, Anaya began translating for his family. Economic, cultural and social challenges soon led to academic difficulties for him at school. Following high school, he took a job in a tea factory where he suffered an industrial accident. The accident landed him in the emergency department, leaving him temporarily paralyzed and physically and emotionally traumatized. It took several years to overcome his injuries, but from then on, he set his mind on becoming an emergency medicine physician. Fast forward to today, Anaya realized his goal and will be staying in Fresno to provide medical care.

**Jaimie Brandley, DO**, graduated from Marin High School in Novato, California, went to UC San Diego and graduated from medical school at Touro University California in Vallejo. Dr. Brandley’s father was a bench scientist and her mother was a teacher. After earning an undergraduate degree, Brandley taught high school science in Washington, D.C., as part of Teach for America. A love for both science and teaching and a desire to merge the fields motivated her to become a physician. As a medical student, Brandley completed fourth-year clinical rotations at UCSF Fresno. The welcoming and positive learning environment and the opportunity to work with diverse and underserved patients like the students she taught in D.C. inspired her to come back for residency training. A bondness for children and fulfillment of working with the whole family to improve health drew her to pediatrics. Brandley completed a three-year residency in pediatrics and joined UCSF Fresno as faculty to teach future doctors. While in Fresno, she met the “love of her life” and married him. Husband Kelly Lanham is an F-18 pilot currently stationed at Naval Air Station Lemoore.

**Karndeep Samran, MD**, graduated from Madera High School, attended UC Berkeley and earned his medical degree from Michigan State University. Early on, Samran was drawn to the field of science. Having grown up on his family’s small vineyard in Madera, he originally envisioned a career in agriculture and plant sciences. However, he soon realized he enjoyed interacting with people and began focusing on a career in medicine. Psychiatry was a good fit because it allowed him to hear personal stories and see patients from a holistic perspective. Throughout residency training, Samran started each day by tending plants in his family’s vineyard then headed back to Fresno to take care of patients. Samran completed a four-year residency in psychiatry. After graduation, he planted roots locally, literally, and is giving back to the community by working in the substance use department at the VA Central California Health Care System in Fresno. Frustrated by the stigma involved with mental illness, especially within communities of color, one of Samran’s goals is to promote mental illness awareness.
UCSF Fresno plays a significant role in training and retaining physicians in the Valley and across California. Thanks to the expertise of faculty physicians at UCSF Fresno, travel outside of the region for exceptional care is no longer necessary in most cases. The majority of complex medical cases can be handled effectively right here, faculty and residents at UCSF Fresno also care for the overwhelming majority of underserved populations in and around the Fresno area. UCSF Fresno collaborates with many partners to academically prepare students from diverse backgrounds for careers in health and medicine. And our faculty, trainees and staff members give back to the community in many ways.

UCSF Fresno has trained nearly 3,000 physicians since it was established. About 50% of physicians trained at UCSF Fresno stay in the Central Valley to practice. 85% of physicians trained at UCSF Fresno stay in California.

UCSF Fresno’s 300 residents and fellows provide high-quality health care cost-effectively. The average U.S. resident salary in 2017 was $57,700. In comparison, the average cost to recruit a physician can amount to as much as $88,000.*

*2011 CEJKA Search and AMGA Physician Retention Survey.

UCSF Fresno is building a pipeline of future health care providers in the region. Part of that commitment is the Doctors Academy (DA). Nearly 800 students have graduated from DA programs at Sunnyside, Caruthers and Selma high schools. 100% of DA graduates are admitted to colleges and universities.

The UCSF Fresno Antibiotic Stewardship Program at CRMC, under Naiel Nassar, MD, promotes evidence-based prescription of antibiotics hospital-wide to decrease overuse and prevent microbial resistance. The program has saved over $2 million in under two years and improved overall patient outcomes by switching IV to oral antibiotics, providing routine pharmacist consultations with patients on certain medications and rapid testing for microbial infections.

City of Fresno Mayor Lee Brand practices patient skills on a baby simulator in the UCSF Fresno Clinical Skills Lab.
Outstanding Patient Care: 
UCSF Fresno-CRMC Partnership Saves Lives

Gary Gramenz, PhD, dean of the School of Education at Fresno Pacific University, thought he was getting a cold. When symptoms persisted, he went to his family doctor. Having had pneumonia in the past, he wanted to rule it out. X-rays revealed bilateral pneumonia. He was prescribed antibiotics and went home. Then he took a turn for the worse.

“The next thing I knew, I woke up in the intensive care unit,” said Dr. Gramenz. That’s when he turned to his significant other Maureen Barrett to explain.

“His symptoms became progressively worse,” said Barrett, a registered nurse. “He was weak. He couldn’t walk and his respiration was labored. I immediately called 911.”

Gramenz was taken to a hospital and was soon transferred to Community Regional Medical Center (CRMC).

“At first, I was concerned about Valley fever,” said Mohamed Fayed, MD, a pulmonary and critical care faculty physician at UCSF Fresno and CRMC. “By morning, he wasn’t improving nor responding to the usual management. I knew we had to implement life-saving treatment immediately.”

An acute case of pneumonia and bleeding in the lungs were causing respiratory failure in Gramenz, making him an ideal candidate for ECMO.

Extracorporeal membrane oxygenation or ECMO, coupled with a special, high-level care medical team, gives patients with life-threatening respiratory or cardiac failure new hope for life. The unique UCSF Fresno-CRMC team launched in August 2016. Timothy Evans, MD, PhD, professor of medicine at UCSF Fresno and medical director of the CRMC medical intensive care units led the effort. The team consists of an intensivist, surgeons, cardiologist, specialized nurses, perfusionist, respiratory therapist and physical therapists.

ECMO works by pumping and oxygenating a patient’s blood outside of their body. Blood is pumped through catheters and oxygenated, taking out carbon dioxide before it is warmed to body temperature and returned to the patient. This allows the organs to rest and heal.

“The program is unique in the Valley because of its accreditation and the medical team’s approach,” said Dr. Fayed. “Physicians and the entire ECMO team provide round-the-clock care.”

Over the past year and a half, the team has been critical to saving lives. Gramenz is one of those grateful patients.

“Lots of words come to mind after this experience,” said Gramenz. “Lucky, fortunate, blessed, humbled. Words cannot express my gratitude.”

Thanks to Team ECMO, Gramenz was able to go home and along the way, satisfied a craving for In-N-Out Burger.
One in 2,500 babies is born with craniosynostosis, a birth defect in which one or more of the bones in the skull fuse prematurely, preventing the skull from growing and developing properly. Unfortunately, for Greg and Melody Swarthout of Tulare, their baby, Troy, was that one.

Melody noticed something was different early on.

"At birth, he had a ridge down the center of his head that our other boys didn’t have," she said.

They took a watch and wait approach initially, but the mother of three observed Troy’s head was growing in an oval shape. At almost seven months, Troy’s head was not a typical shape.

Worried and scared, Greg and Melody looked online for other parents dealing with the same issue. That’s when they learned about craniosynostosis. While the exact cause is unknown, there may be a genetic link.

"A lot of families went to the Bay Area for care," said Greg.

The Swarthouts followed up with their pediatrician, who referred them to the UCSF Fresno/Community Medical Center Cleft and Craniofacial Center after hearing a presentation by George Zakhary, DDS, MD, FACS.

A CT scan confirmed what they had suspected. Troy’s skull was developing in an oblong shape like a football. If not fixed, the head shape deformity would persist, causing complications, ranging from permanent head and facial deformity to developmental delays, cognitive complications, blindness or other eye problems, seizures, and in rare cases, death.

Dr. Zakhary, a faculty member with the UCSF Fresno Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (OMFS) Residency Program, reassured the Swarthouts that Troy’s condition could be fixed. The surgical scope of the OMFS program at UCSF Fresno includes trauma, head and neck cancer/malignancies, benign head and neck pathology, microvascular/head and neck reconstruction, dentoalveolar surgery, dental implants, outpatient anesthesia, facial cosmetic surgery, TMJ surgery, oropharyngeal surgery, cleft lip and palate, and reconstructive cranio-maxillofacial surgery.

Within weeks, Troy was scheduled for surgery. Zakhary along with Yu-Hung Kuo, MD, interim chief of neurosurgery at UCSF Fresno, performed the operation mid-week and by Saturday, Troy was home.

Troy’s condition required a cranial vault reshaping surgery, performed by Dr. Kuo, and involved removing the affected parts of Troy’s skull. Dr. Zakhary then reconstructed the pieces into the correct shape and positioned them with resorbable plates and screws. Resorbable plates and screws hold the pieces of skull together and completely dissolve after the bones have healed.

Once the bones have healed, three to six months after surgery, his skull will be as strong and typical as any other child.

The surgery lasted four hours and required a pediatric anesthesiologist and nursing team.

Recovery was fast. Not long after the surgery, Troy started walking at nine months.

"Troy’s outlook is great," said Zakhary. "He is developing like any other child without craniosynostosis."

"It’s amazing looking at the before and after CT scans," said Melody. "It’s also amazing how quick it was (the whole process). If he didn’t have a scar, I don’t think you’d be able to tell he had surgery."

"We think he’s perfect," she said. Indeed, as he celebrates his first birthday this month, Troy’s cheerful personality, inquisitive nature and a dimple on his cheek when he smiles are his most noticeable features.

Scholarship at-a-Glance

117
Publications by faculty at UCSF Fresno

23
National and regional honors and awards presented to faculty and residents at UCSF Fresno

286
Open research studies

500
Health professionals and others attended UCSF Fresno conferences

24
New academic grants and contracts awarded to faculty at UCSF Fresno

8
Academic conferences hosted

85
Quality improvement projects
Academy of Medical Educators Honors UCSF Fresno’s Loren Alving, MD

In 2000, UCSF established one of the first two Academies of Medical Educators in the U.S. along with Harvard University. This honorary society recognizes the most outstanding medical educators and brings them together to provide a resource for all teaching faculty and faculty development. UCSF Fresno’s Loren Alving, MD, director of the UCSF Fresno Alzheimer and Memory Center, was recently elected to the Academy. Dr. Alving joins 10 other members of the Academy in Fresno.

UCSF Fresno’s Juan Ruvalcaba, MD, Honored with Excellence in Teaching Award

Juan Ruvalcaba, MD, a faculty member in the UCSF Fresno Department of Family and Community Medicine, was recognized with the UCSF 2018 Excellence in Teaching Award by the Hale T. Debas Academy of Medical Educators. This award highlights a group of outstanding teachers of students and residents across all specialties who stand out across all UCSF training sites, including Fresno. The award requires a peer-nominated submission as well as a review process by the Academy to determine recipients. Recipients will be honored at the Celebration of New Members this fall.

UCSF Fresno Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology Contributions Recognized

During this academic year, CRMC received three national awards, including Gynecology Surgery Excellence, Labor and Delivery Excellence and an award for Obstetrics and Gynecology Excellence for demonstrating superior outcomes in women’s health care services. These Healthgrades awards underscore the contributions made by OB/GYN faculty and residents at UCSF Fresno and the high-quality care they provide to patients.

National Award Spotlight

More than 1,000 posters were accepted for display at the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons 2018 Annual Meeting in New Orleans. Only 15 awards were given. The Best in Trauma was awarded to a UCSF Fresno team for “Should Femoral Heads be Sent to Pathology After Arthroplasty for Femoral Neck Fracture?” by Geoffrey Rohlffing, DO; Maximino Brambila, MD; Lisa Husak, MPH; and Jason A. Davis, MD.

Research and Grants

Continuing a seven-year trend, UC San Francisco retained its position this year as the top public recipient of National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding. As a branch campus of UCSF, UCSF Fresno is very much focused on research. Medical research conducted at UCSF Fresno brings cutting-edge treatments to Fresno and the San Joaquin Valley.

The UCSF Fresno Clinical Research Center (CRC) is a dedicated research facility at UCSF Fresno. The CRC employs 20 research staff members who oversee the operation of more than 60 clinical trials currently taking place at UCSF Fresno.

Active clinical trials include
- Acute Myeloid Leukemia
- Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome
- Asthma
- B-Cell Lymphoma
- Bipolar Disorder
- Brain Aneurysm
- Breast Cancer
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Cirrhosis Coronary Artery Disease
- Colorectal Cancer
- Community Acquired Pneumonia
- Cystic Fibrosis
- Type 2 Diabetes
- Glioma
- Heart Failure
- Hospital Acquired Pneumonia
- Interstitial Lung Disease (ILD)
- Intracerebral Hemorrhage
- Ischemic Stroke
- Multiple Myeloma
- Non-Alcoholic Steatohepatitis (fatty liver disease)
- Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer
- Pancreatic Adenocarcinoma
- Pancreatitis
- Pulmonary Hypertension
- Renal Cell Carcinoma
- Respiratory Syncytial Virus
- Sepsis
- Traumatic Spinal Cord Injury
- Urothelial Carcinoma
- Valley fever

Studies are led by UCSF faculty at UCSF Fresno. Funding is provided by the NIH, U.S. Department of Defense, California Office of Health Hazard Assessment, Central California Faculty Medical Group, the Larry L. Hillblom Foundation, the David and Marilyn Britz family and many other individual donors as well as more than two dozen pharmaceutical and medical device companies.

In addition, UCSF Fresno researchers are conducting local population-based studies, including an NIH-funded study investigating the effects of air pollution on immune cell function in pregnant women and newborns and in the subsequent development of allergies in children, and a separate, Cal EPA-sponsored study on the impacts of environmental chemical exposures during pregnancy (including air, water and food) on prenatal development.
UCSF Fresno Vital to Comprehensive Cancer Care in the Valley

Faculty physicians and fellows at UCSF Fresno provide comprehensive cancer care and conduct clinical trials and research in the Valley that significantly advance cancer treatment. In an effort to provide the local community access to cutting-edge clinical trials, UCSF Fresno and Community Medical Centers partnered to create a joint Clinical Trials Program at the new Community Cancer Institute in Clovis. Nearing the conclusion of the first year, enrollment to clinical trials has tripled and recruitment is still going strong. Plans to continue growing and providing services to as many patients as possible are underway. Access is available to cooperative clinical trials (NIH/NCI), industry or pharmaceutical clinical trials as well as investigator-initiated studies (research led by faculty physicians at UCSF Fresno) in various areas of solid tumor cancers as well as blood cancers. UCSF Fresno is pleased to provide patients with access and opportunity to participate in these studies and proud to contribute to the body of knowledge to fight and beat cancer.

UCSF Fresno Programs Receive $2.15 Million to Expand and Train the Physician Workforce in Underserved Areas

Four UCSF Fresno residency programs received a combined $2.15 million over three years from the Office of Statewide Health and Planning in 2018 to expand and train the physician workforce in underserved areas. The granting program is part of the Song-Brown Health Care Workforce Training Act (Song-Brown Program).

“We are extremely pleased to receive this funding,” said Lori Weichenthal, MD, assistant dean for Graduate Medical Education at UCSF Fresno. “UCSF Fresno was established to address the shortage of physicians in the San Joaquin Valley. About half of UCSF Fresno graduates remain in the region to provide care. Still, more physicians are needed. These awards are recognition of our progress and they position UCSF Fresno to continue training and retaining physicians for our underserved region.”

The UCSF Fresno Family and Community Medicine Residency Program received $1.075 million. The UCSF Fresno Internal Medicine Residency Program received $825,000. The UCSF Fresno Pediatrics and the Obstetrics/Gynecology residency programs each received $125,000.

The funds will be used to support new residency positions in Family and Community Medicine and Internal Medicine and will provide infrastructure and educational support for all four programs. Together, the four programs train more than 140 physicians per year.

“The Song-Brown funding from the state is an important supplement to federal funding for graduate medical education,” said Michael W. Peterson, MD, associate dean at UCSF Fresno. “The number of residency positions supported through the Medicare system has been frozen since 1997. Without this state support, UCSF Fresno would not be able to expand the number of physicians being trained in the Valley for the Valley.”

According to the Healthforce Center at UCSF, the San Joaquin Valley has just 133 physicians per 100,000 population compared to the state rate of 222 per 100,000.

Studying Air Quality to Improve Children’s Health

Air in the San Joaquin Valley, unfortunately, is among the most polluted in the United States. The health impacts of long-term exposure to bad air can be quite serious. Children, in particular, are more susceptible to environmental risks, including air pollution, because they are still developing and take in more oxygen. To understand and reduce the impact of air pollution exposure on children’s health in the Valley, UCSF Fresno is a partner in the Children’s Health & Air Pollution Study (CHAPS). The study also includes pregnant women and birth outcomes.

The research considers children at three important stages, pregnant women and their babies, children and young adults. Information gathered will evaluate the consequences of exposures on birth results, development, and immune health and metabolism. In addition, CHAPS looks at how the built environment in Fresno impacts transportation behaviors and air pollution exposures of pregnant women.

More than 200 women were enrolled in the study when they were pregnant. They brought their infants back at 12 and 24 months of age. More than 300 children were enrolled when they were approximately seven and eight years old to complete one study visit and they came back for a second visit two years later (at nine or ten years of age). About 100 adolescents and young adults were enrolled when they were approximately 13 to 23 years old to complete one study visit. All of the adolescent and young adult participants were involved in a previous CHAPS investigation, the Fresno Asthmatic Children’s Environment Study, which was conducted from 2000 to 2008.

All study visits take place at the UCSF Fresno Clinical Research Center inside the UCSF Fresno Center for Medical Education and Research in downtown Fresno. Most study participants will be seen two to three times.

Hospital admissions and emergency room visits linked to asthma and other respiratory illnesses, increased cardiovascular disease risks and even premature death are just some of the health impacts associated with the Valley’s polluted air.

The goal of the multi-year CHAPS investigation is to understand and reduce the impact of air pollution on children’s health and to develop partnerships with community organizations that prioritize air quality, environment and health. The study is a partnership among UC Berkeley, Stanford, Sonoma Technology, Fresno State and UCSF Fresno and is funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.
As the largest academic medical institution in the San Joaquin Valley, UCSF Fresno hosts several continuing medical education conferences and events to elevate clinician knowledge and share best practices with the goal of enhancing health care in the region.

March 2018

Multidisciplinary Updates in Internal Medicine Conference
Leading experts in diabetes and internal medicine from Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Harvard Medical School, Mayo Clinic, UCSF Fresno, UC Davis, UCLA, UCSD, USC, National Jewish Health, Oregon Health & Science University, Scripps Clinic and Stanford gathered at UCSF Fresno for the first Multidisciplinary Updates in Internal Medicine Conference in 2018. Diabetes care was the focus of the first day. Six Valley counties have the highest percentage of hospital patients in the state with diabetes. The 2019 conference will have a day dedicated to caring for the aging community – an important topic since the number of Californians aged 65 and older is expected to almost double over the next decade.

April 2018

Air Pollution and Climate Change Symposium
Air pollution and climate change are closely related topics. Both present serious health implications, particularly in the San Joaquin Valley where air is some of the most polluted in the United States and significant health disparities exist. The Department of Internal Medicine at UCSF Fresno held its third annual Air Pollution and Climate Change Symposium at UCSF Fresno this year. The conference focused on the State of Air in California’s Central Valley, air pollution and its effects on obstructive airway diseases, climate change and the impact on air pollution, and mid- and long-term solutions to combat climate change and air pollution.

April 2018

High Sierra Wilderness and Travel Medicine Conference
The UCSF Fresno Department of Emergency Medicine presented its annual High Sierra Wilderness and Travel Medicine Conference at the Pines Resort at Bass Lake. This conference is designed for those who may encounter life-threatening situations with limited resources. The conference draws a wide variety of participants, including emergency physicians, nurses, physician assistants, interns, family practitioners, rangers, EMS providers, members of the search and rescue community and outdoor enthusiasts. Through both lecture and hands-on workshops, topics including survival and field treatment of environmental illness, rescue techniques, wound care, and fracture management are addressed.

May 2018

Cardiology in the Valley
Coronary heart disease is the number one cause of death in California and the San Joaquin Valley has some of the highest rates of heart disease in the state. To improve health in the region, faculty physicians in UCSF Fresno’s Department of Internal Medicine presented its annual Cardiology in the Valley Symposium to help health care professionals better understand and implement strategies to prevent patients from developing coronary artery disease complications and to more effectively communicate treatment options. Topics covered at the conference included coronary artery disease preventive strategies, heart attack recovery care, and Takotsubo cardiomyopathy also known as broken-heart syndrome.

January - February

Park Medic Certification Course
The Parkmedic certification is a six-week course that occurs every other year (odd years) in January and February to train park rangers in emergency medicine principles. It consists of four weeks of classroom time at the UCSF Fresno Center followed by two weeks of hands-on clinical time at CRMC and with American Ambulance. The course is taught by Parkmedic faculty and residents at UCSF Fresno, visiting lecturers, current Parkmedics as well as CRMC staff. The students are rangers from the National Park Service. Contingent on testing, they become certified as advanced emergency medical technicians and Parkmedics. Each course usually has between 12 and 30 participants. A two-week refresher course is offered at UCSF Fresno every other year in even years to maintain Parkmedic certification.
In 2018, UCSF Fresno held its third annual Education Symposium to highlight excellence in medical education at UCSF Fresno, with a focus on how technology is being used to teach future physicians.

Jessica Mason, MD, clinical instructor of Emergency Medicine at UCSF Fresno, demonstrated how technology is being used to enhance the teaching of medicine in a digitally-connected world in her keynote lecture, “MedEd in the Digital Era.”

Dr. Mason educates physicians across the U.S. and globe as a contributor and producer for the popular podcast for physicians, “Emergency Medicine Reviews and Perspectives,” and she shares health information with the general public via a humorous medical podcast called “This Won’t Hurt a Bit.” The podcasts feature emergency room patients (with their consent) at Community Regional Medical Center and are heard by people in 35 countries. One episode alone had 25,000 hits after just a few days.

While Dr. Mason educates learners worldwide, often from UCSF Fresno’s clinical skills lab, each year, UCSF Fresno trains about 300 medical and surgical residents, about 50 medical and surgical fellows and more than 300 rotating medical students.

“Our goal at UCSF Fresno is to train the next generation of outstanding clinicians and patient advocates,” said Interim Chief of Pediatrics Serena Yang, MD, MPH, a member of the UCSF Fresno Faculty Development Committee, which organized the symposium. “Innovative approaches are needed to train learners capable of anticipating and responding to the ever-expanding base of medical knowledge, evolving health needs of patients and communities, and changes in the health care environment.”

The symposium included hands-on demonstrations of technological approaches in medical education such as online medical procedure videos, podcasts, use of “big data” (large datasets) to improve medical education and patient care, virtual reality, 3D scanning and printing, and digital dashboards.

UCSF Fresno’s Information Technology Services (ITS) was instrumental to the success of the symposium and the department is redefining technology overall at UCSF Fresno.

Future faculty and trainees turn to the web for their first look at our medical education program. As a result, UCSF Fresno launched a newly designed website to organically integrate across various digital platforms, including mobile compatibility, social media, physician profile pages, and application and digital media. The redesign is essential to supporting recruitment of high-quality physicians to the region.

To increase effectiveness and accountability, ITS is improving and automating business processes; enhancing Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPPA) training protocols, and cyber security training and measures. ITS also is engaging with the greater UCSF community and strengthening relationships with affiliate partners like Community Medical Centers and Central California Faculty Medical Group to improve patient data and privacy awareness and practices.

In short, UCSF Fresno is using technology to transform medical training and offer new resources to best serve patients.

One of the ways UCSF Fresno contributes to improved health is through partnerships and giving back to the community. Many of our faculty physicians serve on boards for community organizations, hold joint appointments at organizations that also are dedicated to improving health, and organize or participate in programs and events that share health information and resources with the public.

Here are just a few:

Gene Kallsen, MD, Board Secretary, Hinds Hospice
Alan Kelton, MD, Past President, Fresno Madera Medical Society
Rene Ramirez, MD, Board of Directors, Marjaree Mason Center
John Tran, MD, Medical Director at Fresno County Department of Behavioral Health
Rais Vohra, MD, Medical Director of California Poison Control System, Fresno-Madera Division

Trauma is the leading cause of death for Americans under age 46, according to a National Academies of Science study. However, many lives can be saved by stopping blood loss. The UCSF Fresno Department of Surgery and the Community Regional Medical Center (CRMC) Trauma Program have teamed up to teach life-saving skills to the public as part of Stop the Bleed, a national initiative launched by the White House in 2015 in response to the Sandy Hook school shooting tragedy.

According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Stop the Bleed is intended to cultivate grassroots efforts that encourage bystanders to become trained, equipped and empowered to help in a bleeding emergency before professional help arrives.

Bleeding emergencies are the most amenable to bystander treatment, but time is critical. A person can bleed to death in just three to five minutes. Still, many bleeding deaths can be prevented when quick and proper first-aid treatment is rendered while waiting for professional medical help to arrive.

“Stop the Bleed demonstrates what can happen when the right resources are available at the right time,” said James W. Davis, MD, Steven N. Parks Endowed Chair of Surgery at UCSF Fresno, as he concluded a recent training. “The goal of the UCSF Fresno and Community Regional Medical Center Stop the Bleed collaboration is to train as much of the Fresno area population as possible to recognize and stop bleeding as a result of vehicle accidents, home or work injuries, active-shooter situations and other emergencies to ultimately save lives.”

The UCSF Fresno Department of Surgery and CRMC Trauma Program have offered more than 87 Stop the Bleed classes and trained nearly 3,000 people to date.

UCSF Fresno and CRMC Team Up to Teach Life-Saving Skills

In the Community

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A disaster is defined as any incident in which the number of victims overwhelms the resources of the emergency medical responders. This includes events such as a fire, hurricane, mudslide, terrorist attack or multi-vehicle car accident. Preparing for disasters is complex, and takes the cooperation of different agencies and organizations.

This year, UCSF Fresno, in partnership with Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, held the fifth Annual Mass Casualty Incident Drill, or MCI Drill, near Grant Grove in Kings Canyon National Park.

Stephanie Benjamin, MD, a third-year emergency medicine resident at UCSF Fresno, has been focused on growing the program to better train first responders.

“Training for a Mass Casualty Incident Drill is a lot of work, and requires different organizations to come together and work closely. In the event of a disaster, however, we would need that same level of cooperation to save as many lives as possible. This training allows us to work out the potential hurdles in advance, so when a disaster does strike, we are as prepared as possible,” she said.

The drill included volunteers posing as victims with very real-looking wounds to simulate what an actual disaster would be like.

“Training quickly and efficiently is one of the most important components of MCI training. If we can make the disaster appear as real as possible, it allows us to provide an authentic training experience for our first responders,” said Geoff Stroh, MD, clinical professor, emergency medicine, at UCSF Fresno.

This year, more than 100 participants from different agencies participated in the training, which involved a simulated cabin-fire explosion with multiple casualties and severely wounded patients.

Dr. Benjamin hopes the program will continue to grow. Her vision is to create a model that can be duplicated across the country in different national parks and eventually develop a comprehensive curriculum to improve disaster response.

UCSF Fresno started taking health care and medical education on the road this year. Thanks to support from Anthem Blue Cross, the Central Valley Community Foundation, Legacy Health Endowment and American Ambulance, UCSF Fresno is providing basic health screenings such as blood pressure readings, cholesterol checks and other health services in rural communities. The effort involves regional college and university pre-health students and medical students. The students gain valuable clinical skills – experiences that are needed to be a successful health professional school applicants and essential to developing the skills needed to work as practicing physicians. Students work alongside experienced medical residents and faculty physicians.

UCSF Fresno Mobile Health and Learning or Mobile Heal, is a win-win by extending medical screenings to communities where residents may not have easy access to care and by providing learning opportunities for future physicians.

Heart disease is the number one killer of women. UCSF Fresno’s Chief of Cardiology, Teresa Daniele, MD, FACC, is triple board certified in cardiology, nuclear cardiology and echocardiography and has a special interest in women’s heart disease. She is one of just a few female cardiologists in the region. Daniele holds ongoing events that support women’s heart disease awareness and health. These include an annual Women’s Heart Health Fair to improve awareness and share heart healthy information and tips as well as provide important health screenings to women free of charge. She also holds quarterly women’s heart health support groups, Healing Hearts: Finding Our Own Rhythm, that provide informative presentations about women’s heart health as well as opportunities for self-care through fun and social activities. Both the heart health fair and heart health support groups are offered in partnership with Community Medical Centers. Dr. Daniele also serves as the medical director of the Women’s Center for Cardiovascular Health Program at Community Regional Medical Center, director of the UCSF Fresno Cardiovascular Fellowship Program and is an assistant professor of clinical medicine at UCSF Fresno.

Mini Med School

Mini Medical School is a series of lectures at UCSF Fresno presented by the Academic Senate. Mini Med School allows faculty physicians to share the latest trends in health and medicine with community members of all ages. Now, in its seventh year, Mini Med School consistently packs the 200 seat-auditorium. Topics range from pediatric intensive care, questions about vaccinations, global health and medicine, navigating social services, how to negotiate health care costs, digital apps and hotlines that improve health, dermatological conditions, heart health, medical simulation and many other topics. Mini Med School is popular because it shares health and medical information in an easy-to-understand way and introduces community members to the medical expertise of faculty physicians at UCSF Fresno.
Reaching Out to Aspiring Doctors (ROAD) for the San Joaquin Valley

ROAD for the San Joaquin Valley is a biennial pre-medical, pre-health and public health conference for students enrolled at colleges and universities in the Valley. Held every other year in September, the event aims to provide students with the information, networking and experiences essential to pursuing careers in health, medicine and public health. The majority of students who participate in the conference come from backgrounds underrepresented in medicine and are the first in their families to attend college. UCSF Fresno partners with Fresno State, UCI Merced, the Central Valley Higher Education Consortium and many other schools, departments, institutions and organizations to offer this highly popular conference for area students. Dozens of health professionals, including faculty physicians, medical residents and medical students at UCSF Fresno volunteer to inspire the next generation.

UCSF Fresno Cares for Two Cities Marathon Runners

The Two Cities Marathon takes place every year on the first weekend of November. The event features a 26.2 full marathon and two 13.1 half marathons (one course in Clovis and another in Fresno). Since around 2012, Lori Weichenthal, MD, assistant dean of graduate medical education at UCSF Fresno and assistant program director of the UCSF Fresno Department of Emergency Medicine, has served as the medical director for this race. It takes about 1,500 volunteers to put on the event for approximately 5,000 athletes from around the state, U.S. and world.

The wilderness medicine faculty at UCSF Fresno have been and continue to be involved in the medical direction, along with residents from various departments including emergency medicine, surgery, orthopaedics, pediatrics, and psychiatry. Medical students, scribes, nurses, LPNs and other ancillary staff from Community Regional Medical Center also help in caring for race participants at the finish line and in multiple tents along the race course.

Pediatricians Promote Student Success

Since 2010, the UCSF Fresno Department of Pediatrics has focused on developing a local culture of health through the lens of advocacy and social justice. Recognizing that the health of the child depends largely on family and the local community, UCSF Fresno’s Pediatric Residency Program joined forces with Fresno Unified School District to develop a medical resident-mentor adolescent peer education program. The program focuses on topics of interest to adolescents while simultaneously modeling health careers for disadvantaged students. The result—the Women’s Alliance—is an elective for at-risk students and is designed to foster success in the classroom and beyond.

Together pediatric residents, high school students and faculty health utilized a “youth as partner” approach to create participatory action research projects for the last four years including sugary drinks, body image, exercise can be fun, dating violence and most recently, stereotypes. Students identified and researched topics, created and conducted surveys utilizing technology, analyzed outcomes and discussed presentation plans. Students then developed unique educational interventions.

Project results were broadcast at the Western Regional meeting of the American Federation for Medical Research, resulting in three poster presentations and two oral presentations. Student abstracts were also published in a national medical journal.

The students’ latest research was on stereotypes and was accepted for a poster presentation at the National Society for Adolescent Health & Medicine meeting in Seattle this past March. The students also were invited to participate in a workshop on amplifying teen voices.

According to their high school teacher Kelly Colwell-Walker, having doctors who aren’t that much older than the high school students takes down walls and is empowering to the students.

Amazing results such as “at-risk” students presenting at national conferences and mentoring relationships have developed because of this partnership.
In addition to residency and fellowship training, another goal is to create a pathway from medical school to residency in the Valley to increase the number of physicians who remain in the region to practice. Currently, UCSF Fresno trains about 300 medical students from other UC campuses and from across the U.S. on a rotating basis. At the same time, training students from the Valley is essential.

The two best predictors of where physicians will practice are where they complete training and where they grew up. A significant milestone toward this goal will occur when students in the new UCSF San Joaquin Valley Program in Medical Education (SJV PRIME) start at the UCSF School of Medicine in 2019 and then move to UCSF Fresno for two and a half years of their medical school training.

UCSF Fresno is invested in the region and we work with many partners to achieve goals. As we look to the future, an important undertaking is how do we work more efficiently to train, heal, care and discover.

One notable way is through the use of technology. UCSF Fresno was recently awarded strategic initiative funding from UCSF to develop and host a series of self-serve web-based data dashboards to support population health studies and enable research related to Valley patient populations. Aligning with key partners from UCSF Computational Health Sciences and using de-identified data, multidisciplinary informatics will make research tools and data more accessible and functional.

The end result will reduce technology and informatics workloads and shave months off data delivery time. In short, the project will put agile data analytic tools into the hands of researchers, physicians and trainees to advance research studies and quality improvement initiatives.

As a branch campus of the consistently top-ranked UCSF School of Medicine, faculty physicians at UCSF Fresno provide UCSF-quality care in the Valley while training the next generation of physicians. Recognizing that physicians who care for themselves provide the best care to others, UCSF Fresno will continue to emphasize wellness among faculty and trainees. Equally important, we will grow our commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive community that promotes culturally competent learning, patient care and discovery to improve health in the San Joaquin Valley.