

Focus on UCSF Fresno

Winter 2023

Teach

UCSF Fresno Neurologist Appointed to the Mr. and Mrs. David George Rowe and Stephen W. Rowe Endowed Chair for Teaching in Neurology



Loren I. Alving, MD

By Lucero Benitez, UCSF Fresno Communications

Loren I. Alving, MD, has dedicated the last 34 years of her career as a practicing neurologist and to teaching as a professor of Neurology at UCSF Fresno. Her dedication to academic medicine has been recognized this year by her selection as the Mr. and Mrs. David George Rowe and Stephen W. Rowe Endowed Chair for Teaching in Neurology.

This is the first endowed education chair that has been appointed at UCSF Fresno. An endowed chair is the highest honor a university can bestow upon a member of its faculty.

The honor – and the responsibility of an endowed chair – is not lost on Dr. Alving. “While there have been other endowed chairs of different types, an Academy of Medical Educators endowed chair has not been appointed to Fresno. It’s amazing that I was selected,” she said.

As endowed chair, she hopes to work in two areas to raise the visibility of Neurology. First, she hopes to work to create an academic base for the nascent faculty Neurology program at UCSF Fresno. “There is support for Neurology at UCSF Fresno and I’m hopeful to be able to create a nurturing ecosystem for future faculty.” Second, she hopes to develop medical student curriculum focusing on the unique needs in the San Joaquin Valley and to expose more pre-medical students to neurology through her work in the SJV PRIME and SJV PRIME+ programs, increasing the possibility that students choose the specialty for a career.

Originally from Washington, D.C. area, Dr. Alving’s career led her to Fresno in the early 1990s. At that time, she had finished training and immediately looked for an opportunity to teach and practice neurology simultaneously. She and her husband, Dzung Trinh, MD, a geriatrician, moved to California’s San Joaquin Valley because it’s where they had completed some of their medical training and her husband had attended high school in Caruthers.

As a regional campus of the UCSF School of Medicine, UCSF Fresno was perfect for Dr. Alving because of the emphasis on teaching. For her, it was the perfect opportunity to be a practicing physician and teach residents – and eventually medical students.

Dr. Alving is director of the UCSF Fresno Alzheimer & Memory Center and director of the UCSF San Joaquin Valley Program in Medical Education (SJV PRIME). As the SJV PRIME director, Dr. Alving works closely with medical students who are committed to ensuring high quality, diverse and well distributed medical care to improve health in the Valley. The students also are given the opportunity to work with highly underserved populations at the individual and community levels.

SJV PRIME program fourth-year medical student, Rey Berry, who is pursuing Emergency Medicine residency programs in the Match this year, met Dr. Alving through her admission to the program and worked closely with her during a conference that provides aspiring physicians with the information, resources, skills, and networking that is essential to achieving their educational goals.

“She was an exemplary role model in teaching and facilitating small group learning. Despite her busy schedule as a program director, clinical neurologist, and the many other roles she plays in medical education, she took it upon herself to lead us,” Berry said.

“Having endowed faculty means we, as students, get to interact, learn from, and be mentored by the most talented leaders in our field. Professors appointed endowed chair also receive extra funding and resources to make an even larger impact on the students, community, and patients they interact with,” Berry said.

Dr. Alving’s endowed chair appointment is for a five-year term and began in July 2022. The endowed chair was established in 2005, using an allocation from the Regina Rowe Estate Fund

matched by discretionary funds provided by the dean of the School of Medicine. Regina Rowe and her husband, David Rowe, made several gifts during their lifetimes for the Stephen W. Rowe Memorial Fund, a current fund, established in memory of their son, which is used to support fellowships in the Department.



Expert Care and Kindness Provided to Critically Ill Young Patients by UCSF Fresno Pediatric Intensivists

Victor Vargas, MD

By Barbara Anderson, UCSF Fresno Communications

Since her son's diagnosis with a rare congenital neuromuscular condition, Mary D'Arcy of Mariposa has been at his bedside at Pediatric Intensive Care Units (PICUs) over the years on the East Coast and in Southern California, but recently it was her first time at the PICU at Community Regional Medical Center (CRMC) in Fresno.

"We tend to go to Los Angeles for our care. We used to live in the East and we would go to Philadelphia," D'Arcy said. But late last year, her son had a pneumothorax and needed emergent care to insert a chest tube into the air-filled space that was a pressing on his collapsed lung.

"I was super impressed with how thoughtful everyone was explaining what they felt needed to happen. What their job would be. But it was moving fast, and it was intimidating," she said. She began to relax when Victor Vargas, MD, UCSF Fresno pediatric intensivist and medical director of the PICU, explained the procedure for inserting a chest tube. "Dr. Vargas was really clear:

‘This is how we’re going to do it.’ And he sort of took charge in this very loving, thoughtful, considerate way.”

After the emergency procedure, the decision was made that her son be admitted to the hospital’s PICU, and D’Arcy said her son’s experience in the Emergency Department left her with this impression: “It was just managed so well and it made me feel hugely relieved and confident that we were getting really, really good care.”

The PICU at CRMC is a specialized unit where the very sickest pediatric patients are cared for by a specialty team of pediatric intensivists, nurses, respiratory therapists, pharmacists, among others. There are only 30 PICUs in California and the PICU at CRMC is one of only three in the San Joaquin Valley. D’Arcy was surprised that Fresno had a unit for the most medically fragile children. Now, she said, “I feel really relieved knowing this is here.”

UCSF Fresno pediatricians have been instrumental in providing care to patients at the PICU at CRMC since the 10-bed medical-surgical unit opened in September 2016 for critically ill or injured infants, children and adolescents up to age 21.



Thianchai Bunnalai, MD, division director of UCSF Fresno Pediatric Critical Care and co-medical director of the PICU, helped start the special unit, said John Moua, MD, chief of the UCSF Fresno Department of Pediatrics. “He helped diagram rooms, write policies and procedures, and ensuring that the PICU met all of the requirements for California Children’s Services (CCS) approval (a state program for children with certain eligible chronic diseases and health problems); and he was instrumental in the recruitment of faculty physicians.”

UCSF Fresno currently staffs the PICU with six board certified pediatric intensivists – pediatricians who all have an extra three years of pediatric critical care training.

“The PICU sees some of the sickest children you will ever see,” Dr. Moua said. “And this respiratory season, we have had many sick pediatric patients coming through the PICU. We take care of children from throughout the San Joaquin Valley. Across the state, many of the PICUs are full and have needed to divert patients to other hospitals. The PICU at CRMC allows us to continue to take care of the children in the Valley. It provides extra beds for pediatric patients and allows us to take care of the children who need it the most.”

Daily, the pediatric intensivists provide patient care for children in the San Joaquin Valley with acute medical needs, Dr. Vargas said. “Parents don’t have to drive or fly out of the Valley every time their children get sick. We can help take care of them here.” But this winter, the physicians have taken care of children from across California, he said. “Normally, our area of coverage includes the Central Valley and the mountains, but with the current surge of patients, it has been as far as Santa Maria to the south and Redding to the north.”

PICU patients require intensive care and UCSF pediatric intensivists can consult and work closely with UCSF Fresno pediatric sub-specialists, such as pediatric pulmonologists, cardiologists, endocrinologists and gastroenterologists, to name a few. “There are very few diagnoses we cannot take care of,” Dr. Vargas said.

“We are adept at the care of the patient, but also on the support and training of their families,” he said. “During a child’s stay, the family is encouraged to stay with the child, and we support this opportunity and engagement.”

D’Arcy felt welcome being at her son’s bedside for the more than 10-days he stayed at the PICU. “Bringing your kids into an ED or into a new hospital is really scary,” she said. “It’s the level of vulnerability you feel in those moments ... but they communicate with you. Oftentimes, you’ll be in places where you don’t have the communication with the doctors, with the clinicians ... and you’re just sort of treated like well, ‘you don’t need to know that’ or ‘we’ll handle it.’ And that’s not the way here. Each and every day, I’m included in the conversations and a part of it.”

“I think the overreaching thing I want to say is that all the times I have been in hospitals, I have never been in a unit that I felt was as kind,” she said. “And the culture of this unit, from the nurses to the staff that come and empties the trash cans, it doesn’t matter who it is – all are very professional.”

Dr. Vargas said the CRMC PICU is a hidden gem, and he hopes people know “our team is ready to help you.”

UCSF Fresno has extremely competent and expert physicians in the PICU, Dr. Moua said. “Some parents have said it’s the best PICU they have ever been in. That’s a badge we’ll wear on our shoulder.”

Research

UCSF Fresno Infectious Diseases Specialist Treating Monkeypox Patients Under CDC Research Protocol



Geetha Sivasubramanian, MD, FIDSA

By Barbara Anderson, UCSF Fresno Communications

Before the first case of monkeypox had been identified in Fresno County this summer, a UCSF Fresno infectious diseases specialist had obtained “compassionate use” approval through a federal research protocol to treat patients with a drug the United States has stockpiled for smallpox.

“We got the medication in stock here. And the first patient in Fresno who was diagnosed, we got the patient in the very next day and started on treatment,” says Geetha Sivasubramanian, MD, FIDSA, director of the Infectious Diseases Fellowship Program at UCSF Fresno.

Monkeypox or MPX is in the same family of orthopoxviruses as smallpox and after MPX cases began being reported in the U.S. in May, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) expanded access to tecovirimat or TPOXX, a drug that had been approved for the treatment of smallpox in 2019. Smallpox, a highly contagious and devastating disease, has been

eradicated worldwide, but the U.S. has stores of TPOXX available at the U.S. Strategic National Stockpile in the event of a smallpox emergency.

A vaccine to prevent MPX for people who are at high risk of exposure to the virus is available in Fresno County at the [UCSF Fresno Mobile Heal COVID-19 Equity Project \(CEP\)](#). But the vaccine is not a treatment for the infection.

TPOXX is currently the only treatment option for MPX. It is not a cure but appears to shorten the length of illness, which typically causes a painful blistering rash. MPX often is a mild illness, but some patients have required hospitalization, particularly those whose painful rash-like lesions are in sensitive areas, such as the genitals; and patients who are immunocompromised. The virus is not a sexually transmitted infection but is spread primarily through close, skin-to-skin contact. It also can be spread by contact with contaminated clothing or bedding; and droplets can be inhaled.

As of Oct. 26, Dr. Sivasubramanian, along with help from UCSF Fresno clinical research coordinators, have treated 20 patients with TPOXX. The patients were incapacitated by the painful rash or were vulnerable to complications because of a weakened immune system. Adults, children and pregnant women are eligible for the treatment.

Dr. Sivasubramanian had been preparing an educational talk on MPX in early July, when Fresno County Public Health Officer Rais Vohra, a UCSF Fresno emergency physician, contacted UCSF Fresno Infection Control about obtaining authorization to administer TPOXX. Dr. Sivasubramanian agreed to lead the project and staff at the UCSF Fresno Clinical Research Center, and the Community Medical Centers Institutional Review Board, which approves research projects, worked quickly to finish the paperwork necessary for CDC approval, she says.

Through the research protocol, UCSF Fresno receives a stock of TPOXX directly from the CDC. TPOXX treatment is a 14-day regimen of pills. Prior to CDC approval, the CDC had to be contacted every time a patient presented with MPX for the medication to be shipped. Now, when Dr. Sivasubramanian receives a call for a patient, she responds the same day to provide TPOXX treatment.

“The CDC wanted local champions who can take care of dispensing TPOXX for them, rather than them being involved with each patient,” Dr. Sivasubramanian says. “This is faster access for these patients who are in pain.”

“Kudos to Dr. Sivasubramanian and the UCSF Fresno Infection Control Team,” Dr. Vohra says. “They are just great partners for the Fresno County Department of Public Health and just stepped up as the investigator in the area.”

UCSF Fresno is not conducting a clinical trial of TPOXX but results of the study protocol (how quickly patients’ symptoms resolve, reports of side effects – headaches, nausea, vomiting) are sent to the CDC. This adds to a body of evidence the CDC and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration are collecting from approved providers. That data can be used to evaluate the

drug for mainstream use, Dr. Vohra says. “And it is definitely helping our patients now,” he says.

Ideally, the CDC will run placebo-controlled clinical studies of TPOXX where some people get the medication and some patients do not, Dr. Sivasubramanian says. “But right now, we don’t have that data, so we have to kind of use this medication at least for the most vulnerable and for patients with the most sensitive areas that have the lesions.” If there are future clinical trials, “I am pretty certain we will take part in them,” she says.

The willingness of Dr. Sivasubramanian and the CMC Institutional Review Board to apply for approval to be a TPOXX provider is an example of UCSF Fresno’s commitment to public service, Dr. Vohra says. “It is just a great, shining example of how really impactful leadership shown by our faculty and teams are to helping the community.”



UCSF Fresno Accepting Applications for Standardized Patients to Help with Medical Education

A clinical skills session

By Brandy Ramos Nikaido, UCSF Fresno Communications

UCSF Fresno is turning to the community to help build a group of standardized patients to assist with medical education. Standardized patients (SPs) are people of various ages, generally 18 years and older, from diverse backgrounds who are selected and trained to portray patients with pre-determined medical conditions, symptoms and personal histories. SPs aid in the training of medical students and resident physicians and are vital to meeting graduation requirements for all

medical students in California including students in the UCSF San Joaquin Valley Program in Medical Education (SJV PRIME).



“Our (medical) students, for graduation requirements, must complete the Clinical Performance Examination (CPX),” said Trina Hughes, Career Launch advisor in UCSF Fresno’s Department of Undergraduate Medical Education and coordinator of the Standardized Patient Program. “We would not be able to do those exams without standardized patients. Faculty or staff may not portray patients. It must be someone who isn’t associated with the University.”

Hughes said they are looking for people from the local community to serve as standardized patients. SPs are part-time and are paid an hourly rate. They are reimbursed for mileage and served lunch. In addition, standardized patients will participate in some paid online and in-person training leading up to each activity.



Standardized patients follow a carefully designed script. They play a valuable role in medical education, allowing medical students and physicians in training to fine tune patient interaction and clinical skills. Medical students interact with a standardized patient as if there were a real patient – listening, assessing, and making a diagnosis and treatment plan. Afterward, the student receives constructive feedback from instructors and sometimes, the standardized patient.

Standardized patients also are called upon to help residents master skills.

A recent clinical skills session organized by the UCSF Fresno Department of Internal Medicine and cardiology fellows involved training residents to use the bedside ultrasound and to obtain images of the heart to assess the patient and facilitate clinical decision making.

“SPs were helpful in practicing ultrasound techniques on human bodies to simulate scenarios we encounter in real life,” said Omar Mahmood, MD, chief resident in the UCSF Fresno Internal Medicine Residency Program.

Standardized patient Layce Lynne Kieu made the trip to Fresno from the Bay Area to help.

“I feel like I’m helping in a sense that people can relate to the patient more when it’s a physical exam,” said Lynne. “I feel like I’m doing something in some small way. I’ve always wanted to help people in general.”

Kieu has an acting background and responded to a UCSF “casting call ad” for standardized patients.

“When I came in, and honestly, when I was reading it, I didn’t fully understand it until we actually did it and I was hired.”

An acting background is helpful when it comes to memorizing standardized patient scripts, but it isn’t necessary, according to Kieu.

“I do not think that an acting background or performing background is necessary for something like this,” she said. “In film and commercials, you’re doing what the director tells you to do. When I’m a standardized patient, I try to be as real as I possibly can.

She has portrayed a variety of patients including a daughter whose mother was diagnosed with dementia, a woman who was hemorrhaging after delivering a baby, a patient who had a leg injury and couldn’t stand up, a woman who was abused and blamed herself, as well as many other patient portrayals.

UCSF Fresno will utilize standardized patients for an interdisciplinary standardized patient exercise involving SJV PRIME medical students and other local health professions students in May, the CPX in June, a mini-CPX practice test in the fall and for other purposes as needed.

“Standardized patients are a way for the general community to support and participate in medical student education,” said Kenny Banh, MD, assistant dean for Undergraduate Medical Education. “Local standardized patients are needed to test medical students on their ability to interact with patients, make diagnoses and develop treatment plans. Medical students must pass these exams to graduate. SPs play an important role and serious candidates willing to help are encouraged to apply.”

People interested in applying to become standardized patients may contact Trina Hughes at (559) 499-6524 or trina.hughes@ucsf.edu



Inspire

UCSF Fresno People Spotlight



Brandon Croft, MD

UCSF Fresno's success and growth are a direct result of the dedication and inspiration of our faculty, staff, residents, fellows, students, alumni, partners, donors and friends. In each issue of Focus, we introduce you to the people who contribute to the greatness of UCSF Fresno through informal interviews.

This month, please meet **Brandon Croft, MD**, third-year resident in the UCSF Fresno Department of Internal Medicine Residency Program.

What is your name? Nickname?

Brandon Croft

What is your hometown? Where did you go to school? High School? Undergrad?

I grew up in Visalia, California, and attended El Diamante High School. I then went on to attend Fresno Pacific University and earned my medical degree from the UC Davis School of Medicine in the San Joaquin Valley Program in Medical Education.

Where are you in your residency training at UCSF Fresno? Program and Year?

I am currently a third-year internal medicine resident at UCSF Fresno.

What are your plans after completing residency?

After completing residency, I will be continuing my training in the Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine Fellowship at UCSF Fresno.

If pursuing a fellowship, which fellowship and why that sub-specialty?

Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine allows for a wide scope of practice within the medical field. It is a procedurally heavy specialty that allows for both acute care opportunities as well as the ability to follow patients longitudinally. This field also allows for various types of procedural interventions.

Why did you decide to become a physician? What role did SJV PRIME play in your educational and career decisions?

Growing up in the San Joaquin Valley, I was a witness to the lack of access to medical care in my community. My desire is to help bridge the gap in access to medical care is what sparked my interest in pursuing medicine.

As a native of the San Joaquin Valley and a graduate of the SJV PRIME Community Scholars Program, I have been trained to be a culturally competent physician leader with extensive experiences advocating for marginalized populations. My training has taught me how to work in resource-limited regions and how to navigate the hindrances placed on patients with poor access to care.

What is at the top of your professional to-do list right now?

Professionally, my goal is to continue contributing to the field of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine clinical practice as well as research. My subject of interest within the field of pulmonology is pulmonary hypertension.

What advice do you have for students who are interested in becoming doctors?

The journey of medicine is a long road, but reminding yourself why you started can help make it easier.

The zombie apocalypse is coming. Which three people from UCSF Fresno would you pick to be on your team and why?

Amanda de Lima Croft. She is my wife, my better half, and the only reason that I would survive a zombie apocalypse.

Eyad Almasri, MD. As a clinician and researcher, he would be the one to find out how to reverse zombies into the living

Michael Darracq, MD. He is an emergency medicine physician with a military background who is an expert in toxicology. Sounds like the background of a hero in a movie about fighting zombies during an apocalypse.

What do you like to do in your off time?

I love spending time with my wife and my dog. Running is a hobby of mine as well.

What is the most important thing you would like people to know about you? Or what else would you like to add about you, your background, family or career?

I worked in the clinical research department and as an emergency medicine scribe at UCSF Fresno prior to entering medical school. My first exposure to working with UCSF Fresno was in 2013.



The Clinical Skills Lab and Simulation Center at UCSF Fresno

Isnardi Foundation Gift to UCSF Fresno Enhances Clinical Skills and Simulation Training

By Barbara Anderson, UCSF Fresno Communications

The Clinical Skills Lab and Simulation Center at UCSF Fresno is integral to the educational mission by creating opportunities for teaching, learning and assessment using simulation as a strategy for learners to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for caring for patients in real-world settings.

A generous \$100,000 donation from the Isnardi Foundation of Fresno is now allowing UCSF Fresno to continue to expand and improve the state-of-the-art facility to keep pace with increasing demands for simulation teaching and training for medical students, residents, fellows, pathway program participants and community partners.

On behalf of the staff and co-directors of the UCSF Fresno Clinical Skills and Simulation Center, “we would like to extend to the Isnardi Foundation our sincere gratitude, and the efforts they have established over the years supporting the continuing education and development for both our medical residency and medical students’ medical education programs,” said Simulation Coordinator Lee Hagerty.

As a regional campus of UCSF School of Medicine, UCSF Fresno is the largest physician-training program between San Francisco and Sacramento to the north and Los Angeles to the south and each year about 300 residents, fellows and physician assistants are in training. Roughly 50% of graduates remain in the Central Valley and about 70% stay in California to care for patients, teach future physicians or continue their medical education. Students in the UCSF San Joaquin Valley Program in Medical Education (SJV PRIME) also live and train in Fresno for the final two and a half years of medical school. And UCSF Fresno hosts medical students from other medical schools for rotations, and helps to prepare middle, high school and college students for careers in health and medicine through a variety of career pathway programs.

During simulation exercises, trainees practice responding to common medical procedures, complex medical conditions and life-threatening emergencies. Using high-fidelity interactive patient mannequins and task trainers, learners practice specific skills such as lumbar punctures, intubation, and suturing. Simulations are followed by debriefings to facilitate learning and each simulation is evaluated with faculty oversight to ensure best practices are used.

Mannequins in the Simulation Center are also used in community outreach, helping educate Emergency Medical Services (EMS) community partners at American Ambulance and to educate local high school students in the Doctors Academy program.

The Isnardi Foundation support in the past helped UCSF Fresno purchase a new childbirth simulator mannequin “Victoria,” from Gaumard, that has been instrumental to several education programs such as OB/GYN, Emergency Medicine and Family and Community Medicine.

“This year the Isnardi Foundation has contributed toward our expansion allowing us to provide more resources to our surgery programs, and many more. With the gift funds from Isnardi Foundation we can purchase two new resources we have never had since the Skills Lab opened in 2015, Hagerty said. “One of the items is an operating room (OR) table for our resident surgeons. This allows us to provide a realistic operating room environment for the faculty to train our residents on complex scenarios, surgical procedures, and team building operations.

“We have also applied the gift funds toward a very high fidelity Cut Suit, and an Advanced Skills Surgical Trainer from Strategic Operations which allows our residents to operate on various abdominal trauma related injuries, and chest trauma injuries. These trainers allow us to use them in pre-hospital, and inter-facility training.”

The procedure trainers have led to an eagerness among the residents to use them to help advance their training, Hagerty said. And there is the potential to help with other programs such as Emergency Medicine, and our Parc Medic Programs.

Last year, Isnardi Foundation directors took a tour of the Simulation Lab and “we left impressed with the people we met and with the demonstrations,” said Peter Tocchini, one of the Foundation directors. “We all walked away very interested, very impressed and with the belief we want to continue to support UCSF Fresno.”

The Isnardi Foundation was established in 2006 by Fresno native and graduate of the University of California, San Francisco School of Pharmacy (1943) Vince Isnardi. He dedicated his life to helping improve the health of his patients as well as the broader community where he was born and raised. He passed away in 2011, but his life of giving and caring continues through the work of the Isnardi Foundation.

The Isnardi Foundation serves as a legacy to Vince Isnardi, who was born in 1918 and was raised in Fresno by his Italian immigrant father, Joseph Isnardi and mother, Jennie (Genevive Tocchini). Vince Isnardi graduated from Fresno High School, the University of California, Berkeley and the UCSF School of Pharmacy. After graduation from pharmacy school, he returned to Fresno to practice at his family’s pharmacy business, the International Drug Company.

Again, from UCSF Fresno Clinical Skills Lab and Simulation Center Co-directors Amy Kwok, MD, Jessica Fujimoto, MD, Simulation Coordinator Hagerty, along with Simulation Technician, Mark Hammes to the Isnardi Foundation, “we thank you for the outstanding generosity and support you have made toward our goals providing the highest education recourse our learners deserve to serve our communities.”

For information about ways to give to UCSF Fresno, please contact Kathleen Smith, Assistant Director of Development for UCSF Fresno, at (559) 499-6426 or kathleen.smith@ucsf.edu.

Kudos

UCSF Fresno Recognition



Patrick Macmillan, MD

Kudos to Patrick Macmillan, MD. Dr. Macmillan’s manuscript, “Physician Perceptions and Beliefs Regarding End-of-Life Care,” in its current form was accepted for publication in the American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine.



Congratulations to Marina Roytman, MD, and team including current and past residents and fellows for recent awards and honors.

The Outstanding Presenter Awards at the 2022 American College of Gastroenterology Annual Scientific Meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina, went to:

“A Rare Case of Pembrolizumab-Induced Hepatitis” by Hunza Chaudhry, MD; Aalam Sohal, MD; and Joanne Lin, DO; “A Tough Pill to Swallow: A Case Series of Statin-Induced Necrotizing Autoimmune Myopathy Manifesting as Dysphagia and Transaminitis” by Hunza Chaudhry, MD; Joanne Lin, DO; Rameen Atefi, DO; and Jeff Hagino, DO; “Catching

Hepatitis C: Screening in a Primary Care Setting in California’s Central Valley” by Jennifer Yoon, MD; Joanne Lin, DO; Hunza Chaudhry, MD; and Victoria Green, MD.

The poster, “[The Increase in Alcohol-related Hepatitis Cases during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Is it a New Normal?](#),” was presented at the [American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases](#) Annual Meeting in Washington, DC, and was highlighted at two patient-focused forums and in an interview with HealthDay News. The study was conducted by Aalam Sohal, MD; Sameeha Khalid, DO; Victoria Green, MD; Jeff Hagino, DO; Hunza Chaudhry, MD; and Alakh Gulati, MD.



UCSF celebrates staff and faculty members who reach service milestones of 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45 or 50 years. UCSF Fresno began a local recognition program in 2022. Thank you to all our dedicated faculty and staff and congrats to those who reached service milestones last year. Click [here](#) for a list of employees honored as part of UCSF Fresno’ inaugural milestone recognition program. A special recognition goes out to Robert Libke, MD, faculty member in the Department of Internal Medicine, for 45 years of service at UCSF Fresno.



Congratulations to the Fall 2022 Spot Award winners:

Joy Dinius, Department of Pediatrics

Rebekah Garcia, Department of Internal Medicine/Clinical Research Center

Ka Her, Department of Internal Medicine

Antonette Horacio, Department of Internal Medicine/Hematology/Oncology

Brandy Ramos Nikaido, Department of Public Affairs, Communications and Government Relations

Dyan Ruelas, Department of Graduate Medical Education

Natasha Saleem, Department of Graduate Medical Education

Jennifer Sanchez, Department of Family and Community Medicine

Sherrie Yang, Department of Graduate Medical Education

Congrats and welcome aboard to these New Hires:

Angela Cerda, Licensed Vocational Nurse, Mobile Heal COVID-19 Equity Project (CEP) (started Jan. 18, 2023)

Elizabeth Cha, Residency Assistant, Department of Internal Medicine (started Dec. 27, 2022)

Stephanie Covacevich, SJV PRIME + Project Coordinator, Department of Undergraduate Medical Education (started Sept. 12, 2022)

Lauren Downum, Administrative Assistant III, Department of Internal Medicine/Cardiology (started Oct. 17, 2022)

Bree Godoy, Education Program Coordinator, Department of Pediatrics (started Sept. 26, 2022)

Erica Jones, Clinical Social Worker, Ambulatory Care (started Jan. 3, 2023)

Mehak Kaur, Program Officer, Department of Family and Community Medicine (started Sept. 12, 2022)

Melody Kirk, Surgery Administrative Assistant, Department of Surgery (started Dec. 27, 2022)

Niki Moreno, Fellowship Program Coordinator, Internal Medicine/Gastroenterology (started Sept. 26, 2022)

Jesus Pimentel, Program Officer, Pediatrics (started Oct. 3, 2022)

Tony Santos, Project Specialist, Latino Center for Medical Education and Research (started Nov. 7, 2022)

Rayne Shepard, Assistant Clinical Research Coordinator, Research (started Jan. 9, 2023)

Souvixada Somsacksy, Clinical Research Credential Assistant, Research Hematology/Oncology (started Sept. 13, 2022)

Sundee Thao, Residency Coordinator, Internal Medicine (started Oct. 10, 2022)

Bousaba Torres, Program Assistant, Family and Community Medicine (started Aug. 29, 2022)

Yeng Vue, Senior Clinical Research Coordinator, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery (started Oct. 25, 2022)

Alycia Serrano, Senior Vocational Nurse, Clinical Lead, Mobile HeaL CEP (started Dec. 25, 2022)

Jolene Woods, Vocational Nurse, Mobile HeaL CEP (started Jan. 30, 2022)

Seeka Yang, Administrative Assistant, Pediatrics (started Oct. 3, 2022)

Congrats to the following on their Promotions:

Sydney Farnesi, Supervisor 2, San Joaquin Valley California Medical Scholars Program, Office of Health Career Pathways, Department of Undergraduate Medical Education (effective Jan. 9, 2023)

Pha Mouavangsou, Campus Life Services Manager, Associate Dean's Office (effective Jan. 23, 2023)

Juanita Sprowell, Senior Operations Specialist, Administrative Officer 2, Mobile HeaL CEP (effective Dec. 12, 2022)

Kudos to the following on their recent Achievements:

Serena Loya, Department Administrator, Internal Medicine, was nominated to serve as Treasurer of the Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine (AAIM) Council for fiscal year 2024

Kathleen Lozano, Risk Manager, was appointed President-elect for the California Society for Healthcare Risk Management

Michelle Newman, Department of Internal Medicine, Pulmonary Critical Care/Sleep Fellowships Coordinator, received her initial certification for Notary Commission

Mackenzie Saepanh, Vaccine Support Specialist, Mobile HeaL CEP, graduated from California State University with a bachelor's in Science Biology with an emphasis in pre-medicine and a double minor in Physical Science and Psychology

Lorna Tahan, Department of Internal Medicine, Infectious Diseases Fellowship Coordinator, received Notary Commission re-certification

Sherrie Yang, GME Analyst, earned a Certification of Training Administrators of GME

Ariana Zaghmouri, Residency Coordinator, Department of Internal Medicine was appointed to the UCSF Fresno Program Coordinator Advisory Council and the UCSF Fresno GMEC Recruitment Subcommittee