

JUNE 2012



ANNETTE SIEGLER

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Teamwork, Flexibility, Clinical Expertise Core to Surgical Intensive Care Unit's Success

UC Health University Hospital's Surgical Intensive Care Unit (SICU) receives patients recovering from major surgeries as well as critical trauma patients needing ventilator support, blood transfusions or cardiac monitoring.

These patients need a great deal of care, and the hospital devotes about 110 nurses to its 34-bed unit. Patients typically remain there four to five days, so nurses become familiar with patients and their families.

"Our nurses really embrace the family and help guide them through the journey of a loved one's recovery from a major surgery or traumatic event," says Jill Hickman, RN, clinical manager, SICU.

Families appreciate the nurses' regular updates and education about a patient's care. Because of their constant patient contact in the SICU setting, nurses also serve as a vital information resource for busy physicians.

The SICU is the largest intensive care unit at University Hospital, and Hickman says there are three factors to successfully running the enterprise: teamwork,



UC Health University Hospital SICU

flexibility and clinical expertise.

Teamwork is essential to manage the stabilization of a new patient, as many individuals coordinate their efforts to provide care. The unit must also remain flexible and ready to admit new patients at any time.

Finally, she says it's important to recruit and maintain nurses with the right clinical expertise to handle the variety of cases encountered at the SICU. ●

The SICU is the largest intensive care unit at University Hospital, and must remain flexible and ready to admit new patients at any time.

Unit Receives Beacon Award of Excellence

This spring the **UC Health University Hospital SICU** received the Beacon Award of Excellence from the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses, an organization that represents 500,000 acute and critical care nurses.

The Beacon Award recognizes individual units for their dedication to improving every facet of patient care. For patients and their families, the Beacon Award signifies exceptional care through improved outcomes and greater overall satisfaction. To be considered, a unit must complete a rigorous application process that can take months.

Only 5 percent of critical care units in the country are Beacon Award winners.

The SICU received the bronze level award, and it's the first and only University Hospital unit to achieve the distinction. Only 5 percent of critical care units in the country are Beacon Award winners. ●

Building a Culture of Safety for Our Employees and Patients

COLLEAGUES,
We recently conducted a survey about patient safety in the hospitals and ambulatory sites. Those results made it



clear that many of our employees don't feel heard when making a suggestion regarding patient safety issues. I want to let you know, we are listening and taking immediate steps to resolve the issues that are brought to our attention, as well as creating a culture of safety throughout the organization.

There is no question that safety is essential to creating a positive work environment. The actions we take to ensure that safety—both for our personal benefit and the safety of our

patients—must be consistent across the system.

That includes addressing things like better lighting in the parking lots where employees walk to and from work—which was a safety concern you identified and we are currently working to remedy in the Eden Garage through the UC architect's office. It also includes defining and implementing best practice expectations for clinical operations—for example, securing all medications and prescription pads, documenting expiration dates on multi-use medication, and clearing the hallways—to ensure safety at every site where we serve patients. We are not doing this because it is a Joint Commission mandate; we are doing it because it is the right thing to do.

To add another layer of accountabil-

ity, we will also implement the MIDAS system currently being used to document safety concerns at UC Health University Hospital. This will help us address concerns in a more timely manner. I will personally monitor this system, meet with the team involved in the incident to review the issue and create best practice for improvement. I will regularly report back to you on the steps being taken to resolve the issues.

We are developing as a strong organization with safety and service at the core of every action we take. If at any time you observe behavior that you feel is unsafe, please report that incident to your manager. If your concern has not been addressed, please contact me at 513-475-7227.

Expect to hear from us often regarding the changes we're making to improve safety—both for our patients and our employees. Moving forward, we will gauge our improvement through an annual patient safety culture survey.

ROSEMARY KEISER
Vice President, Ambulatory Services
University of Cincinnati Physicians

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Connected

Connected is a monthly publication for clinicians and associates of UC Health. Send your comments and ideas to CorporatePR&Marketing@uchealth.com.

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UC HEALTH MISSION

- Provide life changing, patient-centered medical care
- Drive innovation through groundbreaking research
- Educate and inspire the next generation of health care professionals

UC HEALTH VISION

- To be region's quality health care partner and a national leader in solving complex medical problems

UC HEALTH VALUES

- Respect
- Integrity
- Teamwork
- Excellence



HOW WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Postpartum Checkup Leads to Brain Tumor Diagnosis

Young mother thankful for her 'small army' of UC Health caregivers

Sandy Hempel began experiencing fatigue and dizziness in 2002, not long after giving birth.

She visited her physician's office for a postpartum checkup, and the nurse practitioner recommended a CT scan to be safe. "She could've written it off as the effects of being a new mom," says Hempel.

The scan showed a mass in her brain, and she was referred to Ronald Warnick, MD, a neurosurgeon with the

**Warnick**

UC Neuroscience Institute and professor at the UC College of Medicine.

He identified the tumor as an astrocytoma. It sat precariously between the sensory and motor strips on Hempel's brain, which meant surgery was risky since any damage to the motor strip could leave her paralyzed.

Hempel asked Warnick what he would do if she were his wife. "I would not do surgery," he said. He left the final decision to Hempel, and she chose radiation therapy.

For three weeks, she woke at 5:40 a.m. daily to undergo treatments before going to work.

Hempel saw John Breneman, MD, UC Health radiation oncologist and UC College of Medicine professor, for her radiation therapy.

**Breneman**

"He was very compassionate and understanding,"

Hempel says, noting that she had some cognitive difficulties due to complications stemming from a biopsy of the tumor.

"I would ask the same questions multiple times, but he and the staff

were so patient."

Eventually the tumor shrank to a tenth of its original size.

Hempel gladly helps others with her condition, including becoming involved with various brain tumor events and eventually joining the board of the UC Neuroscience Institute's Brain Tumor Center in 2010.

She began chemotherapy in 2011 to control her tumor and has again encountered many kind associates, including Faith O'Brien, clinical services coordinator.

"She helped take things off my mind

by handling so many aspects of my care," says Hempel.

Looking back, Hempel is grateful for the care she's received.

"UC Health is absolutely outstanding," she says. "I'm so lucky to have been referred here. At any time it feels like I have a small army looking out for me." •

>> **APPOINTMENTS & REFERRALS**

A full list of brain tumor specialists can be found at ucphysicians.com. For appointments with the UC Brain Tumor Center, call 866-941-UCNI (8264).

**Sandy Hempel**

"UC Health is absolutely outstanding. I'm so lucky to have been referred here. At any time it feels like I have a small army looking out for me."

UC HEALTH'S INTERNATIONAL REACH

Doctors, Nurses and Medical Staff Extend Health Care Mission Abroad to Help Less Fortunate

FOR MANY UC Health doctors and nurses, vacation isn't a time for beaches or resorts—it's time to load your suitcase with medical supplies and fly to some of the least-developed places in the world, all in the name of service. Each year, these volunteers give their time and knowledge to help patients abroad. Their experiences can be different, but they've all felt the fulfillment that comes with international service and the memories of patients they've helped.

A Team Effort in Haiti

For two years, UC Health's "Team Haiti," has traveled to Port-au-Prince, Haiti, to staff Hospital Bernard Mevs, the country's only trauma hospital. This year's 45-member team came from departments and divisions throughout UC Health and staffed the small hospital continuously for two weeks.

Years after the earthquake that destroyed much of the country, co-organizer and UC Health emergency medicine physician Jordan Bonomo, MD, says the conditions are still shocking, even to those accustomed to high-stress environments.

"There isn't less stress in Haiti, there's just different stress," says Bonomo, who is also an assistant professor of emergency medicine and neurosurgery at the UC College of Medicine. "The stress is more about volume—there's always so much suffering you have to work through."

He said the logistics for performing CAT scans or obtaining blood for surgery are "unbelievable," yet the people of Haiti are remarkably patient and grateful.



Members of Team Haiti perform surgery at Hospital Bernard Mevs in Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Surgical resident Ritha Belizaire, MD, has been to Haiti six times in the last two years, working in both hospitals and orphanages. She says encountering the country's conditions doesn't get any easier, but the austere conditions draw the medical team together.

"It's pure medicine in Haiti," she says. "You see attending physicians doing jobs that nurses aides would do here. Everyone's doing everyone's job, and it's all for the benefit of the patient."

Building Villages in Tanzania

In 2004, UC Health family and community medicine physician Chris Lewis, MD, set his sights on benefiting entire villages of patients with the founding of Village Life Outreach Project, Inc. The organization works to improve conditions of life, health and education in the East African nation of Tanzania.

Since then, more than 200 UC-affiliated volunteers and students from medicine, nursing, design, education and engineering have been involved

with Village Life, providing medical care, safe water efforts, a mosquito net distribution system and lunch programs.

The organization's latest project is building the Roche Health Center, a health clinic to provide 20,000 people with their first access to permanent health care. In April, they opened the first building out of a planned 14-building complex.

"We've treated a couple hundred patients so far," says Lewis, an adjunct assistant professor in the UC College of Medicine. "The next phase is building staff housing to recruit full-time doctors and nurses who can live onsite and operate the facility 24/7."

UC Health has allotted space in its Business Center on Burnet Avenue for Lewis and the team to work on Village Life initiatives.

Lewis says he believes the service makes Village Life volunteers "better stewards of humanity and better global citizens."

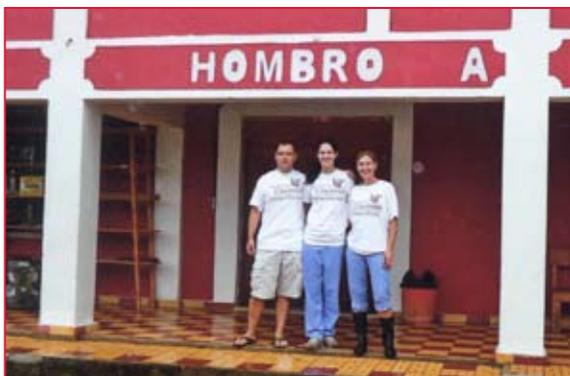
"We receive and learn more than we give through the connections that we form with the Tanzanian people" he says.



Surgical resident Ritha Belizaire, MD (right), with her father, Texas surgeon Roger Belizaire, MD, and their Haitian patient, Uri, who underwent surgery for complications from typhoid fever



Nurse Marie Ryan reads to a Bernard Mevs pediatric patient



Nurses Roger Zutterling, April Dye and Sunshine Barhost at the “Shoulder to Shoulder” clinic in Honduras

Help in Honduras

In 2009, surgical assistant Melissa Allen joined the “Heart to Honduras” program, assisting with oral surgeries in village clinics.

Though she says some patients weren’t as happy with the dental procedures—“no one likes to have teeth extracted”—Allen remembers watching the vision clinic fit Hondurans with glasses.

“You could see them put on the glasses and suddenly be able to actually see—their faces would light up with happiness,” she recalls.

Last fall, UC Health nurse Sunshine Barhost also visited Honduras, working with nonprofit organization Shoulder to Shoulder. She says the team treated “anything—from high blood pressure to machete wounds.”

They also helped inspect the small sinks and washbasins, or “pilas,” that sat outside Honduran homes. Barhost would inspect for mosquito larvae, collect samples and distribute medication for malaria and dengue fever.

“What really struck me was that the poorest of people were so giving,” she says. “One day, we visited a woman who had just delivered twins. They were still at the hospital, hours away. She lived in a shack, just a box, and she had one turkey and one chicken—

and she offered us her turkey.”

Now, in UC Health University Hospital’s emergency department, Barhost says she’s brought some lessons back. In Honduras, she used pictures and props to describe something like lung function, but she realized she can be equally as creative at home: “It helped me realize the different cultural experiences patients have. I learned there are many ways to educate people, even with a language barrier. We can experience those barriers in Cincinnati, too.”



Dye, Zutterling and Barhost in their living quarters above the clinic

Toward Sustainability

Emergency medicine physician Edward Otten, MD, says understanding those cultural differences is key to performing medicine abroad.

A disaster medicine expert, Otten has traveled to post-earthquake Haiti and Turkey to advise on disaster relief. In early 2011, he traveled to Japan after the earthquake and tsunami led to the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident.

“The most valuable thing that we can do when we respond to these disasters is to train the local doctors, nurses and responders to work within their culture and their resources,” says Otten, a professor at the UC College of Medicine. “Many cultures have practices and beliefs around gender, for example, or what causes disease. You have to work within that culture to be successful.”

Members of Team Haiti are hoping to build on their work by bringing teams of Haitian physicians and nurses to UC for training in the future.

Co-organizer and nurse Jessica Wiles

says it’s a daunting task to think about how to improve the country’s situation—and that her experience serves as a daily reminder “of what we have and what we have to give.”

“We’re not here to be a band-aid for the Haitian people. Our goal is to give them something they can work with, to educate them to build their pro-

gram and advance their own practice of nursing and medicine.”

“It all boils down to education, from the kindergarten level up to medical and nursing training,” adds Belizaire. “And if you make an effort to show that you’re invested in the people and the country, and to work with them, that’s a big deal. That can truly impact these countries and make a difference for the future.” ●



Christopher Lewis, MD, with members of the Masai tribe in Tanzania

Have a Story to Share?

Help us celebrate your efforts to help people—both abroad and in our region. Send your story suggestions and photos to CorporatePR&Marketing@uchealth.com.

in brief

Administrative Director for the Cincinnati Cancer Center Named



Cincinnati Cancer Center Administrative Director Vijaya Gandhi, PhD, with CCC Governing Board Member and UC College of Medicine Dean Thomas Boat, MD.

Vijaya Gandhi, PhD, has joined the Cincinnati Cancer Center (CCC) as administrative director. The CCC is a collaboration among UC Health, the UC College of Medicine and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center that brings together interdisciplinary teams to research and develop new treatments, while providing a continuum of care for children, adults and families with cancer.

Gandhi has spent the past 17 years at the University of Pittsburgh, most recently as the associate director of administration and strategic planning for the university's cancer institute where she was responsible for operations, administration, management and strategic planning for the institute's 450-member research facility. Trained as a biochemist, she spent the first 10 years of her career as a research scientist at the University of Texas Health Sciences Center at San Antonio, Texas.

Gandhi's first charge at the CCC will be to refine a priority list and develop an action timeline from the strategic plan. In addition to CCC specific goals, she will work closely with George Atweh, MD, director of the UC Cancer Institute, to streamline processes and mechanisms for increasing National Institutes of Health funding for key cancer research initiatives. ●

McMullan Receives Citizen's Distinguished Service Award

Jason McMullan, MD, a UC Health emergency medicine physician and assistant professor at the UC College of Medicine, received the Cincinnati Fire Department Citizen's Distinguished Service Award for his treatment of Cincinnati man Jan Quinn, rescued from a house fire in November 2010. McMullan received the award at the first Firefighter Awards Banquet, held Thursday, April 26. The event recognizes firefighters and local citizens who had participated in rescue efforts or distinguished acts of service.



McMullan

Free Employee Allergy Screenings June 19

The UC Health Allergy and Sinus Center will host free allergy screenings for UC Health employees Tuesday, June 19, at the UC Health Physicians Office in Clifton. Patients will be screened for the common sources of inhalant allergies in a variety of classes: dust mites, mold, grass, maple tree, ragweed and cat.

To make an appointment, call 513-475-8400.

Falciglia Named ELAM Fellow

Mercedes Falciglia, MD, a UC Health endocrinologist and associate professor at the UC College of Medicine, has been named a 2012-13 fellow in the Hedwig van Ameringen Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine (ELAM) Program for Women.



Falciglia

ELAM is a one-year intensive leadership training initiative with networking and mentoring opportunities for women in medicine, dentistry and public health. The program has nearly 700 graduates, many in leadership positions at American academic medical centers and universities.

Falciglia developed and leads the Diabetes Now program at UC Health University Hospital, a

multidisciplinary inpatient initiative formed in 2006 to improve the care of hospitalized patients with diabetes and high blood glucose.

Panos Named VA Associate Chief of Staff for Research

Ralph Panos, MD, UC Health pulmonologist and associate professor at the UC College of Medicine, has been named the new associate chief of staff for research at the Cincinnati Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center. Panos is chief of the division of pulmonary, critical care and sleep medicine at the VA and is cited as being the driving force behind the hospital's recent Telemedicine ICU implementation. ●



Panos

RIDE CINCINNATI BENEFITS UC CANCER RESEARCH

The annual Ride Cincinnati cycling event to support UC breast cancer research will take place Sunday, June 10. The family friendly event includes non-competitive races ranging from 62.8 miles to 8.2 miles, a kids' bike rally and post-event celebration. Ride Cincinnati has raised nearly \$1 million for breast cancer research efforts at UC since 2007. Registration can be made at ridecincinnati.org or on race day.



Use Caution When Seeking Vitamin D From the Sun

Healthful diets, mineral supplements can help people avoid deficiencies

Summer is here, and with it comes warm weather and the sun's rays. Lauri Erway Nandyal, MD, UC Health primary care physician who sees patients in Wyoming, says with an



Nandyal

increase in the awareness of vitamin D deficiencies, cautious exposure to the sun is important, being careful to avoid burning.

"Vitamin D intake is necessary for

healthy bones and bodies," she says, adding that supplementation is warranted, especially for infants who are breast fed, unless their mothers have sufficient vitamin D intake themselves and for many who are intolerant of dairy products or who do not or cannot consume fatty fish.

"[Vitamin D] is a fatty fish-based product, so we can eat fish, but we also need to see vitamin D deficiency as less of a nutritional issue and more of a skin issue."

Nandyal explains that our bodies are designed to manufacture vitamin D through our skin.

"Vitamin D supplements are often necessary to supplement what little we can get from our diets, but in my opinion, we need more public awareness about what amount of sun exposure is safe and necessary to get

A little time spent outdoors in the sun, safely and in conjunction with good nutrition, is important for keeping bones and bodies healthy and strong.

the amount of vitamin D that we need," she says, adding that during the winter months supplementation is important since sun exposure is limited.

"We're trying to level the playing field, but saying that the same amount of sun exposure will produce sufficient vitamin D for everyone is untrue," says Nandyal. "No one should spend excess amounts of time in the sun, but depending on the amount of melanin in the skin and the amount of skin a person shows, the amount of vitamin D able to be manufactured differs."

She adds that in an effort to be "colorblind," the same recommendations for sunscreen to pale people are often made for people of color.

"Those who are well pigmented

don't need to be slathered in the highest level SPF," she says. "I'm not saying that sunscreen should not be used; however, we do need some sort of sun exposure to be healthy and receive some of the vitamin D that we need. That it isn't a one-size-fits-all kind of solution."

Nandyal says that a little time spent outdoors in the sun, safely and in conjunction with good nutrition, is important for keeping bones and bodies healthy and strong.

"I tell my patients to not think of food as just fuel, but instead to think of it as data—information being used to tell your body how to process and fix problems. We want to be sure that we're putting in the right data—through our mouths or our skin—to achieve the best possible health," she says. ●

>> APPOINTMENTS & REFERRALS
UC Health Primary Care has 60-plus clinicians at outpatient locations across Greater Cincinnati. For appointments, call 513-475-8000.

"[Vitamin D] is a fatty fish-based product, so we can eat fish, but we also need to see vitamin D deficiency as less of a nutritional issue and more of a skin issue."

Lauri Erway Nandyal, MD, UC Health primary care physician and UC College of Medicine adjunct assistant professor



istock.com

We're all UC Health

Annette Siegler

Registered Nurse,
University Pointe Surgical Hospital

POSSESSING THE CONFIDENCE that comes with nearly three decades of nursing experience, it's no surprise that Annette Siegler has become a "go-to" person when people have questions in the hospital. She is happy to share her knowledge with others, particularly younger nurses just starting their careers.

"I'm concerned about the future of nursing. New nurses need good mentors, and I feel strongly about what an RN needs to know to succeed in being the best nurse she or he can be," says Siegler.

Sharing her experience with the next generation of nurses is her way of preserving the integrity of the profession. Hondros College nursing students shadow Siegler up to two times a year as part of their professional training. She gets immense satisfaction from the opportunity to mentor these young women and men.

"I tell every nursing student I work with to make sure they identify one person they can go to for all their questions when they enter a new job. Knowing who that confident, competent leader is will help avoid—and solve—problems when they come up, ultimately keeping our patients safe," she adds.

Siegler joined the nursing staff at University Pointe Surgical Hospital in March 2006 after 23 years at UC Health University Hospital, where she began her career in 1983 as an orthopaedic nurse. Through the years, she transitioned into cardiothoracic surgery and labor and delivery, ultimately landing in the nursing float pool.

When asked what she enjoys about nursing, she quickly says it's the variety of tasks at hand.

"I'm a great multi-tasker and I enjoy the challenges each day brings. It keeps things interesting," she says.

For this reason, University Pointe Surgical Hospital is a great fit for Siegler. The



Annette Siegler

"I'm a great multi-tasker and I enjoy the challenges each day brings. It keeps things interesting."

staff is smaller, so she plays many roles.

"An average day for me usually starts in pre-operative services, but I often end up helping with sedation cases, in the urodynamics lab and PACU (post-anesthesia care unit). It all depends on the day's cases," she says. "We have great camaraderie among our team. We work well together and step up to help when we are needed. It's a great work environment."

Siegler holds a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Cincinnati. Her non-work time is often occupied with boating and fishing trips in the summer. She lives in West Chester with her husband. ●



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- WESTERN HILLS
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