



Overview of the UC medical system

This month, the University begins negotiations with the California Nurses Association (CNA) regarding a new contract for the more than 8,500 nurses that staff the UC medical centers and student health centers. Over the course of negotiations, many important issues regarding the terms and conditions of nurses' employment and the operation of UC medical facilities will be discussed. It is important that UC nurses fully understand the context for these issues and discussions, and the overall environment in which the UC medical centers and student health centers operate.

Serving the health needs for patients across the state

The University takes great pride in the quality care and full range of health services in their communities. The UC medical centers and student health centers comprise one of the largest health care systems in the state, and one of the most respected in the country. Each year the University provides some of the best care in the country to more than 135,000 inpatients, 239,000 emergency room visitors and more than 3.6 million outpatients. Additionally, the UC health system operates Level I trauma centers in four of its five regions and staffs the Level I trauma center at San Francisco General Hospital.

Care for the UC student population

Through its campus health services, the University of California promotes students' good health and well being — which are important elements in their academic success as well as the overall the quality of campus life. UC student health centers provide a comprehensive array of accessible, convenient, cost-effective health care and health promotion services. These services include education about healthful lifestyles and behavior that prevents illness and leads to optimal health. UC also plays an important role as a health care advocate for its students. In addition, all student health centers provide access to low cost health insurance for students, and eight of the nine centers are accredited with the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC).

A major provider of care for the uninsured and underinsured

Each year, UC medical centers proudly provide high quality health services to uninsured and underinsured patients who are unable to afford care. The University is one of the two largest providers of Medi-Cal providers in the state, and by operating hospitals that are responsible for care to uninsured and underinsured patients in Sacramento, San Diego, and Orange Counties, UC is a major "safety net" health care provider. UC's cost to serve California's uninsured population is nearly \$200 million annually.

Medical research

The University medical centers play a leadership role in contributing to medical advances along with the development and testing of new diagnostic and therapeutic techniques. UC researchers have received numerous accolades for their work, including six Nobel Prizes in medicine. Some of the recent research breakthroughs at UC include:

- Discovery of a new class of proteins linked to "mad cow" disease
- Life saving innovations including the seat belt device and the catheter to treat aneurysms
- Discovery of Vitamins E and K

Educating health care professionals

The University of California operates the largest health science and medical education program in the nation. Annual enrollment in medicine, nursing, pharmacy, public health, and other health professions exceed 12,000 students.

UC medical centers, together with four affiliated medical education programs at Berkeley, Fresno, Riverside, and Los Angeles educate more than 2,600 medical students. In addition, UC medical centers have affiliations with Veteran Affairs, county, and community-based facilities throughout California.

There are more than 150 residency programs with more than 4,400 residents participating annually. Of that total, 46 percent are in primary care specialties such as family care, internal medicine, pediatrics, and ob/gyn. UC educates the doctors, nurses and other health professionals who deliver health care, translate medical discoveries into new treatments, and care for a large portion of the nation's uninsured.

UC Medical Centers rank among the very best in the nation

The University's long-standing reputation as a leader in delivering some of the best patient care in the country, and making the strongest possible commitments to patient and employee safety have earned each of the UC medical centers a certification from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO). In addition, UC has received numerous awards and honorable distinctions from various associations that rank and rate the best hospitals in the nation:

UCLA

- Designated the "best hospital in the Western United States" and fifth in the nation overall in 2004 by *U.S. News and World Report*

UCSF

- Ranked sixth in the nation overall in 2004 by *U.S. News and World Report*

UCI

- Received Magnet Designation for its ability to provide the very best nursing care by American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC)
- Recognized as one the nation's 100 Top Hospitals® by Solucient
- Recognized as one the safest hospitals in California by Leapfrog quality and safety survey

UCD

- Recognized as one the top 50 hospitals the nation in 2004 by *U.S. News and World Report*
- Received Magnet Designation for its ability to provide the very best nursing care by American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC)
- Recognized as one of the top burn centers in the nation by both the American Burn Association and the American College of Surgeons

UCSD

- Recognized as one of the Best Hospitals for respiratory disorders, rheumatology, kidney disease, and gynecology in 2004 by *U.S. News and World Report*
- Home to more than 90 UCSD doctors across 25 specialties who were recognized as among the "best in the country" by Best Doctors, ® Inc.

Financial challenges facing the UC medical centers

The University has an unwavering commitment to excellent patient care and safety. Still, the cost of maintaining the excellent standards of the UC medical and student health centers rise every year, and in this very competitive industry, decreasing revenue sources are expected to create even more challenges to UC's resources. Some of the greatest demands facing UC medical centers include the following:

- Seismic retrofitting projects mandated by the state to upgrade and replace existing buildings in order to continue functioning as trauma centers
- Expanding current facilities and construction of additional medical centers on other campuses in the UC system to meet the state's growing demand for medical care
- Maintaining acceptable bond ratings in order to borrow the large sums of money needed for retrofitting and expansion demands

- Continuing service to the growing number of uninsured and underinsured patients while government funding for Medicare and Medi-Cal programs is lagging behind and vulnerable to cuts
- Recruiting and retaining all staff while facing state budget cuts and shortages of qualified personnel
- Updating expensive equipment and investing in new technology
- Overcoming the rising costs of prescription drugs and new medical devices, which are increasing even faster than overall medical inflation

UC nurses are key to delivering quality care

Our nurses play a vital role in helping UC medical and student health centers maintain their hard-earned reputation for excellence. Attracting, retaining, and appropriately rewarding nurses remains one of the university's core priorities, as evidenced by the fact that UC offers its nurses some of the most competitive compensation and benefits packages available in today's healthcare market. To put it in perspective, last year the medical centers spent over \$ 500 million on RN compensation alone.

UC's commitment to professional, efficient negotiations

UC's goal is to reach an agreement with the CNA as quickly as possible, before the expiration of the current labor agreement on April 30, 2005. The University is committed to the collective bargaining process wherein disputes are settled at the bargaining table without impacting the care or safety of our patients. UC expects all its employees to respect and abide by the collective bargaining process and to uphold the standards of professionalism that UC medical facilities are known for.

More Information

For information regarding the UC medical centers and student health facilities, go to <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/health/medcenters.html>.

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