



### LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

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Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Happy 2024, and welcome to another dispatch from UC San Diego Surgery. While it is early in the calendar year and just coming off the holiday season, there is no slow-down in the affairs of the Department. In this month's e-newsletter you will find exciting news in the recruitment of a new Moores Cancer Center Director, a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the UC San Diego Burn Center, a generous naming gift for the new Hillcrest Outpatient Pavilion, an introduction to our innovative compassion-centric anatomy instruction programs, numerous faculty awards and

much more.

We are thrilled, first of all, to announce a generous \$25 million gift from the McGrath Family Foundation has been pledged to support the new McGrath Outpatient Pavilion at UC San Diego Health – Hillcrest Medical Campus. This state-of-the-art facility, slated to open in 2025, will significantly enhance our capacity to provide acute injury and specialty surgical care services both in our communities adjacent to Hillcrest and downtown San Diego and across the region. This represents an exciting first phase of the campus renovation that will culminate in a new Hillcrest hospital that will replace the current facility. The new outpatient facility is particularly important to the Department's clinical missions as it will house our ambulatory clinics and our multidisciplinary partners in cancer, cardiovascular, gastroenterology, and others.

Just as exciting this month was the announcement by Vice-Chancellor John Carethers of the successful recruitment of Dr. Diane M. Simeone as the new Director of Moores Cancer Center at UC San Diego Health. Dr. Simeone is a world-renowned surgeon scientist who has been on the forefront of research in the field of pancreatic cancer for decades. The Moores Cancer Center is the region's only comprehensive

cancer center that brings together unique multidisciplinary teams that provide nation-leading clinical care to the patients of our many and varied communities and that conduct impactful research to ensure that tomorrow is better than today for patients and families facing cancer diagnoses. The selection of Dr. Simeone was the result of a national search that drew the interest of an extraordinarily competitive field of candidates. The Department could not be more excited about welcoming Dr. Simeone to this role. Furthermore we are just as excited to welcome Dr. Simone's spouse, Dr. Ted Welling, to the Department where he will greatly bolster our hepatobiliary and pancreatic surgery programs.

We're also making special note of the 50th anniversary of the UC San Diego Burn Center and its remarkable evolution as the region's only verified Burn Center. In our Q&A this month, Burn Center Director Dr. Jeanne Lee reflects on the Center's half-century mark and the surprising clinical insights 50 years of burn care can provide.

In this edition, I'd also like to draw your attention to a powerful editorial piece titled "Compassionatomy," co-written by our Anatomy Division Chief Geoffrey Noel, PhD, and published in the *San Diego Union Tribune*. The article explores the transformative nature of anatomical dissection in medical education, emphasizing the importance of cultivating compassion in medical students. We have introduced the practice of Compassionatomy at UC San Diego School of Medicine to forge a meaningful connection between students and body donors, instilling a deep sense of gratitude and respect within our future healthcare professionals.

While we're on the topic of gratitude and respect, I offer mine to you, both for another year begun well and for many more opportunities to be of benefit to patients. Happy New Year and may we celebrate many more together!

Bryan Clary, MD, MBA  
Marshall J. Orloff Family Endowed Chair  
Professor and Chair, Department of Surgery  
UC San Diego Health Sciences  
Surgeon-in-Chief, UC San Diego Health

## **SUPPORT THE WORK OF UC SAN DIEGO'S DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY**

With your help, the Department of Surgery at UC San Diego School of Medicine is changing lives. Financial support from our community is critical to providing leading-edge surgical care to thousands of people every year. Your partnership enables UC San Diego's Department of Surgery to continue to serve our region's patients with the most expert care available.

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**CLINICAL NEWS**

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## World-Renowned Surgeon Named New Director of Moores Cancer Center at UC San Diego Health

*Diane Simeone, MD, will lead the region's only NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center*

Following an extensive national search, Diane M. Simeone, MD, has been appointed director of Moores Cancer Center at UC San Diego Health, effective April 1, 2024.

Simeone brings robust institutional, national and international leadership experience to both oncologic patient care and scientific research, with a focus on establishing novel models of interdisciplinary collaboration. She is an internationally recognized surgeon-expert in the biology and multidisciplinary treatment of pancreatic neoplasms, with an active clinical practice in pancreatic surgery.

Simeone currently serves as the Laura and Isaac Perlmutter Professor of Surgery, director of the Pancreatic Cancer Center, and the associate director of translational research at Perlmutter Cancer Center at New York University Langone Health. She served as chair of the scientific and medical advisory board of the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network and is a member of the scientific advisory board for the Let's Win Pancreatic Cancer online community.

"It is an incredible privilege and honor to be chosen to lead UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center in the setting of its world-class patient care and scientific discoveries," said Simeone. "The opportunity to be able to help guide clinical and scientific innovation, increase access to early therapeutics through clinical trials, and train the next generation of clinicians and researchers is a lifetime opportunity."



## \$25 Million Gift to UC San Diego Establishes the McGrath Outpatient Pavilion

The San Diego-based McGrath Family Foundation has pledged \$25 million to support the new outpatient pavilion at UC San Diego Health – Hillcrest Medical Campus, slated to open in 2025. In recognition of the gift, the facility will be named the McGrath Family Foundation Outpatient Pavilion, commonly known as the McGrath Outpatient Pavilion.

The 6-floor, 250,000-square-foot McGrath Outpatient Pavilion will house specialty clinical programs, including oncology, neurosurgery, urology, ear nose and throat, and orthopedics, as well as outpatient surgery operating rooms, endoscopy procedure rooms, advanced imaging, infusion, and radiation oncology.

"UC San Diego Health is home to 10 nationally ranked medical specialties, providing world-class care to patients throughout the region and beyond," said Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. "We are grateful to Laurie McGrath and the McGrath Family Foundation for their generous support of the McGrath Outpatient Pavilion, which will further improve and expand access to the exceptional care for which UC San Diego Health is renowned."

The McGrath Outpatient Pavilion will address the growing demand for specialized diagnostic, treatment and surgical services. It will offer significant new space for multispecialty cancer clinics and infusion centers, allowing UC San Diego Health, and Moores Cancer Center, to greatly expand access to the region's only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center.

“UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center is not only an asset to the university, it’s an asset to our community and beyond. Dr. Simeone’s proven leadership will further elevate and expand our cancer center as an international leader in top-ranked patient care, research, and teaching,” said UC San Diego Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla.

[Read more](#)

[Read more](#)

## Q&A: JEANNE LEE: 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF BURN CENTER

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*The UC San Diego Regional Burn Center has been a leader in making notable advances in burn therapy since 1973, making this year its golden anniversary.*

*Every year, the Burn Center admits about 400 patients – from infants to older adults – for burn injuries, inhalation injuries, and skin disorders. Its surgeons treat another 800 individuals annually as outpatients in Hillcrest. The Center’s state-of-the-art facility has an intensive care unit, a special burn care unit and an outpatient clinic for minor burn assessments and treatment.*

Director of Burn Surgery [Jeanne Lee, MD, FACS](#), shares with us the value of the Burn Center for the San Diego region and the surprising continuity of burn injuries seen over the years and the one simple, two-second at-home maneuver that could prevent a majority of burn injuries.

### **Q: What is the significance of the 50th anniversary of the UC San Diego Burn Center?**

**A:** The Regional Burn Center at UC San Diego has provided burn care to the San Diego and Imperial County citizens for a half century. We are the only burn center in the area and have maintained the highest quality of care for the last 50 years. We are also one of only 140 verified burn centers in the United States and Canada so we have the resources to take care of burn patients when many hospitals don’t. If we didn’t exist, these patients would have to leave the county and go elsewhere for care. We are able to help patients stay close to home and family which impacts their recovery.

### **Q: What is the value in having a specialized Burn Center rather than receiving care in a more generalized way?**

**A:** Burn Centers provide all-around comprehensive care to patients. It’s not just about the initial care they receive in the hospital. Verified burn centers have the necessary resources to rehab patients after their burns are healed so the patient can return to work and hopefully, back to their own lives. Our therapists and ancillary services have training that focuses on burn patients who have more demands – from nutrition to physical therapy – than most patients do both in and out of the hospital.

### **Q: How have the nature of the injuries you treat in the Burn Center changed over the past 50 years? Why are people still getting burned?**

**A:** I don’t think the nature of these injuries have changed in the last 50 years. The majority of our patients still sustain scald burns or flame burns. Accidents will always happen, fires will always be a reality of life and that’s why people still come in with burn injuries.

### **Q: What did you wish more people knew about burns and staying safe?**

**A:** That is a very large but important topic. First, as the majority of our burn patients suffer from scald injuries – most often from their own faucets, showers, etc. – many of these injuries are preventable with

one simple maneuver. Setting your hot water heater at home to no more than 120 degrees F would probably prevent many of these injuries. Many hot water heaters are automatically set to 140 degrees F. At 120 degrees F, it takes more than 5 minutes to sustain a significant burn that would need to be treated. At 140 degrees F, that time is five seconds.

Secondly, I would like for the entire community to know that our burn center exists and that timely referrals is better for the patients. We continue to do outreach to get the word out but still have a fair number of patients who come to us late after injury. The sooner we see patients, the sooner we can make sure they get the care and rehab they need to get them back to their lives.



## FEATURE STORY

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### **Opinion: Medical students must learn to have compassion for patients. This begins with body donors.**

*This editorial piece was co-written by Anatomy Division Chief Geoffrey Noel, PhD and published in the San Diego Union Tribune.*

Anatomical dissection is a canonical part of medical education and is often considered a rite of passage for first-year students — it is simultaneously a fascinating and troubling experience for many. While learning novel and detailed information about the human body, students find themselves confronting complex and potent aspects of the clinician-patient relationship, such as power, boundaries, respect for fellow humans and the sanctity of life, often leading to intense emotions.

The exploration of death, dying and end-of-life issues during the course can be emotionally taxing, causing anxiety and unease for many students. Most medical schools teach anatomy to equip students with fundamental knowledge and technical skills, but the experience of human dissection serves as a pivotal and transformative moment. It not only provides a solid foundation for medical practice but also plays a crucial role in nurturing emotionally equipped health care professionals who are capable of delivering compassionate care to patients. At [UC San Diego School of Medicine](https://www.ucsd.edu/school-of-medicine), we understand the importance of

forging a meaningful connection between students and donors who selflessly contribute their bodies to medical education.

To facilitate this connection, we have implemented humanistic exercises at the start of each anatomy lab, a practice that we call [Compassionatomy](#). This lab was, and continues to be, developed with the support of the [Sanford Institute for Empathy and Compassion](#) and the Compassion Institute. Through activities such as guided meditation, storytelling, or discussions on empathy and compassion, students are given the opportunity to connect with the humanity of the donors. Students are encouraged to take the perspective of the donors, contemplating their lives, experiences and the profound act of selflessness they have shown. Then, discussions are held where students openly share their own vulnerabilities and fears, unveiling the donors' stories and acknowledging the shared human experience of mortality. By incorporating these exercises, we aim to instill a deep sense of gratitude and respect within our students, reminding them of the privilege and responsibility that comes with studying the human body. [Read more](#)

## RESEARCH NEWS

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### Undergrad Sky Li Recognized for Outstanding Research Skills

Undergraduate Sky Li won a 2023 Undergraduate Library Research Prize (ULRP) for his research project, "Diagnosis of Inflammatory Bowel Disease Using a Robust 14 Species Signature." Li conducted his research under the mentorship of Weg M. Ongkeko, MD, PhD, Associate Adjunct Professor in the Department of Surgery at UC San Diego School of Medicine. Li's research involved utilizing modern, machine-learning-powered bioinformatic tools to harvest the power of genomic and clinical datasets to investigate cancers, COVID-19 and other diseases. His project was presented at the 2023 Triton Research and Experiential Learning Scholars (TRELS) event where he was honored with the TRELS scholarship.



[Read more](#)

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### UC San Diego Health Wants to Know: Seeking Community Input on Blood Clotting Agent Trial for Trauma Patients

Bleeding out is the most common cause of preventable death after injury. Researchers at UC San Diego Health are asking for community input on whether they should participate in an international study. The study will see if a blood clotting drug, given soon after arrival in the emergency department, can improve survival.

Kcentra® (or 4-factor Prothrombin Complex Concentrate) is a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved drug and is currently used to reverse the effects of medications given to "thin" the blood, for patients who experience bleeding and/or require surgery.

The Trauma and Prothrombin Complex Concentrate or TAP Trial will evaluate the effectiveness of Kcentra®, in addition to all standard care, in injured patients predicted to require a large volume blood

transfusion. “There is evidence that Kcentra® may reduce the chance of dying in injured patients who are not on blood-thinning medications,” explains Dr. Doucet, a trauma surgeon at UC San Diego Health.

“The standard treatment of injured patients who are bleeding involves the transfusion of different types of blood products, as well as the use of medications to help the blood clot better, along with surgery to stop the bleeding. But even with these treatments up to 30% of patients suffering from a serious traumatic injury die,” said Dr. Doucet. “Finding a way to improve that survival rate is our highest priority here at UC San Diego Health.”

Patients in this study will have suffered a serious and potentially life-threatening injury, causing significant blood loss, and requiring immediate lifesaving interventions. These types of injuries occur unexpectedly, and it will not be possible for most people to sign up to participate ahead of time. Most patients will be unconscious, unable to speak or hear, and too sick to consent to immediate treatment, or participation in the study. If the community feedback is positive and an independent review board (IRB) approves the study at UC San Diego Health, then UC San Diego Health will participate in this trial. Community members who do not want to participate can request a bracelet indicating this. If feasible, doctors will consent patients who fit the study criteria. If consent is not feasible, patients who fit the criteria will be automatically enrolled without their individual consent if they are not wearing an opt-out bracelet.

The TAP trial will be conducted in about 120 leading trauma centers in several countries and will include 8,000 patients, making it the second-largest trauma trial ever conducted. The trial will begin between early 2023 and last until 2026, and is funded by CSL Behring, a global biotherapeutics leader which makes PCC.

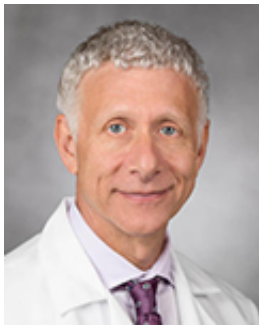
“The results of this study have the potential to change the way trauma patients are treated,” said Dr. Doucet. “If we can determine that Kcentra® is safe and effective for trauma patients, we can transform the standard of care for bleeding trauma patients and save thousands of lives.”

The researchers are asking for feedback from the San Diego community about this study to help determine whether the community wants us to participate in this study. Please consider completing a very brief anonymous survey hosted by the local study site. [Complete the anonymous survey](#) on your thoughts about this exception from informed consent study. Contact: [Kathleen Wilson](#) or [Lilian Von Husen](#) for further information.



### **Dr. Tatiana Hurtado de Mendoza Awarded R21 Grant**

The grant (R21 CA296198), entitled “Harnessing Cytomegalovirus (CMV)—Specific T Cells for Pancreatic Cancer Immunotherapy,” will bring in \$299,108 in direct costs over the 2-year funding period. Congratulations Dr. Hurtado de Mendoza!



## Dr. Andrew Lowy Delivers the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center David Rubinstein Award Lecture

The title of Dr. Lowy's lecture was "Linking Actin Dynamics and Transcriptional Control to Pancreatic Cancer Biology."

This prestigious award, which includes the lecture, is given annually for impacting the understanding, diagnosis, and tumor management of hepato-pancreatic-biliary (HPB) tumors. It was part of a three-day symposium to commemorate the life and career of Dr. Leslie H. Blumgart, a noted HPB surgeon at MSKCC, who passed away recently.

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## Dr. Santiago Horgan One of Three Editors of "The SAGES Manual of Fluorescence-Guided Surgery"

SAGES—the abbreviated form of Society of Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons—is the leading minimally invasive surgical society. The concise, illustrated manual includes 17 chapters, compiling the latest knowledge on fluorescence-guided surgery techniques and applications in a range of surgical fields. Congratulations to Drs. Michael Bouvet, Ryan Broderick, and Jared Matson also on contributing to this book.



## UC San Diego Nurses Support Fourth Annual Miles4Merak Fundraiser

A team including surgical nurses from the 4th Floor Jacobs Medical Center recently held the 4th annual Miles4Merak Step Challenge fundraiser. This two-week virtual event began Dec. 1 and raised vital funds to help accelerate



gastrointestinal stromal tumor (GIST) research in memory of Merak Melikian Hatounian, forever 25 years old.

After caring for Melikian Hatounian, Maura Caffrey, a surgical oncology nurse, had the vision and inspiration to honor the memory of Merak, who was not only a GIST patient but an advocate. In partnership with Merak's mother, Debra Melikian, Caffrey launched the inaugural "Miles4Merak" Step Challenge in 2020.

Since the event's inception, the Miles4Merak Step Challenge has raised more than \$400,000, with this year's challenge raising nearly \$200,000 among 500 participants. One hundred percent of the funds raised support [GIST cancer research at UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center](#) under the direction of Dr. Jason Sicklick.

This event has become a tradition at UC San Diego and beyond. It is a powerful yet heartwarming example of how an amazing young man's love of life and his legacy brought together caring doctors and nurses, surgeons and scientists, industry professionals, colleagues, family, and friends to walk these



meaningful Miles4Merak.

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**Christopher A. Longhurst** @CALonghurst

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What a privilege to celebrate the JCHI (@InnovationUCSDH) one year anniversary with amazing colleagues. Grateful to Joan and Irwin Jacobs, the JCHI team, @pattymaysent, and @UCSDHealth



51 likes

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**Dr. Kristin Mekeel** @DrKMekeel

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Dr. Aleah Brubaker addressing the American Society of Transplant Surgeons about her work on expanding the liver donor pool and improving outcomes for patients with normothermic machine perfusion @UCSDsurgery @UCSDHealth @ucsdtransplnt





Bryan Clary  
@clary\_bryan

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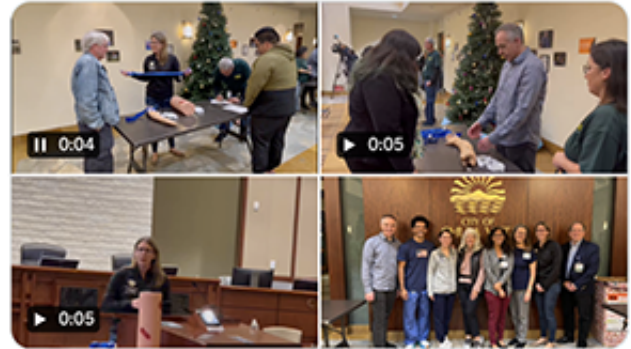
Rounding with the residents at sunrise at Hillcrest with a view of the moon and the morning star...appreciate everything our residents do 24/7 for pur community's patients



Jay Doucet  
@jaydoucet

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Stop the Bleed training tonight in Chula Vista by @UCSDTrauma and @ChulaVistaFD #CERT team - we trained 66 participants on how to #StoptheBleed [stopthebleed.org](http://stopthebleed.org)



## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

### [AGA Clinical Practice Guideline on the Management of Pouchitis and Inflammatory Pouch Disorders.](#)

Barnes EL, Agrawal M, Syal G, Ananthakrishnan AN, Cohen BL, Haydek JP, Al Kazzi ES, Eisenstein S, Hashash JG, Sultan SS, Raffals LE, Singh S; AGA Clinical Guidelines Committee. Electronic address: [clinicalpractice@gastro.org](mailto:clinicalpractice@gastro.org). Gastroenterology. 2024 Jan;166(1):59-85. doi: 10.1053/j.gastro.2023.10.015.PMID: 38128971.

[Considering molecular alterations as pan-cancer tissue-agnostic targets.](#) Adashek JJ, Kato S, Sicklick JK, Lippman SM, Kurzrock R. Nat Cancer. 2023 Dec;4(12):1622-1626. doi: 10.1038/s43018-023-00676-y.PMID: 38102355.

[Inhibiting stromal class I HDACs curbs pancreatic cancer progression.](#) Liang G, Oh TG, Hah N, Tiriack H, Shi Y, Truitt ML, Antal CE, Atkins AR, Li Y, Fraser C, Ng S, Pinto AFM, Nelson DC, Estepa G, Bashi S, Banayo E, Dai Y, Liddle C, Yu RT, Hunter T, Engle DD, Han H, Von Hoff DD, Downes M, Evans RM. Nat Commun. 2023 Dec 6;14(1):7791. doi: 10.1038/s41467-023-42178-6. PMID: 38057326.

[Race, gene expression signatures, and clinical outcomes of patients with high-risk early breast cancer.](#) Kyalwazi B, Yau C, Campbell MJ, Yoshimatsu TF, Chien AJ, Wallace AM, Forero-Torres A, Pusztai L, Ellis ED, Albain KS, Blaes AH, Haley BB, Boughey JC, Elias AD, Clark AS, Isaacs CJ, Nanda R, Han HS, Yung RL, Tripathy D, Edmiston KK, Viscusi RK, Northfelt DW, Khan QJ, Asare SM, Wilson A, Hirst GL, Lu R, Symmans WF, Yee D, DeMichele AM, van 't Veer LJ, Esserman LJ, Olopade OI. JAMA Netw

Open. 2023 Dec 1;6(12):e2349646. doi: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.49646. PMID: 38153734.

[Adopting a circular economy for surgical care to address supply chain shocks and climate change.](#)

Mehtsun WT, Hyland CJ, Offodile AC 2nd. JAMA Health Forum. 2023 Nov 3;4(11):e233497. doi: 10.1001/jamahealthforum.2023.3497. PMID: 37921743.

[Neoadjuvant trebananib plus paclitaxel-based chemotherapy for stage II/III breast cancer in the adaptively randomized I-SPY2 trial—Efficacy and biomarker discovery.](#)

Albain KS, Yau C, Petricoin EF, Wolf DM, Lang JE, Chien AJ, Haddad T, Forero-Torres A, Wallace AM, Kaplan H, Puzstai L, Euhus D, Nanda R, Elias AD, Clark AS, Godellas C, Boughey JC, Isaacs C, Tripathy D, Lu J, Yung RL, Gallagher RI, Wulfkuhle JD, Brown Swigart L, Krings G, Chen YY, Potter DA, Stringer-Reasor E, Blair S, Asare SM, Wilson A, Hirst GL, Singhrao R, Buxton M, Clennell JL, Sanil A, Berry S, Asare AL, Matthews JB, DeMichele AM, Hylton NM, Melisko M, Perlmutter J, Rugo HS, Symmans WF, van 't Veer LJ, Yee D, Berry DA, Esserman LJ. Clin Cancer Res. 2023 Dec 18. doi: 10.1158/1078-0432.CCR-22-2256. Online ahead of print. PMID: 38109213.

[The impact of extracellular matrix on the precision medicine utility of pancreatic cancer patient-derived organoids.](#)

Lumibao JC, Okhovat SR, Peck KL, Lin X, Lande K, Yomtoubian S, Ng I, Tiriach H, Lowy AM, Zou J, Engle DD. JCI Insight. 2023 Dec 5:e172419. doi: 10.1172/jci.insight.172419. Online ahead of print. PMID: 38051586.

[See full list of publications](#)

## IN THE NEWS

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[New director of Moores Cancer Center has deep research roots. 'She brings a wealth of expertise and vision,](#) *San Diego Union Tribune*, featuring Dr. Diane Simeone

[Opinion: Hospitals are struggling as health insurers, such as Anthem Blue Cross, maximize profits,](#) *San Diego Union Tribune*, Opinion piece by Dr. Sonia Ramamoorthy

[Revolutionizing Reconstruction: UC San Diego Health And Navy Employ 3D Printed Teeth In Jaw Surgery,](#) *India Education Diary*, featuring Dr. Christopher Reid

## JOB LISTINGS

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[Assistant, Associate or Full Project Scientist - Surgical Oncology](#)

[Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clinical, Clinical X, In-Residence, Adjunct\) Audiologists](#)

[Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clinical, Clinical X, In-Residence, Adjunct\) Otolaryngology Research](#)

[Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clinical, Clinical X, In-Residence, Adjunct\) Pediatric Cardiothoracic Surgery](#)

[Assistant Professor \(Ladder Rank/In-Residence\) Surgical Scientists](#)

[Associate or Full Professor \(Ladder Rank/In-Residence\) Surgical Scientists](#)

[Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS](#)

[Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clinical, Clinical X, In-Residence, Adjunct\) Minimally Invasive Surgery](#)

[Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clinical, Clinical X, In-Residence, Adjunct\) Plastic Surgery](#)

[Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clinical, Clinical X, In-Residence, Adjunct\) Head and Neck Surgical Oncologist](#)

[Miscellaneous Lecturer: Audiology](#)

[Clinical, Clinical X, In-Residence, Adjunct\) Surgical Scientists](#)

[Assistant Research Scientist - Surgical Oncology](#)

[Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clinical, Clinical X, In-Residence, Adjunct\) Pediatric Surgery](#)

[Assistant, Associate or Full Professor \(HS Clinical, Clinical X, In-Residence, Adjunct\) Transplant Surgery](#)

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: ERIN P. WARD, MD

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"I am incredibly grateful for the training I received at UC San Diego. As a resident, we were given the opportunity to take ownership of our patients and learn to care for the most complex patients. I constantly draw upon the lessons I learned from all the specialties we trained with, from burn to transplant to vascular surgery at the VA to the complex tertiary care provided at Thornton. Having the opportunity to train under a diverse group of surgeons who were all uniquely committed to their patients and pushing forward their field set me up to pursue and achieve my career goals. To this day, I rely on the advice and support from the mentors and co-residents I was lucky enough to work with at UC San Diego. I would not trade my time at UC San Diego for

anything.

*Dr. Erin P. Ward is an assistant professor of surgical oncology at the University of Utah. She was a prior surgical oncology research fellow and completed her general residency at UC San Diego in 2020.*



Forward to a Friend 

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### ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

The Department of Surgery at UC San Diego prides itself on maintaining a thriving clinical enterprise in 13 surgical divisions and providing exceptional care to patients; while educating future generations of surgeons and conducting ground-breaking research. Since 1968, our team of internationally recognized surgeons have performed cutting edge surgeries, which today include including awake brain surgery; heart-lung transplants; scarless appendectomies; and incisionless weight-loss

surgery. We're proud of the research breakthroughs we make in surgical medicine and the quality rankings we achieve year after year. [surgery.ucsd.edu](http://surgery.ucsd.edu)