U.S. Justice Department Honors UC Irvine’s Efforts to Prevent Elder Abuse

The U.S. Department of Justice honored Laura Mosqueda, M.D., and Kerry Burnight, Ph.D., co-directors of UC Irvine’s Elder Abuse Forensic Center, with a 2011 Award for Professional Innovation in Victim Services. The center was among 10 organizations and individuals recognized for outstanding work on behalf of crime victims in the United States.

“We commend these individuals and service providers who, when faced with emerging challenges, seek out new ways to protect our communities and to more effectively assist and empower crime victims,” U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder said.

Each year, the Justice Department’s Office for Victims of Crime recognizes extraordinary individuals and programs whose work serves crime victims. The ceremony was a prelude to National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, April 10-16.

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Student-Senior Partnership Program Creates Real Understanding between Physicians of the Future and Older Adults

The Student/Senior Partnership Program (SSPP) is one of the cornerstones of the geriatrics education program for medical students at University of California, Irvine School of Medicine. During the first year of medical school, each student is partnered with an older adult who is a patient in the UC Irvine SeniorHealth Center located at UC Irvine Medical Center in Orange.

Medical students interact with their senior partner for a period of one academic year. These interactions include four required visits, which are a combination of a house call, two healthcare visits and an activity of the senior’s choice.

This program facilitates an opportunity for students to gain perspective on aging and to learn about caring for the special healthcare needs of the older adult. Emphasis is placed on developing skills in communication, health literacy and shared decision making, key aspects of the patient-physician relationship.

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“Listening is such a vital part of our practice as physicians. This experience really allowed me to learn how to listen and be patient. Ms. M had such interesting life experiences; to spend hours hearing them was really worthwhile. In addition, seeing her apartment was really an invaluable experience, as many times we merely see patients within our environment in the hospital, and being able to see her place allowed me to get a sense of what obstacles arise every day.”

– FIRST-YEAR MEDICAL STUDENT
Letter from the Director

Numbers of Seniors Increasing, While Number of Geriatricians Declines

Starting this year and continuing for the next 20 years, 10,000 people will turn 65 every day in the U.S. Yet, the number of geriatricians is decreasing. Geriatrics is one of only two medical specialties that are not growing.

Board-certified geriatricians specialize in treating older adults. We are trained to consider the comprehensive needs of older adults. Older people often take more time in the office and need a physician who is willing to take the time to address our patients’ complex needs. It also takes specialized training to understand how to address many issues unique to aging. For instance, many physicians who are not trained in geriatrics assume that depression is normal in older adults and do not attempt to treat it. They may be unfamiliar with signs of elder abuse as well.

Another example is that many primary care physicians are not trained to talk about very important end-of-life issues, such as palliative care and hospice. Proper handling of these issues has a significant impact on patient safety and quality of care. Geriatricians are trained and knowledgeable in these important subjects. Geriatricians are also trained to work well within an interdisciplinary team environment, which benefits the patient by using an inclusive team approach. Often the social workers, nurses and other professionals involved in the older adults’ care will have information that is important in understanding the complex medical care needs of the older patient. Physicians who understand the value of the team’s input can give superior care to their patients.

Geriatricians have highly tuned listening skills, whether the conversation is with the patient, family or other healthcare professionals. This all adds up to excellent, comprehensive and compassionate care for older adults.

– Laura Mosqueda, M.D.
Director, UC Irvine Program of Geriatrics

The SSPP is a collaborative effort between the Program in Geriatrics and medical education at UC Irvine School of Medicine. It is currently funded through a four-year grant from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation. If you are a patient in our SeniorHealth Center and interested in volunteering for this program, please call: 714.456.5530.

To view a feature article, please view this article from KPCC: www.scpr.org/news/2011/06/14/uc-irvine-medical-students-learn-senior-mentors/

“Participation in the program has been and forever will be a source of comfort for me. I would forever want to participate and I commend the physicians of the Senior Center for promoting this experience.”

– FRANK P.

Make A Difference

The Program in Geriatrics provides compassionate clinical care, innovative medical education and pioneering work in the study and intervention of elder mistreatment. Your contribution will help us to continue this important work. Donations can be made online (www.som.uci.edu/geriatrics), over the phone or by mail. Please ask staff at the SeniorHealth Center or contact Susan Lozano at 714.456.7821 if you would like assistance. Thank you for your support!

Celebrate Your Independence this Summer: Simple Steps to Living Independently

Several simple steps will help you stay healthy and independent. You can significantly increase your chance of maintaining your independence by:

• **Staying hydrated** – Drink at least eight glasses of water a day
• **Stay cool** – Look for shade if you’re outside and make sure your home stays cool
• **Have your doctor check your gait and balance to prevent falls**
• **Secure loose rugs** in your home so you won’t trip
• **Do you have grab bars in your shower?** These are inexpensive and help prevent falls

Age with Gusto! Stay Independent by Staying Safe
Mosqueda, Burnight and UC Irvine’s geriatrics faculty and staff spearheaded the country’s first Elder Abuse Forensic Center in 2003. It aids victims of elder and dependent-adult abuse and brings together legal, medical, social services and law enforcement experts to better understand, identify and treat such abuse. It also helps prevent abuse and determine more efficient ways to successfully prosecute offenders.

The Orange County Elder Abuse Forensic Center has assessed more than 750 cases and is the model for three other centers in California and New York.

“We’re honored and proud to receive this award,” said Mosqueda, director of UC Irvine’s Program in Geriatrics, chair and professor of family medicine, and the Ronald Reagan Chair in Geriatrics. “It’s a tribute to our Orange County colleagues in social services, law enforcement and medical fields who work every day on behalf of abused and neglected elders. The Archstone Foundation has been a major supporter since our very first efforts in this arena,” she noted. “We’re grateful to them and to the UniHealth Foundation for continued funding to support our Center of Excellence on Elder Abuse & Neglect.”

Nearly 2 million older Americans are abused each year, according to the National Center on Elder Abuse. Orange County’s law enforcement and social services agencies receive more than 8,000 reports annually. And for each incident reported, Mosqueda said, data show that at least five more go unreported.

Innovative Programs Helping Seniors

In addition to collaborating to create the Elder Abuse Forensic Center, UC Irvine also is joining with public partners and foundations to improve conditions for senior citizens through a range of projects—several of which are the first of their kind in the nation:

❤ The Orange County Vulnerable Adult Specialist Team consists of geriatricians and neuropsychologists who provide in-home evaluation of seniors suspected of being abused.

❤ The Center of Excellence on Elder Abuse & Neglect offers medical, forensic and victim services to abused and neglected seniors, as well as training, research and technical assistance to law enforcement and social services agencies statewide.

❤ The Elder Abuse Training Institute is devoted to educating legal, medical, social services, law enforcement and government personnel about all aspects of elder abuse.

Please contact UC Irvine’s Program in Geriatrics office for more information at 714.456.5530 or go to our website, www.centeronelderabuse.org.

UC Irvine’s Geriatric Fellowship Program Granted Highest Level of Approval

The Program in Geriatrics is proud to announce that we have received full accreditation for our Geriatric Fellowship Program from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) Residency Review Committee for Internal Medicine. ACGME is a private, nonprofit council that evaluates and accredits medical residency programs in the U.S. The committee granted the fellowship the distinction of the highest level of approval. The Geriatric Fellowship Program is highly competitive and attracts applicants from all over the country. Fellows are physicians who are already certified in family or internal medicine. The one-year fellowship immerses these physicians in the clinical, research and multi-disciplinary aspects of care of older adults. Upon completion, fellows sit for specialized medical board exams in geriatric medicine. “Geriatric medicine is a uniquely fulfilling practice,” says Dr. Lisa Gibbs, director of UC Irvine’s Geriatric Fellowship Program. “Geriatricians are trained to understand the complexity of geriatric medicine, while, at the same time, focusing on what’s best for our patients and families. We’ve been very fortunate to train compassionate and competent physicians who will practice geriatric medicine at its best.”
SeniorHealth Center Hosts Book-Signing Event for Patient & Author Max D. Lechtman

The UC Irvine SeniorHealth Center recently hosted a book-signing event for Max D. Lechtman, a patient and author. Mr. Lechtman is Professor Emeritus with experience in the aerospace industry. His work with germ-warfare defense systems serves as a background for A Sense of Rumor. According to Outskirts Press, the book is, “an offbeat, intricate and often hilarious thriller.” It “crackles with the gritty dialogue of newsrooms and precinct houses, of diners and street people, all set amid the Southern California beach cities’ sunshine.”

“An offbeat, intricate and often hilarious thriller.”
– OUTSKIRTS PRESS

Author of A Sense of Rumor, Max D. Lechtman, at the book signing event with Dr. Steven Tam and Dr. Laura Mosqueda.

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Inside:
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• UC Irvine Honored by U.S. Justice Department
• Student-Senior Partnership Program

You’ll be bowled over by the care when you come see us at the SeniorHealth Center!