



UCLA UROLOGY

UPDATE



From left to right, inspiring UCLA Urology patients include: Chelsie Hill (with husband Jason Bloomfield and their daughter Jaelyn); Jeff Mitchum (right, with, l. to r., Pat Hickey, Cheryl Lau, and Laurie Mitchum); and Mikey Hann (with his wife, Stefanie Betti).

It Begins With U: UCLA Urology Patients Persevere and Inspire

Countless UCLA Urology patients have thrived through adversity, thanks in part to the care they have received. Following are the stories of three such individuals:

In 2010, when she was 17, Chelsie Hill survived a drunk-driving accident in which she sustained a spinal cord injury that left her paralyzed from the waist down. Told by her doctor that she wouldn't be able to walk, Hill had other ideas. "Forget walking," she said. "I just want to dance."

Two years later, Hill reached out to six other women with spinal cord injuries in her hometown of Monterey, California, inviting them to join her in putting on a dance performance for friends, family, and the local community. That marked the birth of the Rollettes, with Hill as founder and CEO. The mission: Women empowering women

with disabilities to live boundlessly and shift perspectives through dance.

When Hill decided to move her flourishing business to Los Angeles in 2014, one of her first goals was to find a team of physicians to maximize her health. She began seeing Dr. Ja-Hong Kim, professor in UCLA Urology's Division of Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery. As with many spinal cord-injured individuals, Hill experienced frequent urinary tract infections as well as issues around incontinence. Those issues have been greatly resolved, with periodic bladder

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This page, above and in the first column: Chelsie Hill, with her husband, Jason Bloomfield. Second column: Jeff Mitchum with his wife, Laurie. Opposite page: Mikey Hann, with his wife, Stefanie Betti.

Botox injections dramatically reducing the problem with leakage. “I’m very active, and yet I was constantly worried about going out in public,” Hill says. “This has given me peace of mind, which makes a huge difference in my quality of life.” When Hill became pregnant, Dr. Kim worked with her to address concerns about taking any medication that could negatively affect her fetus. “She always listens to me and never makes me feel rushed,” Hill says. “She recognizes that everybody is different and wants to provide what’s best for my needs.”

Today, Hill and her husband are raising a healthy girl, Jaelyn, born in January 2023. Meanwhile, Hill’s business is thriving. The Rollettes, the all-women’s wheelchair dance team now based in Los Angeles, have performed all over the U.S. as well as overseas. Hill also started the Rollettes Experience, a weekend that includes dance, crafts, speakers, and bonding. “It’s become the largest empowerment weekend for women and children with disabilities,” Hill says. “It shows people that dance is dance, whether you’re walking or rolling. That’s something I’m very passionate about because dance gave me my happiness back.”

Hill credits the treatment she has received at UCLA Urology with making her current life as a wife, mother, and businessperson possible. “If I didn’t have the right care, I couldn’t be as

*“I hadn’t felt
that good since
I was a teenager.”*

independent and successful as I am with my disability,” she says. “I’m so thankful that I found UCLA and Dr. Kim.”



For Jeff Mitchum, a chance meeting with the legendary landscape photographer and environmentalist Ansel Adams nearly 50 years ago marked the start of a remarkable journey.

In 1974, when Mitchum was 14, he was in California’s Yosemite Valley using his Kodak Brownie camera to capture clouds breaking up after a storm when he heard the voice of a man behind him. “He said, ‘Do you mind, young man, if I look through your viewfinder?’” Mitchum recalls. “I turned around and it was Lord Ansel.”

Adams took a great interest in Mitchum’s work and when he died 10 years later, his family gave Adams’ hiking boots to Mitchum as a gift. Meanwhile, Mitchum’s career flourished, to the point that he became known

as the “Ansel Adams of color” in the world of fine-art photography. His fierce determination to bring the beauty of nature and dramatic landscapes to people’s lives has taken him to nearly every country on the planet — from the coastlands of California to the wild plains of Africa. His works have been featured in the Smithsonian and the

Getty, in National Geographic and the Sierra Club.

Mitchum's fitness has long played a key role in his work. A former All American triathlete who has continued to train and run competitively, he once rode 80 miles through Denali National Park and Preserve in Alaska to capture a bull moose against the backdrop of Mt. McKinley, then took a short nap, mounted his headlamp and made the return trip through territory known to be populated by grizzly bears. "Maybe not the smartest thing I've done in my life, but I did it," Mitchum recalls with a smile.

In retrospect, Mitchum says, he should have been screened earlier for prostate cancer — a disease that had afflicted his father and grandfather. In 2006, his wife Carolyn was diagnosed with breast cancer. She died 10 years later. Through his wife's illness, the grieving he went through after her death, and his devotion to raising their young children, Mitchum admits that he avoided any testing that might have created added stress. But, in what Mitchum calls "a fairy tale," several years after Carolyn's passing he fell in love again. As he began to plan for a future with his fiancée, Laurie, he undertook a physical exam to update his life insurance policy. "The bloodwork came back and showed that I was fit as a racehorse — except for one unfortunate number," says Mitchum, now 64.

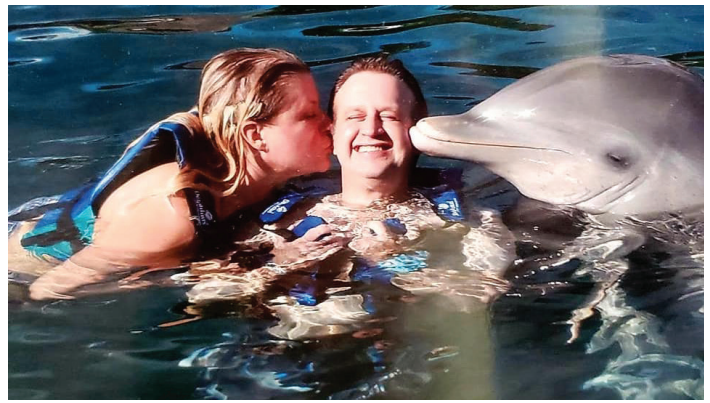
When the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test indicated an aggressive form of prostate cancer, Mitchum connected with friends who told him the place to go for state-of-the-art care was UCLA. Last summer, he underwent a robotic prostatectomy performed by Dr. Wayne Brisbane, UCLA Urology assistant professor. "Dr. Brisbane took a personal interest and worked with me to determine the right procedure," says Mitchum, whose recovery has been so swift he was boasting of the return of his "six pack abs" three months after the surgery. "We talked about celebrating by going surfing," he says.

Mikey Hann says the hardest part of being on dialysis wasn't the



actual treatment. "Normal kidney function is 24 hours a day, seven days a week," he says. "Dialysis is doing that 24-hour job of removing fluids in three hours. That's extremely taxing."

Hann moved to Southern California in 1995, transferring to UCLA from Boise State University for his junior year of college. But before he could complete his degree, "life got in the way," he recalls. Hann went to bartending school and began working in the hospitality industry. At around that time he began experiencing



health problems, including chronic back pain and reduced energy. Only much later did he learn these were caused by his deteriorating kidneys.

In 2009, after a trip to the emergency room, Hann was diagnosed with kidney failure. He spent the next six-and-a-half years on dialysis. By then, Hann had left the hospitality industry and begun working in comedy, at Second City Hollywood, where he ultimately took a position as stage manager. "It was great medicine to be around a community of performers who, when I wasn't in treatment, were making me laugh all the time," he says. Still hoping to one day complete his degree, in 2014 he registered for classes through UCLA Extension, using the idle time necessitated by the hours-long treatment regimens to study.

During that time, Hann learned about the UCLA Kidney Transplantation Exchange Program. Under the leadership of Dr. Jeffrey Veale, UCLA Urology professor, the program increases access to kidney transplant through innovative means such as donor chains: An altruistic donor's kidney goes to someone with a willing donor who isn't a match, that person's incompatible donor "pays it forward" by giving to someone else with a willing but incompatible donor, and so on. After Hann put the word out, one of his former Second City colleagues volunteered to be an altruistic donor, starting a chain that allowed Hann to receive a transplant, in early 2016. Subsequently, another friend donated to a stranger through UCLA's kidney voucher program, providing Hann with the assurance that if his new kidney were to fail, he would get a future transplant.

After receiving the new kidney, Hann was transformed. "I hadn't felt that good since I was a teenager," he says. "I had such mental clarity and so much more energy than at any time I could remember." He knew one way he wanted to channel that energy. By the fall of 2016, Hann was back at UCLA as a full-time student while working full-time at night in the hospitality industry he always loved. Hann earned his bachelor's degree in psychology from UCLA in 2018, two weeks after being hired for a new position managing a restaurant in Westwood. In 2021, he got married in the Bahamas to Stefanie Betti, whom he had started dating a decade earlier, when Hann was a year into dialysis treatment.

"A lot of great things happened after I received that kidney," Hann says. "I feel very lucky."

ALUMNI PROFILE

Eric T. Miller, MD



The mix of cases Dr. Eric T. Miller sees at Sutter Health's Van Ness campus in San Francisco is highly unusual — and exactly what Dr. Miller hoped for as he progressed through his combined urology and transplant surgery training, starting with his UCLA Urology residency.

“UCLA's program is as robust and in-depth as any in the country, but also broad in that we were exposed to all aspects of urology while rotating through incredibly diverse settings,” Dr. Miller says. “We learned from world leaders in each of these areas who were so motivating as mentors that the toughest part was deciding which direction to choose.”

Unlike most urology residency programs, UCLA's included a kidney transplant rotation — and for Dr. Miller, that training with Dr. Jeffrey Veale, UCLA Urology professor and director of the UCLA Kidney Transplantation Exchange Program, proved pivotal. “I fell in love with the experience — it's hard work, but extremely rewarding,” Dr. Miller says. By the time he completed his residency in 2018 he knew he wanted to become a transplant surgeon. But along the way, Dr. Miller had also developed a strong interest in treating patients with urologic malignancies. So, for his transplant fellowship he chose Cleveland Clinic, where the urology-run program gave him the opportunity to experience a range of oncology surgeries as well as abdominal organ transplantations.

Dr. Miller's current position at Sutter Health provides the rare combination of transplant surgery and urology practice. He was recruited to join a multispecialty group of nearly 200 physicians both as a transplant surgeon and to create a urology service line that didn't previously exist. “The variety of cases is remarkable, and uncommon among urologists in the country,” Dr. Miller says. “I'm seeing patients with urological needs one week, then practicing transplant surgery the next.”

Despite the late nights and unpredictable hours, the impact he's able to have on patients through transplantation never gets old. “I just saw someone I had done a simultaneous pancreas and kidney transplant for — 36 years old, on insulin since age 9 and dialysis the last four years,” Dr. Miller says. “The day after surgery they no longer needed insulin or dialysis and felt great. Those are the types of patients who make you realize how grateful you are to be able to do this.”

He believes landing what he calls his “dream job” wouldn't have been possible without his UCLA Urology residency. “I'm doing exactly what I wanted to do,” Dr. Miller says. “Not everyone has that luxury, but when you train at UCLA you're able to follow your heart, which serves both the trainee and the world.”

HEALTHY AT EVERY AGE

Recurrent Urinary Tract Infections

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are bacterial infections of the urinary tract that result in pain or discomfort during urination, increased urinary frequency and/or urgency, or acute changes in continence. UTIs can affect anyone, but women are particularly susceptible. Among the most common triggers in women are sexual intercourse, low fluid intake, changing hormone levels, general changes in immune status, and conditions such as kidney stones. Approximately 60% of women experience at least one UTI in their lifetime. Of those women, 20-40% will have a second UTI, and 25-50% of those experience recurrent UTIs — defined as two symptomatic infections confirmed by urinary culture within six months, or three such episodes in a year.

UTIs carry a risk of complications, including kidney or systemic infection. Treatment with antibiotics is important to not only lessen the duration of symptoms, but also reduce the risk of complications. However, not all lower urinary tract symptoms are caused by UTIs. Lower urinary tract symptoms resulting from a variety of conditions can produce UTI-like symptoms even though they aren't UTIs. Therefore, to avoid antibiotic overuse, which can lead to resistance, the most recent recurrent UTI guidelines from the American Urological Association call for antibiotic treatment when patients have UTI symptoms and the infection is confirmed by a urinary culture.

A number of strategies are effective in preventing recurrent UTIs. Attention to water intake is important. For example, a total 1.5 liters of water each day within the diet has been shown to reduce the risk. Patients are encouraged to measure their intake and to consume a plant-forward diet, especially one with high-water-content vegetables and fruits. In addition, for the first time the new AUA prevention guidelines emphasize supplements, including cranberry. This can come in the form of pure cranberry juice, whole-fruit cranberries, or cranberry tablets. Patients should consult their urologist for dosing and content guidance.

While the bladder was once thought to be sterile, it's now understood that the bladder as well as the bowel have a microbiome, and that antibiotics influence the bacterial environment of both. This has led to research at UCLA to study the microbiome in ways that reduce UTI susceptibility, and to understand how the microbiome influences and is related to lower-urinary-tract symptoms. Future projects are planned to better understand the relationship between diet and the microbiome. Clinical trials have also begun on a sublingual vaccine, which has shown promise in preventing or reducing recurrent UTI in high-risk individuals.

For more information, visit www.uclaurology.com. To make an appointment, call (310) 794-7700.



Letter from the Chair



*At the heart of all
we do are the
interactions with
our patients and
their families.*

As I have discussed in this space before, UCLA Urology has a multipronged mission. Through our teaching and mentoring of residents, fellows, and medical students, we create world leaders in health and medicine. Through our research, we discover the basis for wellness as well as advancing the diagnosis and treatment of urological diseases. Through our programs as well as personal and professional interactions, we foster a culture of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, while cultivating community partnerships that advance health and wellness outside the walls of our clinics and hospitals.

But at the heart of all we do are the interactions with our patients and their families. Nothing is more important to us than the care we provide, nor is anything more rewarding. As physician-scientists, if we ever find ourselves feeling frustrated, stressed, or otherwise down about certain aspects of our work or life in general, we can always count on the patient care experience to lift our spirits.

It's those private moments we have with patients — whether it's during a diagnostic workup or decision about treatment, before a major surgery, or through the recovery — that remind us of why we went into medicine. We are privileged to be let into people's lives at their most vulnerable states, and in some cases at their lowest points. These individuals willingly let their guard down and trust us to act as partners in the healing process. The bond we develop is incredibly special — and the responsibility is one we never take for granted.

UCLA Health has adopted the mantra “It Begins with U” to emphasize the conviction among those of us who practice medicine as part of the UCLA Health enterprise that the patient comes first in everything we do. We in UCLA Urology are strongly committed to that principle (I like to point out that urology, too, begins with u). The term “precision medicine” is increasingly used to describe treatment tailored specifically to an individual patient's genetic profile and risk factors. But we believe precision medicine also involves a shared decision-making process leading to treatment that best fits a patient's priorities and preferences.

This issue of our newsletter includes a few of the numerous inspiring patients who have benefited from UCLA Urology care. Each of us on the faculty, no matter how junior or senior, can draw on countless gratifying experiences we have had with our patients and their families. Many of us keep a file of emails and handwritten notes we have received to remind us of the lives we have impacted. These are the experiences that make everything else worthwhile. We help humanity, one patient at a time, and our determination to continue improving those outcomes drives all we do.

❖ **Mark S. Litwin, MD, MPH**

Distinguished Professor and Chair, UCLA Urology

A. Lenore Ackerman, MD, UCLA Urology associate professor and director of research for the Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery, received funding from the Innovative Science Accelerator Program for her study, “Accuracy of Bladder-Specific Microbial Profiling by Sampling and Analytic Method.” The study seeks to advance progress in urinary microbiome research by determining the optimal method for sampling the bladder-resident microbiota and examining the utility and feasibility of different microbial profiling approaches in studying bladder-resident microbial communities.

Juan José Andino, MD, UCLA Urology assistant professor, was a co-author of an editorial in *Urology Gold*, “The Deafening Silence of Male Infertility.” The editorial discussed the infertility journey through the lens of the patients, providers, and scientists who deal with infertility every day. Dr. Andino was an invited author in this multi-institutional work and wrote the section on health policy landscape and how it impacts access to care for male infertility evaluation and treatment.

Sriram Eleswarapu, MD, PhD, UCLA Urology assistant professor and director of andrology research, had his manuscript, “Tissue anisotropy and collagenomics in porcine penile tunica albuginea: Implications for penile structure-function relationships and tissue engineering,” published in the August issue of *Acta Biomaterialia*. The manuscript describes a study that explored properties of the layer of the penis called the tunica albuginea (TA), the elastic layer affected by conditions such as Peyronie’s disease, penile fracture, and other penile injuries. The findings may be helpful for developing engineered replacements for the TA to treat conditions such as Peyronie’s disease, which causes deformities and dysfunction in the TA.

Andrew Goldstein, PhD, associate professor of urology and molecular, cell and developmental biology, had his manuscript, “MYC is a regulator of androgen receptor inhibition-induced

metabolic requirements in prostate cancer,” published in the October issue of *Cell Reports*. The manuscript reports on a study that provides insight into the regulation of treatment-induced metabolic phenotypes and vulnerabilities in prostate cancer.

Kathy Huen, MD, MPH, UCLA Urology assistant professor, has been named to the Super Doctors Rising Stars 2024 list as an outstanding practicing doctor in Southern California.

Mark S. Litwin, MD, MPH, UCLA Urology professor and chair, was selected as a recipient of the 2023 UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine JEDI Trailblazer Award. The JEDI Trailblazer Award recognizes years of commitment embodying leadership and excellence in advancing ideals of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, and is presented in collaboration with the AAPI Faculty Alliance and BLNA Collective (Black, Latinx and Native American Faculty Collective) at the School of Medicine.

Ava Mousavi, UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine student, received a \$4,000 American Urological Association Summer Medical Student Award for her research project, “Biochemical and Microbial Factors Associated with Ureteral Stent Encrustation.” Mousavi is mentored by **Dr. Kymora Scotland**. The Summer Medical Student Fellowship Program is a chance for outstanding medical students to pursue urology research by engaging in a research fellowship mentored by world-class urologic scientists.

Nima Nassiri, MD, UCLA Urology assistant clinical professor, was first author on “Robotic bladder autotransplantation: Preclinical studies in preparation for first-in-human bladder transplant,” featured on the cover of the October issue of the *Journal of Urology*.

Kymora Scotland, MD, PhD, UCLA Urology assistant professor, director of endourology research, and associate director of the Endourology Fellowship Program at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, was awarded

a 2023 Urology Care Foundation Humanitarian Grant. Dr. Scotland will partner with Gold Standard Urology to provide urologic screening events that bring the medical community directly to patients in South Los Angeles with a focus on prostate cancer, incontinence, nephrolithiasis, and erectile dysfunction.

Grace Sollender, MD, UCLA Urology resident, presented an abstract, “Patient and Family Experiences Toward Fertility, Self-Esteem, and Sexual Function in Adolescents with Varicoceles: A Qualitative Study,” at the Societies for Pediatric Urology Fall Congress held in Houston in September. It represents the first study to utilize a qualitative approach to explore the patient and family experience of an adolescent varicocele diagnosis. Co-authors were **Allen Siapno** and **Drs. Eduardo Piqueiras, Jennifer S. Singer**, and **Sriram Eleswarapu**.

Lynn Stothers, MD, MHSc, professor of urology and OBGYN, graduated from a two-year fellowship in integrative medicine from the University of Arizona’s Andrew Weil Center for Integrative Medicine in September — a program that has achieved international recognition as the leading integrative medical education program in the world. Fellows of integrative medicine apply integrative principals and techniques to more than 35 medical specialties.

Jeffrey L. Veale, MD, UCLA Urology clinical professor and director of the UCLA Kidney Exchange Transplantation Program, was featured on the KCAL/KCBS-TV news feature, “Transplanting Hope,” on August 31. The program featured UCLA Health’s Immunosuppression-Free Kidney Transplant (Tolerance Program) led by Dr. Veale.

Adam Weiner, MD, UCLA Urology clinical instructor, became the 21st UCLA recipient of the Prostate Cancer Foundation’s Young Investigator Award for his study, “Molecular Correlates With Prostate-Specific Membrane Antigen (PSMA) in Prostate Cancer.” The highly competitive process confers \$75,000 a year for three years in support of his scholarship.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

How You Can Support UCLA Urology

As we approach the season of giving, we at UCLA Urology extend our heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support of the department. In the spirit of this season, we are excited to share additional ways you can make an impact through philanthropy.

Philanthropy is the driving force behind creativity, innovation, and progress, and we are immensely grateful for the philanthropic support that continues to spur approaches to the detection, diagnosis, and treatment of urologic diseases.

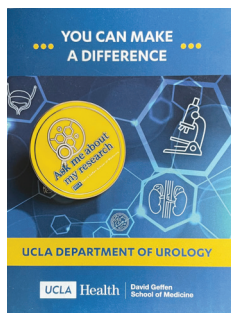
There are numerous opportunities to support the department's current endeavors. You can make an immediate impact by supporting ongoing research projects or the education of UCLA Urology's young physician-scientists.

Alternatively, larger endowed contributions hold transformative potential, allowing UCLA Urology's chair, Dr. Mark S. Litwin, to bolster the department's growth. Endowments play an invaluable role in advancing the mission of the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, and they offer an extraordinary opportunity to invest in scholarly and scientific achievement. These funds provide a consistent source of funding, with the income from each endowed fund allocated to fulfill the purpose envisioned by the donor.

Your investment has the potential to significantly shift the needle, propelling our research initiatives forward to accelerate new interventions, clinical trials, late-stage research, drug development, and advanced training for the next generation of physician-scientists. At UCLA Urology, your philanthropy can pave the way for groundbreaking discoveries and outstanding patient care.

For more information, please contact:
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"Ask Me About My Research"



The Department of Urology's research has been instrumental in making major breakthroughs, including discoveries that have revolutionized the diagnosis and treatment of urologic conditions. Now, UCLA Urology faculty have begun to wear pins that say "Ask me about my research" on their white coat lapels in the clinic.

These are meant to encourage and invite patients and their families to ask about the work being done outside the clinic to improve patient care outcomes. UCLA Urology faculty are eager to discuss their important efforts to introduce new and improved diagnostic approaches and treatments — making care less invasive, more effective, and less costly than ever before. Patients and families are encouraged to learn more by taking them up on their invitation to "ask."

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Tom and Lisa Bailey



Tom and Lisa Bailey will always remember Christmas Day, 2019 — and specifically, a conversation they had with their friend Michael in their Colorado home.

Tom Bailey had just been diagnosed with prostate

cancer. "That's the last thing anyone wants to hear," says his wife, Lisa Bailey. "Your whole world comes tumbling down at that point."

Sitting at the dinner table, the Baileys were explaining to their friend that after reviewing the biopsy, Tom Bailey's doctor had recommended against any treatment — explaining that it was likely to be a slow-growing tumor and, given Bailey's age, it wasn't likely to become a problem during his lifetime.

But their friend urged them to get a second opinion from Dr. Leonard S. Marks, UCLA Urology professor and holder of the deKernion Endowed Chair in Urology. Marks has been a pioneer in developing targeted fusion-guided biopsies — combining MRI and ultrasound to detect and diagnose prostate cancer with greater accuracy than traditional "blind" biopsies, which rely on random samples.

The next week, the Baileys went in to see Dr. Marks, and the fusion-guided biopsy conducted at UCLA revealed that he had an aggressive form of cancer that, while it had not yet spread outside of the prostate, warranted immediate attention. Tom Bailey was treated with radiation therapy and has been cancer-free ever since.

Lisa Bailey is grateful not just for the technology that enabled the Baileys to learn that Tom's cancer should be addressed, but also for the attention and care they have received from the start. "When you're discussing cancer with your doctor, you listen but often you're not really hearing because there's so much going on in your mind," she says. "But Dr. Marks made the process so much easier. He let us know that he was available to answer questions any time we had them. As large as UCLA is as an institution, everyone treated us with such respect and sensitivity."

Tom Bailey, who founded Janus Capital Group, is now retired; after the successful treatment, he and his wife have returned to enjoying life on their 400-acre ranch. They also made a substantial donation to support the research program of Dr. Marks. "We're so thankful that we ended up going to UCLA and benefiting from the work Dr. Marks has done," Lisa Bailey says. "We want to support more of that type of work so that other people will have the opportunity to benefit in the same way."



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UCLA Health placed #1 in California
and in Los Angeles in the 2023-24
U.S. News and World Report rankings.



The Men's Clinic at UCLA

DID YOU KNOW?

Men who need surgery or radiation for prostate cancer can maximize their sexual function by engaging in penile rehabilitation. The fellowship-trained experts at The Men's Clinic at UCLA have a data-driven protocol that has been found to improve erectile recovery for cancer survivors and can prevent side effects such as penile shortening and Peyronie's disease.

*The Men's Clinic at UCLA is a comprehensive, multidisciplinary health and wellness center located in Santa Monica, now with locations in Burbank and Santa Clarita.
For more information or to make an appointment, call (310) 794-7700.*



**Give Now.
Here's How.**

Contributions to UCLA Urology support our research programs and help our faculty make the cutting-edge discoveries that can save lives. You can make a gift to UCLA Urology by logging on to <http://giving.ucla.edu/urology>. Please call (310) 206-4565 if you have any questions about making a gift to UCLA Urology.

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