

# August 15, 2002

For Immediate Use

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UCLA Health Sciences Media Relations

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## Condition Report: Twins at Mattel Children's Hospital at UCLA

(Barring unforeseen changes in their condition, the next condition report on the twins will be released on Friday, Aug. 16.)

As of 1 p.m., Thursday, Aug. 15, Maria Teresa and Maria de Jesus Quiej Alvarez were upgraded from critical to serious condition with stable vital signs in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital in Westwood.

Maria Teresa was taken off the ventilator on Aug. 15. She is still slightly sedated, but now is breathing on her own.

Maria de Jesus now is feeding from a baby bottle. The breathing tube was removed from her on Aug. 13, and she continues to breathe on her own.

Both girls slowly continue to grow more alert and more active. Doctors remain cautiously optimistic about their long-term prospects for recovery. The twins, conjoined at birth, were separated Aug. 6 in a nearly 23-hour surgery.

-UCLA-

# August 14, 2002

For Immediate Use

August 14, 2002

12 p.m.

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## Condition Report: Twins at Mattel Children's Hospital at UCLA

(Barring unforeseen changes in their condition, the next condition report on the twins will be released on Thursday, Aug. 15.)

As of noon, Wednesday, Aug. 14, Maria Teresa and Maria de Jesus Quiej Alvarez remain in critical condition with stable vital signs in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital in Westwood. The breathing tube was removed from Maria de Jesus

midday yesterday, Aug. 13, and she is now breathing on her own. Maria Teresa continues to rely on a respirator, but also is more alert.

Both girls slowly continue to grow more alert and more active. Doctors remain cautiously optimistic about their long-term prospects for recovery. The twins, conjoined at birth, were separated Aug. 6 in a nearly 23-hour surgery.

-UCLA-

## August 13, 2002

For Immediate Use

August 13, 2002

12 p.m.

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### Condition Report: Twins at Mattel Children's Hospital at UCLA

(Barring unforeseen changes in their condition, the next condition report on the twins will be released on Wednesday, Aug. 14.)

As of noon Tuesday, Aug. 13, Maria Teresa and Maria de Jesus Quiej Alvarez remain in critical condition with stable vital signs in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital in Westwood. Both girls slowly continue to grow more alert and more active. Doctors remain cautiously optimistic about their long-term prospects for recovery. The twins, conjoined at birth, were separated Aug. 6 in a nearly 23-hour surgery.

-UCLA-

## August 12, 2002

For Immediate Use

August 12, 2002

4 p.m.

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### Condition Report: Twins at Mattel Children's Hospital at UCLA

As of 4 p.m., Monday, Aug. 12, Maria Teresa and Maria de Jesus Quiej Alvarez remain in critical condition with stable vital signs in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital in Westwood.

Both girls are moving their limbs and continuing to respond to stimulus, with Maria Teresa's recovery pacing a bit behind her sister's, according to doctors. Both girls remain under sedation, but the dosage has been decreased and they are gradually becoming more alert.

"As with any complex brain surgery on small babies, it takes a while to recover," said Dr. Irwin Weiss, pediatric intensive care specialist. "They both are showing very positive signs of recovery and we remain cautiously optimistic about their long-term prospects."

The sisters are both tolerating intravenous nutrition well, according to Clarice Marsh, director of pediatric intensive care nursing.

The twins, conjoined at birth, were separated Aug. 6 in a nearly 23-hour surgery.

-UCLA-

## August 12, 2002

For Immediate Use

August 12, 2002

11 a.m.

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### Condition Report: Twins at Mattel Children's Hospital at UCLA

(Note to Editors: A hospital spokesperson will be available at 4 p.m., today, Aug. 12, to give an on camera update at the entrance to UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital. New video footage of the twins in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit will be available.)

As of 11 a.m., Monday, Aug. 12, Maria Teresa and Maria de Jesus Quiej Alvarez remain in critical condition with stable vital signs in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital in Westwood. Doctors say that the twins still have many hurdles to overcome, but remain cautiously optimistic about the sisters' long-term prospects for recovery.

Both girls remain under sedation, but the dosage has been decreased. The sisters are both tolerating intravenous nutrition well. According to PICU staff, Maria de Jesus is much more alert than last week. Maria Teresa's recovery continues to lag behind her sister's.

The twins, conjoined at birth, were separated early Tuesday, Aug. 6, in a nearly 23-hour surgery.

-UCLA-

## August 9, 2002

For Immediate Use  
August 9, 2002  
3 p.m.

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## Doctors at Mattel Children's Hospital at UCLA Remain Cautiously Optimistic About Twins' Outlook

As of 3 p.m., Friday, Aug. 9, Maria Teresa and Maria de Jesus Quiej Alvarez remain in critical condition with stable vital signs in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital in Westwood. Both girls, who remain under sedation, continue to show movement and response to stimulation. Doctors plan to begin administering nutrition intravenously today to the sisters. Doctors remain cautiously optimistic about their long-term prospects for recovery. The twins, conjoined at birth, were separated early Tuesday, Aug. 6, in a nearly 23-hour surgery..

-UCLA-

## August 9, 2002

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August 9, 2002  
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## Twins at Mattel Children's Hospital at UCLA Remain in Critical Condition With Stable Vital Signs As They Recover From Separation Surgery

(NOTE: A UCLA spokesperson will be available to provide an update at 3 p.m. Friday, Aug. 9, at the entrance to UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital. The update will also be distributed via the Associated Press and City News Service.)

As of 11 a.m., Friday, Aug. 9, Maria Teresa and Maria de Jesus Quiej Alvarez remain in critical condition with stable vital signs in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital in Westwood. Both girls, who remain under sedation, continue to show movement and response to stimulation. Doctors plan to begin administering nutrition

intravenously today to the sisters. Doctors remain cautiously optimistic about their long-term prospects for recovery. The twins, conjoined at birth, were separated early Tuesday, Aug. 6, in a nearly 23-hour surgery.

-UCLA-

## August 8, 2002

For Immediate Use

August 8, 2002

5 p.m.

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### Update on Twins at Mattel Children's Hospital at UCLA

(Note: Barring an unexpected change in condition, this will be the final advisory until 11 a.m. PDT Friday, Aug. 9.)

As of 5 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 8, Maria Teresa and Maria de Jesus Quiej Alvarez remain in critical condition with stable vital signs in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital in Westwood.

Both girls, who remain under sedation, are able to open their eyes and close them. Both also respond to stimulation, such as moving their hand away when it's squeezed. Maria de Jesus also looks around when she opens her eyes, and is moving her arms and legs slightly.

"Both respond very nicely to stimulation," said Dr. Andy Madikians, assistant professor of pediatrics at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and PICU attending physician for the twins. "Things are moving the way we hoped that they would move."

The conjoined twins were separated early Tuesday, Aug. 6, in a nearly 23-hour surgery. Maria Teresa underwent a two-part, five-hour surgical procedure later that day to correct a subdural hematoma, or build-up of blood in the brain.

"Maria de Jesus is a little more responsive than Maria Teresa," Madikians said. "It's possible that Maria Teresa is a bit behind her sister because of the follow-up surgery."

Maria de Jesus was the first to show movement after doctors took the twins off paralytic agents overnight. Doctors administered the drugs after the surgery to protect the sisters from brain injury by preventing coughing and movement in the very early stages of recovery.

"We remain cautiously optimistic about the long-term prospects of both girls," Madikians said.

UCLA Medical Center is covering the estimated \$1.5 million in medical costs related to this week's separation surgery of conjoined twins from Guatemala. As a research university hospital, the medical center after much review accepted the case for humanitarian reasons, and for teaching and learning opportunities. The parents of the children are under no obligation to reimburse the hospital.

Donations to help UCLA Medical Center defray its costs are welcome. Checks payable to "Twins Care at UCLA Fund" may be mailed to UCLA Medical Sciences Development, 10945 Le Conte Ave., Suite 3132, Los Angeles, CA 90095.

Healing the Children is also accepting donations on behalf of the twins at P.O. Box 221478, Newhall, CA 91322.

-UCLA-

## August 8, 2002

For Immediate Use

August 8, 2002

10 a.m.

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## Update on Twins at Mattel Children's Hospital at UCLA

(Note: Barring an unexpected change in condition, this will be the final advisory until 5 p.m. PDT Thursday, Aug. 8. No doctors or medical staff are available for interviews.)

As of 10 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 8, Maria Teresa and Maria de Jesus Quiej Alvarez remain in critical condition with stable vital signs in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital in Westwood, Calif.

Maria de Jesus briefly fluttered her eyes overnight after doctors took the twins off paralytic agents. Doctors administered the drugs after the surgery to protect the sisters from brain injury by preventing coughing and movement in the very early stages of recovery.

"We remain cautiously optimistic about the long-term prospects of Maria Teresa and Maria de Jesus," said Dr. Andy Madikians, assistant professor of pediatrics at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and PICU attending physician for the twins. "There are still many medical hurdles to cross."

The conjoined twins were separated early Tuesday, Aug. 6, in a nearly 23-hour surgery. Maria Teresa underwent a two-part, five-hour surgical procedure later that day to correct a subdural hematoma, or build-up of blood in the brain.

-UCLA-

## August 7, 2002

For Immediate Use

August 7, 2002

10 a.m.

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## Conjoined Twins Separated at Mattel Children's Hospital at UCLA Sleep Through the Night Under Sedation

Maria Teresa and Maria de Jesus Quiej Alvarez slept through the night under heavy sedation in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital in Westwood. The conjoined twins, who were separated early Tuesday, Aug. 6, in a 22-hour surgery, remain in critical but stable condition.

"They will be under sedation for several days," said Dr. Barbara Van De Weile, director of neurosurgical anesthesiology at UCLA Medical Center and chief anesthesiologist on the twins' case. "When respiratory and cardiovascular status is stable, we will lighten the sedation gradually while continuing to give them pain medication as necessary."

Dr Jorge Lazareff, director of the UCLA Pediatric Neurosurgery Program and the lead neurosurgeon on the case, said the sisters are on target for recovery. "I remain optimistic about the chances for a full recovery for both Maria Teresa and Maria de Jesus, and their ability to live full and normal lives," he said.

The 22-hour surgery to separate the craniopagus twins was completed at 5:40 a.m. Tuesday, Aug. 6. Craniopagus twins - those who are fused at the tops of their heads - are among the rarest of conjoined twins, accounting for just 2 percent of cases worldwide. During the day Tuesday, Maria Teresa underwent a two-part, five-hour surgical procedure to correct a subdural hematoma, or build-up of blood in the brain.

The twins arrived at UCLA on June 7 from Guatemala with their mother, Alba Leticia Alvarez. Their father, Wenceslao Quiej López, who had remained in Guatemala to work, arrived in Los Angeles on Aug. 3 to be with his family.

A nonprofit group called Healing the Children (HTC) worked with Lazareff - an HTC volunteer - to accept their case and bring them to UCLA.

While many of the UCLA physicians -- including Lazareff -- are donating their services -- Mattel Children's Hospital expects the girls' care to cost upwards of \$1.5 million. To recover some of the medical expenses, the hospital has established a fund called Twins Care at UCLA. Checks payable to UCLA Foundation may be mailed to UCLA Medical Sciences Development, 10945 Le Conte Ave., Ste. 3132, Los Angeles, CA 90095.

Healing the Children also is accepting donations on behalf of the twins at Post Office Box 221478, Newhall, CA 91322. See [www.healingchildren.org](http://www.healingchildren.org) for more details.

More information will be released as available. For pictures, video and more information about the twins and their UCLA medical team, see [www.uclahealth.org](http://www.uclahealth.org).

-UCLA-

# August 6, 2002

For Immediate Use

August 6, 2002

3:15 p.m.

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## Conjoined Twins Separated Today at Mattel Children's Hospital at UCLA Doctors Complete Follow-up Surgical Procedure on One Sister

Doctors at UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital in Westwood completed a two-part, nearly five-hour surgical procedure Tuesday afternoon to remove a build-up of blood in the brain of one of two conjoined twins who were separated earlier in the day.

Maria Teresa Quiej Alvarez returned to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit and was listed in critical but stable condition following the surgical procedure to correct the subdural hematoma. Her sister, Maria de Jesus Quiej Alvarez, also is hospitalized in the PICU in critical but stable condition following the nearly 22-hour separation surgery.

"Despite the complication involving Maria Teresa, we feel that the outlook for both twins is positive," said Dr. Jorge Lazareff, director of the UCLA Pediatric Neurosurgery Program and the lead neurosurgeon on the case. "We removed the build-up of blood to help speed her recovery."

The more than 22-hour surgery to separate the craniopagus twins was completed at 5:40 a.m. PDT Tuesday, Aug. 6. Craniopagus twins - those who are fused at the tops of their heads - are among the rarest of conjoined twins, accounting for just 2 percent of cases worldwide.

The twins were moved into the operating room at 7:53 a.m. Monday, Aug. 5, and the anesthesiologists began their work at 9:05 a.m. At 12:09 p.m. the surgeons began their work, with the first incision at 1:49 p.m. The separation was completed at 12:56 a.m. Tuesday, Aug. 6. The plastic and reconstructive surgery team completed their work to close the wounds at 5:40 a.m., and the girls were both moved into the Pediatric Intensive Care unit. Maria Teresa returned to surgery to correct the hematoma at 9:17 a.m.

The surgical team included more than 40 health-care professionals including five neurosurgeons, five plastic and reconstructive surgeons, two pediatric surgeons, the chief resident of neurosurgery, 10 anesthesiologists, a nursing staff of 14, the director of pediatric critical care and other personnel.

The twins arrived at UCLA on June 7 from Guatemala with their mother, Alba Leticia Alvarez. Their father, Wenceslao Quiej López, who had remained in Guatemala to work, arrived in Los Angeles on Aug. 3 to be with his family.

A nonprofit group called Healing the Children (HTC) worked with Lazareff - an HTC volunteer - to accept their case and bring them to UCLA.

While many of the UCLA physicians -- including Lazareff -- are donating their services -- Mattel Children's Hospital expects the girls' care to cost upwards of \$1.5 million. To recover some of the medical expenses, the hospital has established a fund called Twins Care at UCLA. Checks payable to UCLA Foundation may be mailed to UCLA Medical Sciences Development, 10945 Le Conte Ave., Ste. 3132, Los Angeles, CA 90095.

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More information will be released as available. For pictures, video and more information about the twins and their UCLA medical team, see [www.uclahealth.org](http://www.uclahealth.org).

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### Conjoined Twins Separated at Mattel Children's Hospital at UCLA One sister returns to Operating Room for Additional Treatment

Doctors at UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital in Westwood completed a two-part, nearly five-hour surgical procedure Tuesday afternoon to remove a build-up of blood in the brain of one of two conjoined twins who were separated earlier in the day.

Maria Teresa Quiej Alvarez returned to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit and was listed in critical but stable condition following the surgical procedure to correct the subdural hematoma. Her sister, Maria de Jesus Quiej Alvarez, also is hospitalized in the PICU in critical but stable condition following the nearly 22-hour separation surgery.

"Despite the complication involving Maria Teresa, we feel that the outlook for both twins is positive," said Dr. Jorge Lazareff, director of the UCLA Pediatric Neurosurgery Program and the lead neurosurgeon on the case. "We removed the build-up of blood to help speed her recovery."

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More information will be released as available. For pictures, video and more information about the twins and their UCLA medical team, see [www.uclahealth.org](http://www.uclahealth.org).

-UCLA-

## August 5, 2002

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## Conjoined Twins Separation Surgery Under Way Update as of 6 p.m. PDT, Monday, Aug. 5

(No other information will be available until surgery is completed. No surgeons or family members are available for interviews.)

Conjoined twins Maria Teresa and Maria de Jesus Quiej Alvarez were wheeled into the UCLA Mattel Children's Hospital operating room at 7:53 a.m. on Monday Aug. 5, to undergo surgery to attempt to separate the twins. The surgery began at 1:49 p.m. after anesthesiologists put in breathing tubes and several intravenous lines to deliver blood and medication, and arterial lines to measure blood pressure.

Using excess skin created over the past month through a skin expansion procedure, UCLA's plastic and reconstructive surgery team then created the skin flaps that later will be used to

completely cover the top of the brain of each child. Plastic surgeons had implanted balloons under the babies' scalps on June 24 to stretch the skin enough to cover their heads.

UCLA neurosurgeons have now removed a strip of bone about two-thirds of the circumference of the shared skull to expose the brain and the veins of both twins. This procedure was completed at about 5 p.m. Neurosurgeons are investigating the vein connection between the two brains and attempting to separate the two brains.

Surgery progressing as planned as of 6 p.m. PDT. The surgery was expected to last at least another 10 hours and involve more than 50 medical staff, including neurosurgeons, plastic and reconstructive surgeons, anesthesiologists, and nursing support staff.

Since the twins' arrival at UCLA on June 7, they have undergone a series of diagnostic tests, including a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), an angiogram, a computed tomography angiogram (CTA) and developmental testing.

Results showed the twins' brains appear separated by a membrane and look normal in size and structure. However, tests also showed that while each child possesses normal arteries feeding the brain, a portion of the veins draining the brain returns blood to the other twin. If doctors cannot preserve and reroute those veins normally, both twins may be at risk for stroke.

The Quiej Alvarez twins were born in a small hospital in Guatemala on July 25, 2001. The hospital contacted the Guatemalan Pediatric Foundation, which then contacted Healing the Children, a nonprofit group that finds medical care for children in undeveloped countries. The organization approached UCLA through Dr. Jorge Lazareff, a UCLA pediatric neurosurgeon. Lazareff and Dr. Henry Kawamoto, surgical director of the UCLA Craniofacial Clinic, are leading the team of UCLA physicians, nurses and medical staff who are working with the twins.

Craniopagus twins — those who are fused at the tops of their heads — are one of the rarest types of conjoined twins. An estimated 1 in 2.5 million births are craniopagus twins.

While many of the UCLA physicians are donating their services — Mattel Children's Hospital expects the babies' care to cost upward of \$1.5 million. To recover some of these expenses, the hospital has established a fund called Twins Care at UCLA. Checks payable to UCLA Foundation may be mailed to UCLA Medical Sciences Development, 10945 Le Conte Ave., Suite 3132, Los Angeles, CA 90095.

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