THE HUNT CANCER INSTITUTE OFFERS THE LATEST ADVANCEMENTS IN CANCER CARE AND RESEARCH. Our advanced cancer research and clinical trials include breakthroughs in liquid biopsies that eliminate the need for invasive surgery and offer additional information on the cancer’s DNA to help choose the best care. Through our affiliation with Cedars-Sinai, South Bay residents will now have expanded access to clinical trials of promising new cancer treatments and can receive them here in their own community at Torrance Memorial.

TorranceMemorial.org/Cancer

We Fight Cancer One Breakthrough At a Time
Dear Readers,

This has been another year of exciting changes at Torrance Memorial Medical Center. In February our affiliation with Cedars-Sinai became official. This new alliance brings more resources, programs and clinical expertise in specialties from oncology to neuroscience, along with advanced medical research and clinical trials. Our partnership expands the community’s access to the most advanced, high-quality medical care right here where we live.

Inside this issue of Pulse you will learn about the many benefits of this new affiliation. Because of our collaboration with Cedars-Sinai, we are now part of the Los Angeles County Comprehensive Stroke Center system. The Lundquist Lurie Cardiovascular Institute has teamed up with Cedars-Sinai specialists to better coordinate care for heart failure patients. And soon South Bay residents will have expanded access to new cancer treatment clinical trials here at Torrance Memorial.

Our hospital has a long history of providing world-class, compassionate cancer care, and our patients will continue to benefit from the innovative oncology services we offer. The future of cancer care at Torrance Memorial includes the two-story Hunt Cancer Center, scheduled to open in September 2019. The center will provide a personalized, patient-centered environment to meet the needs of our oncology patients—all in one place.

I would like to thank our staff for their continued dedication to providing patients with compassionate and exceptional care. This hard work has earned several notable accolades. We earned the 5-Star Overall Hospital Rating—the highest possible—from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Torrance Memorial is one of only 892 hospitals nationwide to receive an “A” for meeting the highest patient safety standards, according to The Leapfrog Group. And for the seventh straight year Torrance Memorial has been ranked one of the best hospitals in California and Los Angeles Metro in 2018–19 by US News & World Report, placing the hospital in the top 5 percent in the state.

Please enjoy this issue of Pulse to learn more about what’s happening at Torrance Memorial Medical Center.

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President, Chief Executive Officer
Torrance Memorial Medical Center
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Attend Torrance Health IPA’s complimentary Medicare 101 Educational Program to learn about Medicare and the different types of insurance plans available to you including: HMO & PPO, Supplements (or Medi-gap) and Part D prescription plans.

Hoffman Health Conference Center, 3315 Medical Center Dr.
Aug 22 | 6:30–8 p.m.

Torrance Memorial West Tower Auditorium, 3325 Medical Center
Sept 24 | 6:30–8 p.m.

Seating is limited, RSVP today at thipa.org/Medicare101 or call 310-257-7239.
EDITOR'S LETTER

Torrance is Hot
With cutting-edge medicine and new strategic alliances, Torrance Memorial is a gem of the South Bay.

Our beautiful South Bay area is great any time of year, but it’s especially spectacular in the summer months. And Torrance Memorial Medical Center aims to take full advantage of the weather and to fully appreciate the people who live and work here—especially our fabulous staff.

Case in point: “Advancing Toward a Cure: 18 Things you Need to Know About Torrance Memorial’s Cancer Care—Today and Into the Future” starting on page 24 itemizes some of the factors that contribute to the excellent care and compassion cancer patients and their support teams find here—from computer-assisted diagnostics to comprehensive tumor boards.

The new “Our Community VIPs” feature (page 36) profiles South Bay residents who make a difference, including Anne Hayward, a nurse who worked at Torrance Memorial during the 1940s, ’50s and ’60s and has lots of stories to tell. And in our new On Pace news department, you’ll find a rundown of Honda’s Evening Under the Stars food and wine gala on August 25, including recipes from featured chefs. Proceeds benefit the renovation of the Donald and Priscilla Hunt Tower, which includes a new mother/baby unit and a new neonatal intensive care unit (NICU).

Play hard, eat well (don’t forget to hydrate!) and rest assured you’re in good hands—and an awesome place to live.

Keep moving,

Peg Moline

CONTRIBUTORS

Carole Jakucs, BSN, RN, PHN
(“Bronchoscopy,” page 28)
Jakucs wrote about this life-saving diagnostic for our cancer feature. “Learning that lung cancer causes more cancer deaths than breast, prostate and colon cancer combined is an eye-opening fact. While most people think of only smokers becoming afflicted with lung cancer, non-smokers can also get it. It’s so important to pay attention to unusual symptoms such as a cough that won’t go away, coughing up blood, shortness of breath and chest pain—and seek medical care quickly for any concerns.”

Michael Neveux
(“Zest for Life,” page 22)
Neveux shot runner and vintage warplane pilot Dave Klein for our cover story. “I’ve been a professional photographer in the South Bay for 40 years. I’ve shot a lot of different subjects but never a World War II fighter plane ... it was an interesting shoot.”

Laura Watts
(“The da Vinci Robot,” page 30)
Watts contributed several pieces to our cancer feature, including one about how doctors at Torrance Memorial are using the da Vinci surgical robot to minimize surgical invasion for cancer patients. “I first learned about robotic surgery a few years ago when my son played with a robotic arm at a science museum. Amazing how this technology makes surgery a better experience for patients (and surgeons!)”

Nancy Sokoler Steiner
(“Fond Recollections,” page 38)
“I loved hearing about Torrance Memorial’s early days from 102-year-old Anne Hayward. I hope I age as well as she and the medical center have.” Steiner also contributed to our “Advancing Toward a Cure” feature.
RESTAURANTS AND BEVERAGE PARTNERS: (as of 07/25/18)

Benihana
Bettolino Kitchen
Depot
Doubletree by Hilton Torrance-South Bay
Fleming’s Prime Steakhouse
The Honda Classic/PGA Tour Professional Wines

Ise Shima
Island Eats Hale A’ina
Jackson’s Food + Drink
Nothing Bundt Cakes
Ortega 120 / Hey 19
Paul Martin’s American Grill
Plough/Wooden Valley Winery

Red Car Brewery & Restaurant
Riboli Family Wine Estates
Rock & Brews El Segundo
Rolling Hills Country Club
Sake Shochu Institute of America
Sodexo (Honda Café)

Sushi Chef Institute
The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf
Torrance Marriott Redondo Beach - 21 Square
Truxton’s American Bistro

Featuring select wines poured by sommeliers from the Disneyland® Resort

SPONSORS: (as of 07/18/18)

PLATINUM
Priscilla Hunt

GOLD
L.A. County Supervisor – Janice Hahn

SILVER
2H Construction, Inc.
A&A Maintenance
Association of South Bay Surgeons, A Medical Group, Inc.

Carlene Ringer Choura
Continental Development Corporation
COR Healthcare Medical Associates
El Camino College

InjectAbility Clinic
Jacobs Johnson Controls
PDM, LLP
Certified Public Accountants

RMI International

IN-KIND
Daily Breeze
Easy Reader
TravelStore

In Partnership With:
TORRANCE Area Chamber of Commerce

All Proceeds to Benefit:
TORRANCE MEMORIAL
A CEDARS-SINAI AFFILIATE

Dress code: cocktail attire. No one under 21 admitted

For more info, follow us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/eveningunderthestars
Great food, wine and music on a warm summer’s eve … doesn’t get much better than this. And on Saturday, August 25, the 32nd annual Honda Evening Under the Stars Gourmet Food & Wine Festival will be hosted by American Honda at its Torrance headquarters. It’s always a spectacular night of fun and philanthropy.

World-renowned saxophonist Kenny G will play his lilting music while guests sample food and wine from more than 20 of the South Bay’s best, including Café Honda—Sodexo, Bettolino Kitchen in Torrance and Paul Martin’s American Grill in El Segundo.

A TASTE OF THE EVENING

To whet your appetite for this year’s event, Pulse has nabbed recipes for two of the featured dishes—from Bettolino Kitchen and Paul Martin’s American Grill. Family-run Bettolino Kitchen offers its tortelloni al limone, a simple dish made with handmade pasta, ricotta, spinach and fresh lemon sauce in the Sorrento style. “It’s one of our fan favorites,” says Sean Liguore, who is part of the creative team at Bettolino Kitchen along with his wife Andreanna and her brother Vince. “Our concept is to stay seasonal and local, so we change the menu quite often. But this dish is a staple.”

Paul Martin’s American Grill executive chef Russell Skall

Braised Short Ribs
Paul Martin’s American Grill – Serves 4

INGREDIENTS
3 pounds boneless chuck short rib
2 tablespoons kosher salt
2 tablespoons black pepper, coarse chop
½ cup olive oil
5 ounces yellow onion, chopped
2 ounces carrot, chopped
2 ounces celery, chopped

2 cups red wine
3 cups beef stock
1/8 ounce fresh thyme
1 teaspoon dry oregano
1 bay leaf

DIRECTIONS
1. Preheat oven to 350°. Drain short ribs in a colander, season all sides with salt and pepper.
2. On stovetop, heat 1/4 cup oil in a large stock pot that can fit in the oven. Char the meat in the pot on all sides. Pull out meat and reserve.
3. Place remaining 1/4 cup oil in the pan then cook the onion, carrot and celery for 10 minutes to lightly caramelize. Add the wine and cook to deglaze and reduce by half. Add the beef stock and herbs and bring to a boil over high heat. Add the meat to the pot, cover with aluminum foil and bake in the oven for 3 to 3½ hours until meat is tender.
4. Pull ribs from oven and remove the cover; allow to cool for 20 minutes. Carefully pull the ribs out and place in a casserole dish with ½ cup of the cooking liquid; cover with the aluminum foil. Pour the remaining cooking liquid through a strainer into a saucepan.

ASSEMBLY
4 short ribs, braised
1 cup short rib jus, 140° (go to TorranceMemorial.org/EUTSrecipes)
4 tablespoons horseradish cream sauce (go to TorranceMemorial.org/EUTSrecipes)
2 cups mashed potatoes (your favorite recipe)
4 teaspoons minced chives

Place the covered casserole with short ribs and liquid in a 350° oven for 30 minutes to warm. Remove pan and place 1 short rib in the center of each of 4 plates. Place 2 ounces of jus and 1 tablespoon of horseradish sauce over the top of each piece of meat. Divide the mashed potatoes on each plate; garnish with chives.
Tortelloni al Limone

Bettolino Kitchen
Serves 4

INGREDIENTS
Pasta
3 1/8 cup flour
4 eggs
2 pinches salt
1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil

Filling
1 cup baby spinach
1/2 teaspoon olive oil
1 cup ricotta
1 egg yolk, pasteurized
1/2 cup grana padano, grated
1/4 teaspoon salt

Lemon Cream Sauce
1/3 cup cream
1 1/2 tablespoons lemon juice
1/4 teaspoons salt

DIRECTIONS
1. Make the pasta: Knead all the ingredients with a mixer for 5 minutes until smooth. Wrap pasta in plastic and let rest 30 minutes before use.


3. Shape the pasta: Cut the sheet into circles using round cutter or upside down glass, spacing the rounds as close together as possible. Gather the scraps into a ball and put them with the remaining pieces of dough to re-roll later. Lay out the circles and place 1 tablespoon of filling in the middle of each. Dip your pasta brush or finger in a bowl of water and run it along the edge of the round to moisten. Fold the dough over to form a semicircle, then draw the two corners together to form a rounded bonnet-shape. Press tightly to seal. Toss with flour, set aside on floured baking sheet and cover.

4. Make the cream sauce: Using a hand blender, blend cream, lemon juice and salt. (It will keep for four days.)

5. Assemble the dish: Heat the cream sauce in a sauté pan. Boil water and gently drop in tortelloni to heat (less than 2 minutes). Carefully add tortelloni and 1 teaspoon of pasta water to cream sauce. Stir, plate and top with Parmesan cheese and fresh herbs.

“The best part of Evening Under the Stars is that it benefits Torrance Memorial, and we are big on giving back to our community.” In fact, every Tuesday Bettolino Kitchen splits its profits with a community cause for a month. (In February 2019, Torrance Memorial will be the recipient.)

Paul Martin’s American Grill’s executive chef, Russell Skall, considers the braised short ribs with mashed potatoes and horseradish sauce the quintessential representation of the restaurant. “It’s what you would expect to be served at a grill, and it’s one of our most popular dishes. I love braised meats because you can take an inner cut of meat and braise slowly so it stays tender and gets so flavorful. It’s comfort food.”

Skall’s family ran a restaurant too. While he attended tech school for a bit, he came right back to his first love. “My dad was a huge influence; he would take big orders and never write anything down. And he had the gift of gab,” he says. “Now I like to say I’ve never worked a day in my life. This is my art form.”

BENEFITTING MOMS, BABIES AND CHILDREN

Proceeds from this year’s Evening Under the Stars benefit the renovation of Torrance Memorial’s Donald and Priscilla Hunt Tower, which includes a new mother/baby unit complete and a new neonatal intensive care unit. Guests will have the opportunity to participate in live and silent auctions, bidding on exclusive items and experiences including a Disney private dining experience and Harry Connick Jr. Hollywood Bowl box seats.

Tickets to Honda’s Evening Under the Stars are $300 per person. To purchase and find details, visit TorranceMemorial.org/EveningUndertheStars.

From left: Vince Guiliiano, Andreanna Liguore and Sean Liguore of Bettolino Kitchen
You’ve just been diagnosed with cancer. So many questions arise. You want to know why you got it. You also wonder: Is it genetic? Does your family need to be concerned that they’ll get it too? Questions like these can be answered by a licensed genetic counselor.

At Torrance Memorial Medical Center, genetic counseling services are offered in the Hunt Cancer Institute. Lauren Rudichuk, MS, CGC (certified genetic counselor), is educated in the science of genetics and provides the artful skills of a counselor to advise her patients when a diagnosis of cancer has struck.

Rudichuk says that having a background in genetic science enables her to provide comprehensive services to patients, such as taking their medical history, mapping out family medical problems, collaborating with referring and treating physicians, recommending the most appropriate genetic tests for a newly diagnosed illness, or determining if a patient has a genetic predisposition for developing a specific type of cancer in the future, she says.

“Family history is an important tool for genetic counseling. If a patient is diagnosed at age 30 with breast cancer, it’s a red flag that this could be a result of a genetic predisposition to cancer. This information prompts the question: ‘Who else in my family might have this gene mutation?’” says Rudichuk.

“Mutations in certain genes can lead to cancer. For example, mutations in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes can lead to a higher risk of breast and ovarian cancer,” she explains. And determining which type of gene mutation has occurred has treatment implications as well.

The other important function of a genetic counselor is to help patients navigate through their diagnosis. “We guide patients through the process, helping them understand their test results and providing psychosocial support to patients and their families. Sometimes, we’ll refer patients to support groups or a psychologist for additional support,” says Rudichuk.

Specialized genetic testing can find high-risk people and stop them from becoming cancer patients. We offer on-site testing and counseling. Our service can assist your understanding of the test and its results, as well as offer advice on how to lower the risk of cancer.

Prior to getting tested, you should talk to your doctor about:

• Your family history of cancer
• Your personal history of cancer

Counseling before the test can help you understand what the test result will mean. It can also explain options that are available if the test is positive.

In some cases, patients seek testing before they are diagnosed with cancer. If this is the case, tests will focus on the closest relative who has been diagnosed. If this relative is not alive, the test can still offer useful information.
Every year Medicare recipients have the option to change their coverage during the Fall Open Enrollment period (also referred to as the Annual Enrollment period). This year it’s the same but with a new additional time frame and enrollment period, according to independent insurance agent Vince Kelly.

The 2019 enrollment period, as in prior years, runs from October 15 to December 7. A person can make as many changes as they wish, but their final selection submitted by December 7 will stand as their new plan. The new plan will start January 1, 2019. If no changes are made, their current plan will continue as it rolls over into 2019. Starting January 1st through March 31 there will be a new Open Enrollment period, during which a person can make one change.

In both time periods a person can change or join a Medicare Advantage HMO plan. People not currently in a Medicare Advantage HMO can join or change their stand-alone Part D prescription drug plan. For individuals joining a Part D plan, they will return to or keep their Original Medicare and should consider purchasing a Medicare Supplement insurance (AKA Medi-Gap). A Medicare Supplement policy helps pay the 20% not covered by Original Medicare.

As early as September 15, Medicare recipients will receive their Annual Notification of Change (ANOC) pamphlet from their current insurance company. The ANOC serves as a way to see if the plan you already have is changing, such as moving a prescription drug to a higher tier (which could make it more expensive) or adding benefits.

If you’re happy with your current doctors, your health plan and your coverage, open the ANOC and check out any changes between your 2018 benefits and the upcoming 2019 benefits. Health plans do change; confirm that your physicians and preferred hospital are still available in your plan in 2019.

“Most people don’t make any changes,” Kelly says, “and some see the pamphlet and get overwhelmed. But they shouldn’t—all you really need to do is read the comparison grid comparing the 2018 and 2019 columns. But don’t make the mistake of seeing 2019 and thinking it seems so far away; it rolls around very quickly.”

Don’t wait—especially if you want to keep your Torrance Memorial doctors and health plan. Get ahead of the action.

Have questions? THIPA members, contact your member services office at 866-568-4472 to speak to a representative. Or contact an independent agent, such as Vince Kelly, 310-625-1837 (medicarebabyboomer.com), or Rose Straub, 310-715-2300 (healthcare65plus.com). Or make an appointment for free Medicare counseling, Thursdays with Doris Herzog, Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP), 310-517-4666.
Black Bean Brownies

Tasting is believing! These flourless brownies are a decadent, gluten-free dessert (and no one will ever guess that they are packed with fiber-filled black beans). They are fudgy and sweet—and one of the best brownies you will ever taste. These brownies are ridiculously simple to make. They require ingredients you likely have on hand, and all you need is a food processor (or a blender) and a baking pan or muffin tin.
Whether it’s via the news or a food expert, there’s no dearth of opinion about what types of food to avoid. The “facts” may change daily, but here are some foods that most doctors wouldn’t be caught dead eating—and you shouldn’t either.

**Instant noodles**
Instant noodles and instant foods in general are filled with preservatives. Food items with a long shelf life will reduce our shelf life. Instant noodles also tend to be high in sodium.

**Soda**
Many popular drinks like sodas and bottled teas are high in sugar. Recent studies have also shown that even diet sodas with artificial sweeteners increase the risk of obesity and metabolic syndrome.

**Processed cheese products**
Avoid products like Cheez Wiz as they contain many more preservatives than other forms of cheese.

**Hot dogs and canned meats**
Meats like Spam and Vienna sausages are definitely high in preservatives. They are also high in sodium, which can exacerbate pre-existing health issues for those with high blood pressure or who are at risk for it.

**Frosting in a jar**
Frosting—and pretty much anything from a jar—has many preservatives. Frosting is also high in sugar.

A majority of these foods are instant convenience foods. While it is not healthy to consume them every day, it doesn’t mean that you can’t have them every now and then. It’s also worth noting that because most of these do contain preservatives, you may want to keep some of them around for emergency situations.

Victoria Shin, MD, is a cardiologist with Torrance Memorial Physician Network; her office is located at 2841 Lomita Blvd., Suite 235, Torrance. 310-517-8950.
It’s a strange time for pain sufferers and their doctors. It almost feels like you could get in trouble for taking Percocet. And pain management specialists hear that loud and clear.

Interventional pain doctor Sina Samie, MD, did his fellowship training in the management of chronic pain conditions at USC and is building a comprehensive pain management program at Torrance Memorial Physician Network. He has seen this pendulum swing back and forth, and the “war” on opioid addiction with it.

“There was a period of time when there was a big push to prescribe more opioids because there was a perception that we were undertreating pain,” Samie says. “Some doctors even got sued, so many started overprescribing. And of course research on opioids convinced us they were not addictive in patients with pain. Now we know that not only is there potential for addiction, but also some of the medications previously prescribed are not supposed to be used for chronic pain. In fact, some can stop working and make pain worse.”

Samie explains, “Patients are very aware of these problems. And we doctors also know we can’t just give opioids without careful consideration because they have many side effects including respiratory depression. It is very easy for patients to misuse opioids accidentally, leading to increased tolerance and addiction.”

“The strong cultural and medical reaction is appropriate, Samie says. “This is a public health crisis and needs to be addressed on all sides. Health care providers should be on the side of helping our patients and helping their lives get better—not contributing to the epidemic.”

In some ways, though, he admits the pendulum has swung too far. “I’ve heard people with severe chronic pain say, ‘I’m tired of being treated like a drug addict,’ and ‘The pharmacists looks at me funny,’ and ‘I used to get something that worked well for me, but my doctor stopped prescribing it’.”

It is clear that a one-size-fits-all approach doesn’t work for chronic pain management, and doctors like Samie are looking at more holistic, customized and multidisciplinary approaches.

“There are so many psychological aspects to pain,” notes Samie. “It can affect a patient’s life in many different ways. You can’t just prescribe pills, and ignoring the mind/body factors only makes the pain worse.”

A holistic approach might include biofeedback and cognitive behavioral therapy, various injections, acupuncture, yoga and/or meditation. “I’m very open to alternatives,” he adds, “and everyone is different, but pain psychology is very important. Biofeedback, for instance, will show a patient how they can affect their pain, anxiety and blood pressure based on how they are breathing and other physiological parameters. Meditation, yoga and tai chi have been found to work very well for chronic pain, including fibromyalgia. We also recommend physical therapy and other exercise, and massage—anything that keeps you active and boosts your mental wellness.”

There’s another alternative Samie says his patients are asking
about: cannabidiol, or CBD, an analgesic compound derived from the cannabis plant. Recently research has shown CBD to have anti-inflammatory and anti-anxiety properties without the psychoactive effects of marijuana—the “high” or “stoned” feeling—and the Food and Drug Administration has just approved its use in preventing seizures.

“I think it’s very interesting,” he says, “and I don’t prescribe it because it’s not regulated yet. Now that it’s available over the counter, you can try it and see what works; just don’t drive after taking it, and be careful because doses can be unpredictable. So far there’s a bit of evidence, but most of the research is not yet from high-quality, randomized controlled studies. That will change in the future. But I do want to stress that as we age, our kidneys, liver and other vital organs don’t function at 100%, and you could be at more risk for over-sedation and other adverse side effects. Especially in the aging population, we need to be extra careful to avoid causing organ damage to the kidneys, liver, heart, stomach, etc., or causing dizziness, falls, fatigue or forgetfulness.”

He continues: “Some exciting breakthroughs are catching on though. These include more interventional techniques, such as epidurals, nerve blocks and radiofrequency ablation and neuromodulation. Nearly 40% of back pain is due to arthritis in the spine, which often responds to a treatment in which we cauterize the tiny nerve endings that provide sensation to these worn-out joints. We can give patients over a year of relief with a short, outpatient procedure. So far it’s working very well, and patients are satisfied. The bottom line is that patients don’t have to live in pain and don’t have to be afraid of getting addicted to pain meds. There are many non-opioid medications and interventional treatments available to patients, thanks to technology. I urge them to come in and see a pain doctor; we will do everything we can to minimize their pain and improve their function and quality of life.”

Sina Samie, MD, has two offices in Torrance; please call 310-891-6795 or go to TMPhysicianNetwork.org for more information.

HSAs: A HANDY WAY TO SAVE

Is a Health Savings Account for You?

Written by JOHN FERRARI

Looking for a way to take the bite out of your high-deductible medical insurance? If you wouldn’t mind saving on your taxes too, a health savings account (HSA) may be right for you. Basically, says Phillip Cook, CFP and president of Mogul Wealth Management, Inc., “You can use pre-tax dollars to pay for out-of-pocket medical expenses.”

HSAs are designed for people with high-deductible medical insurance. To be eligible your health care plan must have a minimum deductible of $1,350 for individuals ($2,700 for families). The maximum amount you can contribute is $3,450 for individuals ($6,900 for families). Money you contribute—using pre-tax dollars—is available to withdraw with no penalty, although you will pay taxes on withdrawals you don’t use for medical expenses.

What if you’re healthy and don’t use all the money you contribute? That, says Cook, is a perk; your HSA can be used as a retirement fund. Once you reach 65 years of age, you can withdraw funds for any reason with no penalty, although you will pay taxes on withdrawals you don’t use for medical expenses. While your money is in the HSA, you can make it work for you by investing it. When choosing an HSA, Cook says, look for low fees ($25 to $50 per year), flexibility in investment options and few limitations on withdrawals.
Strength Training Without Weights

Gravity provides the resistance in three easy exercises.

Written by JOHN FERRARI

We all know that to build strength you’ve got to hit the weight room, right? Maybe not. An exercise program that includes weight lifting is ideal, but according to Yolande Mavity, lead physical therapist for Torrance Memorial Medical Center’s outpatient rehabilitation department, there are times when weight lifting isn’t the best choice. For example, it should be avoided when it may exacerbate arthritis or joint pain.

“You can strengthen your muscles using gravity and your own body weight,” she says. One of her favorite exercises is the Chair Rise: Stand up and sit down as many times as you can using just your core and legs, keeping your feet on the floor and pausing just long enough between rises to avoid relying on your own momentum.

Another favorite is Single-Leg or Double-Leg Heel Raises to strengthen calf muscles: Standing, with your feet flat on the floor, press your toes down, lifting your heels off the ground. Hold that for 3 to 5 seconds before slowly lowering your heels.

For abdominal and core strength, Mavity suggests Planks, which begin with your body in pushup position, hands or forearms on the floor to support your upper body weight, or Knee Planks, with knees and lower legs on the floor. Hold the position for 10 to 30 seconds, maintaining a straight line from head to tailbone.

There are dozens of other strength-building exercises. No matter what you try, Mavity says, “Always consult your doctor before starting an exercise program, and ease into the program. Exercises should never be painful, and you should be watchful that you’re using proper body mechanics.”

With gravity and your body, you can be your own weight room!
Torrance Memorial now top 5% in California

For the seventh year in a row, Torrance Memorial Medical Center has been recognized as a Best Hospital by U.S. News & World Report. The 2018–2019 report recognizes Torrance Memorial as 21st in the state, jumping five rankings higher than last year. It also placed Torrance Memorial as the 10th best hospital in Los Angeles/Orange County region. “We are extremely elated to be ranked among California’s top 25 hospitals this year,” said Craig Leach, president and CEO of Torrance Memorial Medical Center. “It’s a testament to the commitment of our entire patient care team to making continued advancements in the ways in which we provide care to this community.”

The annual Best Hospitals ranking, now in its 29th year, is designed to assist patients and doctors in making informed decisions about where to receive care for challenging health conditions or for common elective procedures.

For more information, visit health/usnews.com/best-hospitals.

Torrance Memorial gets an “A” Grade for Patient Safety

The Leapfrog Group, a Washington D.C.-based organization aiming to improve health care quality and safety for consumers, announced in April that Torrance Memorial was one of 750 hospitals for spring 2018 to be awarded an “A” for its efforts in protecting patients from harm and meeting the highest safety standards in the United States. Developed under the guidance of an expert panel, the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade uses 27 measures of publicly available hospital safety data to assign grades to approximately 2,500 U.S. hospitals twice per year.

To see the full grade details and to access patient tips for staying safe in the hospital, visit the website hospitalsafetygrade.org and follow Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade on Twitter and Facebook.

National Rx Take Back Day

Torrance Memorial is saving lives with responsible drug disposal.

Written by LAURA L. WATTS

More than 6 million Americans abuse prescription drugs, according to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Sadly, the drugs are often obtained from family, friends or the home medicine cabinet.

To help combat this abuse, Anita Chun, community services coordinator, represented the Torrance Memorial Thelma McMillen Center for Drug and Alcohol Treatment Center in partnering with the Lomita Sheriff’s Department and local nonprofit Behavioral Health Services for the DEA’s National Prescription Drug Take Back Day.

On April 28, 110 community members turned in 183 pounds of unused or expired medication at the Lomita Sheriff’s Station. This twice-annual event raises awareness of the need to dispose of prescription drugs in a convenient and earth-friendly way. “By partnering with these other organizations for National Drug Take Back Day, Torrance Memorial is making sure our community is safer and environmentally responsible,” says Chun.

For a complete list of local drop-off locations for unused or expired medications, visit HealthLinks, located on the first floor of the West Tower, or go to TorranceMemorial.org/RxTakeBack.
CALENDAR

**AUGUST 18, SEPTEMBER 15, OCTOBER 20**

**AARP SMART DRIVE TEK**
2:15 to 3:45 p.m. | Free
A new, free, 90-minute AARP workshop that focuses on helping senior drivers understand current and evolving vehicle safety technologies and how to use them. You’ll learn the benefits of current and emerging vehicle safety technology like backup cameras, lane departure warnings, smart headlights, adaptive cruise control, blind spot warning, automatic emergency braking and more. Registration required.

WHERE: West Tower, Torrance Memorial Medical Center, 3325 Medical Center Drive, Torrance

**AUGUST 18, OCTOBER 20**

**INFANT MASSAGE**
10:30 a.m. to noon | $45
Your baby will experience vital physical, psychological and developmental growth in their first year of life. Nurturing touch between you and your baby enriches the mind, body and spirit for both of you, thus helping your baby grow healthy and happy. You will learn a series of strokes and techniques that can be used in short or long massage sessions to stimulate or relax your baby. You also will learn to read your baby’s nonverbal cues, when or when not to massage and basic developmental movement activities. Infant massage can promote bonding; provide relaxation for baby and parent/caregiver; strengthen digestive, circulatory, immune and nervous systems; reduce discomfort from congestion, gas and colic; improve sleep and stimulate motor development.

WHERE: Health Education Center, 3105 Lomita Blvd., Torrance

**SEPTEMBER 5 to OCTOBER 3**

**HOW TO B.E.A.T. EVERYDAY STRESS**
6:30 to 8 p.m. | $60
Stress is a part of life, but your reaction to stress contributes either positively or negatively to your overall health. Learn new ways to respond to stress that lead you to optimal health.

WHERE: The Center for Healthy Living, 2550 Via Tejon, Palos Verdes Estates

**SEPTEMBER 10 to OCTOBER 29 or SEPTEMBER 12 to OCTOBER 31**

**YOGA BASICS**
4:15 to 5:15 p.m., Monday
5:30 to 6:30 p.m., Wednesday
$72/8-week series
Harmonize body, mind and spirit through gentle stretching exercises, traditional yoga poses, breathing techniques and guided relaxation.

WHERE: The Center for Healthy Living, 2550 Via Tejon, Palos Verdes Estates

**SEPTEMBER 1, 2, 3**

**FIESTA HERMOSA**
10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
This annual arts and crafts fair features fun for the entire family. It also has two live music stages, a food court, kiddie carnival, petting zoo, and a charity wine and beer garden.

WHERE: Pier Avenue, Hermosa Beach
INFO/REGISTER: fiestahermosa.net

**SEPTEMBER 22**

**ADVANCE HEALTH CARE DIRECTIVE**
6 to 7:30 p.m. | Free
Learn methods of communicating your health care wishes in writing to your family, friends and health care team. Topics include updates in laws regarding advance directives. Registration required.

WHERE: West Tower, Torrance Memorial Medical Center, 3325 Medical Center Drive, Torrance
SEPTEMBER 11 to OCTOBER 30
PRIME OF LIFE YOGA
12:30 to 1:30 pm | $72/8-week series
A specialty yoga class designed for the 40+ population. Increase flexibility and strength and reduce stress. Postures are adapted to your body’s needs and ability. Classes are therapeutic and slow to moderate in intensity.
WHERE: Health Education Center, 3105 Lomita Blvd., Torrance

SEPTEMBER 12 to OCTOBER 31
MAT PILATES, INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED
10:30 to 11:20 a.m. | $72/8-week series
Fast-paced and dynamic class that focuses on strengthening core muscles to help improve balance and provide support for your spine. Participants must have a moderate fitness and flexibility level. Recent mat Pilates experience is recommended.
WHERE: The Center for Healthy Living, 2550 Via Tejon, Palos Verdes Estates

SEPTEMBER 12 to OCTOBER 31
HEALTHY BRAIN: THE FELDENKRAIS METHOD FOR BOOSTING YOUR BRAIN
Noon to 1 p.m. | $72/8-week series
Using the principles of neuroplasticity, this class will focus on Feldenkrais exercises that help improve brain function and reorganize neurological connections that boost your brain health.
WHERE: The Center for Healthy Living, 2550 Via Tejon, Palos Verdes Estates

SEPTEMBER 24 to NOVEMBER 12
BEST: BALANCE, ENDURANCE AND STRENGTH TRAINING
Noon to 12:50 p.m. | $85
This small group exercise class is led by a physical therapist and focused on reducing your fear of falling. Intermediate-level class—must be able to walk with a cane. Pre-testing is required, so call 310-517-4666.
WHERE: West Tower, Torrance Memorial Medical Center, 3325 Medical Center Dr., Torrance

SEPTEMBER 24 to OCTOBER 29
CAREGIVER TRAINING, PART ONE
6:15 to 8:45 p.m. | $60
This class will explore understanding the how-to’s of housing options, stress related to caregiving, medication management, advocacy, transfers, mobility and more. Certificate awarded.
WHERE: Health Education Center, 3105 Lomita Blvd., Torrance

SEPTEMBER 16
6th ANNUAL EVELYN’S BFF 5K AND 8K BRA RUN/WALK
8 a.m.
Race organizer and breast cancer survivor Evelyn Calip is a nurse navigator at Torrance Memorial Medical Center. For details, go to instagram.com/brarunla or check out the BRARunwalk Facebook page.
WHERE: Dockweiler Beach, Playa Del Rey
INFO/REGISTER: mercuryevents.net

To register or get more information, go to TorranceMemorial.org/Classes or call 310-517-4711.
How can I Avoid Getting Sick on an Airplane?

Written by ERIC MILEFCHIK, MD

Summer is high season for travel. And air travel presents an increased risk for infection due to the close quarters and the repeated use of airplanes. Seats and other surfaces accumulate infectious agents. Planes are cleaned in between each use, but cleaning is limited by the turnaround time of the flights—with most airplanes only getting a deep cleaning every several weeks.

The good news is air filtration systems in most modern airliners are actually very good. They utilize HEPA filtration which markedly limits circulating agents. The bad news is this is not enough to protect passengers within three to six feet of someone who is infected with most viral respiratory germs spread by air droplets coughing or sneezing. These include influenza, parainfluenza, rhinoviruses (common cold), respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), human metapneumovirus as well as the bacteria group A Streptococcus (“strep throat”).

It’s important to remember these agents are spread when we touch the droplets and then touch our faces, which we do often. Here are some answers to popular questions about staying germ-free during air travel:

WHAT’S THE GERMIEST PART OF THE AIRPLANE?

Bathrooms are by far where the most germs are found due to the increased contamination from enteric organisms (bacteria found in stool), which through exposure have the potential for causing gastrointestinal illness. These could include Clostridium difficile, pathogenic E coli species, which are usually food borne (E coli O157, Enteropathogenic E coli and others) and others.

Seats and seat fabric including the seat pockets (where people place items like diapers and food) harbor bacteria—including staphylococcus—that can stick around for days. This would include strains of methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), which can cause spontaneous skin abscesses or other more invasive infections.

Pillows, tray tables and even touchscreens all present risk for bacterial contamination given serial exposures from many passengers.

This information might be enough to make you want to cancel your vacation, but there are ways to give your immune system a hand in not letting these villainous germs get the better of you.

WHAT CAN I DO TO STAY HEALTHY?

1. Before flying, make sure you are well hydrated and well rested to assure the healthiest immune system possible;
2. Frequently wash your hands after touching surfaces, throughout the flight and after using the restroom;
3. An alcohol-based hand de-sanitizer is helpful to avoid infections at times when soap and water is not accessible;
4. During the flight, try not to touch your face and avoid people who cough by closely paying attention to who is sitting around you;
5. Consider using bleach wipes on tray tables, touch screens and bathroom areas for bacterial contamination given serial exposures from many passengers;
6. Wearing a mask will offer some protection from air droplets, but is not completely effective due to the potential for spread by touching droplets with your hands, and then touching your face;
7. Easier said than done, but if possible, it is more effective to convince the coughing passenger to wear a mask, which offers the best protection for everyone within 3 to 6 feet.

Eric Milefchik, MD, is chairman of infection prevention at Torrance Memorial Medical Center; please call 310-784-6954 for more information.
Flawless Teamwork Saves a Mom and Her Newborn

Torrance Memorial’s NICU is first-rate—and getting even better.

Written by MICHELLE ABT

Jerry Schwartz, MD, medical director of neonatology at Torrance Memorial Medical Center, always tells people he has the best job in the world. It’s not just that he and his staff get to save babies’ lives—it’s also that he gets to work with an amazing team of people, which includes expert neonatologists, obstetric anesthesiologists, obstetric hospitalists and sub-specialty neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) and labor and delivery nurses, who work together every day to save lives.

It’s this team that makes Torrance Memorial one of the top hospitals in the state and a top-notch Level III NICU. It is also this team, along with staff from the medical center’s code blue team and adult intensive care unit (ICU), that saved the lives of a mother and her newborn son on Christmas Eve 2016 when a rare pregnancy complication turned a routine delivery into a race against time to keep both mother and baby alive.

After an uneventful pregnancy, Stephanie and John Kane also expected an uneventful delivery. Having achieved a full-term pregnancy meant they had already avoided the complications they had experienced with their first child, Annabelle—who had been born prematurely—so they were excited to have their baby and return home to share the holidays together as a family. But while Stephanie was in labor, she suffered an amniotic fluid embolism (AFE), an extremely rare pregnancy complication that is often fatal for mother and baby.

Stephanie was in serious distress. She was having trouble breathing and had developed an excruciating headache. Within minutes she was taken into surgery, where she went into full cardiac arrest. Specially trained teams went to work to save her and her baby. Led by Patrick Donley, MD, the on-staff obstetric anesthesiologist, the obstetrics team performed a caesarian to deliver the baby. The neonatal team, led by Schwartz, worked to revive the baby and transfer him to the NICU, while at the same time Torrance Memorial’s code blue team was performing CPR to restore Stephanie’s heartbeat.

All this activity occurred in the span of about 15 minutes, and as Schwartz observed, “It was done in almost complete silence. It was like a ballet. Everyone was so well practiced we didn’t need to say much to each other. And it was incredibly intense in that room. You could have heard a pin drop.”

Stephanie was moved to the adult ICU where she remained for more than two weeks until her organ function was restored. Meanwhile John was able to bring his son, Jack, home with him after eight days.

SAME ADVANCED CARE, NEW NICU

As a result of the advanced care at Torrance Memorial, a situation that could have ended in tragedy had a happy ending. Schwartz believes that much of the credit for saving Stephanie and her son goes to the medical center’s commitment to providing the most advanced care for the families in the South Bay community.

This level of commitment will soon give families access to a redesigned NICU, opening August 23, 2018. The design features 25 private rooms, so parents will be able to have private time with their baby and even spend the night, giving mothers and their babies more health-boosting bonding time during those important early days and weeks.

“One of the reasons I love working here is that we are always able to give our babies and their families what they need to achieve the best outcome,” says Schwartz.

Meanwhile, the Kane family believes they have much to be grateful for. Their children are happy and healthy, and Stephanie’s health is restored. “I want to send the people at Torrance Memorial a heartfelt ‘thank-you,’” says John. “We have a beautiful family, and that wouldn’t have happened without them.”

During quiet moments, Schwartz reflects on this day often. “That was one of the most incredible experiences I ever had working with our team,” he says. “I felt honored to have been part of it. And to this day I still get choked up every time I tell this story.”

From left: Rita Wadhwani, RN, Liz Ferris, RN, Jerry Schwartz, MD, and Princemol Biju, RN.
In 1989 Torrance Memorial Medical Center patron and Golf Tournament committee member Dave Klein ran the Los Angeles Marathon—his first. His goal then was to run a marathon every 10 years, but in the 30 years since he has outdone that by just a bit. He also is a member of Tiger Squadron, a precision formation flying team based in Southern California. The Squadron puts on thrilling exhibitions flying vintage warbirds. Pulse caught up with Dave to ask about his dual odysseys.
How and why did your goal change after that first marathon?

My goal was to run a marathon at age 30, 40, 50 and 60. I ran them at 30 and 40, then took a break. When my kids were growing up I didn’t think I’d be able to run another at 50, so I ran the Los Angeles Marathon again at 46, thinking that would be the last one.

I’d heard about people running marathons in all 50 states and thought that was a great goal, so I ran in Chicago and St. George, Utah, in 2011 and 2012. I had such a good time in Chicago that I ran the New York City and Boston marathons too. Then I completed a series called the World Marathon Majors, which added Tokyo, Berlin and London.

My wife, Song, and I had the opportunity to travel when we became empty nesters, and we mixed in races along the way … even in Antarctica, where we ran through the snow, ice, mud, penguins and cold. Once we had run in Antarctica, it just made sense to try to join the Seven Continents Club. After running in Melbourne, Australia, and Santiago, Chile, we’ve run marathons on six continents.

In August we’re going to Kenya to run with Masaai on the last continent. Our sons, Christopher and Jonathan, will be joining us; they will be running their first marathon with me as I finish (hopefully) my last.

How much do you run in an average week?

I use a 16-week program to train for marathons. It starts at about 30 miles per week and gets up to 50 miles per week about three weeks before the race.

What does running do for you, besides keeping you physically fit?

Running gives me the opportunity to have some quiet time to think about the day’s events and plan for tomorrow. I think it keeps me a little sharper mentally too.

How do you stay committed to running? Do you allow yourself time off from running sometimes?

Sometimes it is difficult to keep the training going. After a race I usually take a few weeks off. It’s definitely hard to start training after a long break, but I feel so much better after a few weeks.

Do you run alone or with others?

I do both. Normally I run during the lunch hour for 4 to 7 miles around my office in Torrance, and I’m on my own. Long runs on the weekends are much more enjoyable with friends. We generally run on The Strand from Torrance Beach up to Manhattan Beach or on various trails around Palos Verdes.

What’s your favorite marathon?

The Boston Marathon would have to be my favorite. I was lucky enough to join Team MR8 to raise money for the Martin Richard Foundation; he was the 8-year-old boy who died in the bombing at the 2013 Boston Marathon. Wearing the team jersey during the run was truly humbling. The energy during that marathon is incredible.

What can you tell people starting a (hopefully) long-term exercise program to help them stick with it?

Start at a level you can achieve easily and add a little bit to your program regularly. Once exercise is part of your everyday regimen, it becomes much easier to accomplish. It really doesn’t take a lot of time; a little bit every day adds up.

You’re also a pilot with the Tiger Squadron; how did you become involved with that group?

My father was a pilot for Western Airlines and Delta when I was growing up, so I guess there was a little bit of flying in my blood. I started to learn how to fly in 2007 and bought a Cessna 182 in 2008. I became partners in a slightly larger plane after that and my partner was interested in learning about formation flying. It’s been a great experience. When we’re flying together it takes 100% concentration to perform safely. The level of expertise and camaraderie amongst our Squadron is truly phenomenal.
Advancing Toward a Cure

18 things you need to know about Torrance Memorial’s cancer care today and into the future.

Very little about cancer can be considered positive. It’s a frightening diagnosis and a challenging journey to recovery. Torrance Memorial Hunt Cancer Institute is committed to providing the best cancer care in the South Bay. And with the new alliance with Cedars-Sinai, patients will have more access to cutting-edge technologies and clinical trials, just for starters. In a word, the partnership is changing everything. Here are just a few of the reasons Torrance Memorial is the first step on the road to recovery.

Written by Michelle Abt, Brie Cadman, Colleen Farrell, Carole Jakucs, Peg Moline, Nancy Sokoler Steiner, Laura Roe Stevens, Laura Watts

The Hunt Cancer Center will have one focus: to serve the patient. The Center will consolidate many of Torrance Memorial’s existing cancer treatment services—the new building, due to open in September 2019, will house nurse navigators, genetic counseling services, the Torrance Memorial team of oncology experts as well as Cedar-Sinai specialists and clinical research trials with Cedars-Sinai. Even the parking (this is Los Angeles after all) has been designed with cancer patients and their support teams in mind. “We wanted a comfortable environment,” says Heidi Assigal, vice president of business and operations for Torrance Memorial Health System. “The environment will be relaxed and open—yet private and efficient—allowing patients to feel comfortable where they really will be spending a lot of time.” This starts with the 32 chemotherapy infusion service areas. “They’ll be quiet, with internet and TV and plenty of room, while still giving staff a good visual connection and helping patients not feel shut off. I think we struck a good balance in the new center.” The key, says Assigal, will be the care clusters—groups of four so each nurse can focus on their group and patients can feel that personal attention. Even the exam rooms reflect the reality of treating cancer patients. “Some really important conversations take place there,” she says. We tried to think of everything.”
Doctors Leading the Fight

David Chan, MD, director of breast cancer clinical research for Torrance Memorial Physician Network, is heading up a team whose work could change how cancer is treated. “We are currently working on a clinical trial using immunotherapy that may lead to new treatment avenues for certain types of breast cancers,” says Chan. “Torrance Memorial is one of only five centers in North America selected for this potentially groundbreaking study.”

“David Chan is a rare combination of leading cancer researcher and empathetic, patient-oriented physician,” says Heidi Assigal. Chan, who will join several oncologists in the Hunt Cancer Institute, also literally wrote the book on breast cancer—and has authored 17 studies on breast cancer. Good hands, indeed.

New Partnership with Cedars-Sinai

Earlier this year Torrance Memorial announced a formal affiliation with Cedars-Sinai, one of the nation’s foremost academic health systems. The goal of this new affiliation is to bring the resources and expertise of Cedars-Sinai’s clinical specialties and programs to the South Bay. From oncology to neuroscience to advanced medical research and clinical trials, this partnership will expand our community’s access to the best in medical care.

In certain specialties—including all types of cancer—Cedars-Sinai physicians will partner with Torrance Memorial physician leaders to help our patients access the latest clinical trials, new treatments and advanced technology.

As our relationship with Cedars-Sinai continues to grow, we fully expect the benefits and opportunities for our patients to expand.

“At Torrance Memorial, we already have very high quality and patient experience ratings, new facilities and equipment and a great staff,” says CEO Craig Leach. “The addition of the Cedars-Sinai relationship will only strengthen our foundation as the South Bay’s premier hospital system.”

On-Site Genetic Counselor

Imagine learning you carry a gene mutation that puts you at higher risk of cancer or that may explain why you developed cancer. It would potentially impact not only your health situation but also those of your family members. It’s not the kind of news you’d want to receive or discuss over the phone.

That’s why the Hunt Cancer Institute has a genetic counselor on-site. An expert in both genetics and counseling, Lauren Rudichuk, MS, CGC, is right where patients need her to provide medical guidance and emotional support. “Genetic counseling is a key component of multidisciplinary care for cancer,” says Rudichuk. “And this can be difficult information for people to hear and absorb. Having someone to connect with in person can make a big difference.”
5 Nurse Navigators

Getting a diagnosis of cancer is devastating enough. But as anyone who has tackled cancer knows, it’s just the beginning. The journey toward treatment can be almost as overwhelming as the disease itself.

This is where the nurse navigator program at Torrance Memorial’s Hunt Cancer Institute steps in. Nurse navigators guide patients along the path to recovery by helping them make informed medical decisions, assisting with scheduling multiple doctors’ appointments and tests, making sure they stay on track with their treatment plans, running interference on insurance issues and offering emotional support. All this is at no additional charge to patients.

The ultimate success for a patient, of course, is survival. And Torrance Memorial is uniquely equipped to lead a patient through that phase as well. Cancer survivorship coordinator Miriam Sleven, RN, MS, OCN segues patients as they complete treatment and move forward with their lives. “One of my most important roles is as a coach,” Sleven says. “I help survivors practice talking to their doctors and asking questions, so they will get the answers they need.”

Bottom line: The program is a shining beacon of guidance and hope. “We help patients not fall between the cracks,” says nurse navigator Wendy Nuval Bacerra, RN.

6 Tumor Board

One of Torrance Memorial’s cornerstones, the Tumor Board brings a crucial, multidisciplinary approach to all types of cancers. Nurse navigators, surgeons, pathologists, oncologists, radiologists and more meet weekly to address prevention, early detection, diagnosis, treatment plans and survivorship. All these experts collaborate on the best treatment plan for every stage and every possibility.

“Patients see and appreciate how comprehensive this approach is,” says Andrew Horodner, MD, chairman of Torrance Memorial’s Tumor Board, oncologist and hematologist with Torrance Memorial Physician Network. “We spend as much time as needed on each case, and our team is well coordinated and collegial. We look at everything involved, from cellular, genetic and pathology characteristics to imaging, to ensure we provide a personalized treatment plan for each and every patient.”
Vital Research

Cancer Clinical Trials

A robust clinical trial program and a growing partnership with Cedars-Sinai means the physicians at Torrance Memorial are advancing the field of cancer care—and giving patients access to some of the most promising cancer treatments years before they become available to the public.

Torrance Memorial is one of only five medical centers in North America that is participating in the latest research to learn more about the role of androgen receptors in breast cancer. And the hospital is also participating in clinical trials to explore how different lung cancer treatments can be combined to increase effectiveness and improve patients’ quality of life.

“We plan to leverage our relationship with Cedars-Sinai to expand our clinical trial offerings while providing the best cancer care for our patients,” said Hugo Hool, MD, chairman of Torrance Memorial’s oncology committee, director of the Hunt Cancer Institute and oncologist and hematologist at the Torrance Memorial Physician Network.

8 TrueBeam Radiation Therapy

The very word “radiation” can be terrifying. It also can be an important treatment tool. The good news: Torrance Memorial is utilizing the latest in radiation therapy, TrueBeam, a state-of-the-art linear accelerator that helps zero in on tumors while sparing normal tissue.

“The TrueBeam has two great strengths: high precision and flexibility,” notes Thyra Endicott, MD, a radiation oncologist at the Hunt Cancer Institute. “It can be used for treating tiny tumors with very tight dose margins and highly exact setup, and it can be used to treat broader areas if the cancer has already spread to adjacent lymph nodes.”

Qinan Bao, the lead physicist working with TrueBeam, notes that it enables better treatment by targeting the tumor volume more precisely. As a result, it “gives a smaller dose to the critical organs, so the patient may experience fewer side effects.”

And because normal tissue is less likely to be damaged, higher doses of radiation can be delivered. If a patient is a good candidate for the therapy, a team of experts will develop the best course of treatment. “It’s a wonderful machine,” Endicott says, “but the people behind it are the most important variable.”
Cutting-Edge Technology

9 3-D Breast Imaging

The battle against breast cancer continues at Torrance Memorial Medical Center, and one of the best weapons today is 3-D mammography. Board-certified radiologist Patricia Sacks, MD, is medical director of the Polak Breast Diagnostic Center. “The center has always been at the cutting edge of diagnosis,” Sacks says. “For instance, our 3-D mammography is now 41% more accurate, which reduces the number of callbacks we have to do by at least 40%; those callbacks make women really nervous.”

A conventional mammogram creates a two-dimensional image of the breast from two X-ray images of each breast. Several studies have found that 3-D mammograms find more cancers than traditional 2-D mammograms and also reduce the number of false positives. And a three-year analysis published by JAMA Oncology found the benefits last over time. While 3-D imaging may soon be the standard of care, only Torrance Memorial offers it in all five of its breast centers.

For information on mammography or any of the other services offered at the Polak Breast Diagnostic Center, please call 310-517-4709.

Minimally Invasive Diagnostics

10 Bronchoscopy

Lung cancer is more common than you think, causing more deaths from cancer than breast, prostate and colon cancer combined. While smokers have a high risk of developing lung cancer, nonsmokers can get it too.

Diagnosing lung cancer early and finding tumors when they’re still small can help improve patient outcomes, says John T. Abe, MD, a physician at Torrance Memorial Physician Network, board-certified in pulmonary and critical care medicine.

There are different types of bronchoscopy; one of the latest is electromagnetic navigation bronchoscopy (ENB), says Abe. This cutting-edge diagnostic tool, can biopsy areas of the lungs that previously could only be biopsied by performing invasive surgery and opening a patient’s chest.

“Another important diagnostic tool we use is endobronchial ultrasound,” Abe adds, “which allows us to sample mediastinal lymph nodes without surgery and assists in appropriately assigning a stage to patients with lung cancer.” In addition, a lung CT scan can find tumors early, also without invasive surgery. “We treat patients as an interdisciplinary team, calling on our experts in pulmonary medicine, critical care, cardiothoracic surgery, oncology and radiation oncology to provide the best treatment for each.”

For questions about CT lung scans and other tests, call 310-517-4665.
11 Liquid Biopsies

A new type of biopsy is under investigation at Torrance Memorial, and it may change the way we detect and treat cancer.

The new method is known as a liquid biopsy and it is much less invasive than a standard biopsy, which can require surgery. Instead, it analyzes DNA or other genetic material produced from tumor cells circulating in the blood.

In partnership with liquid biopsy companies, three clinical trials are currently underway at the Hunt Cancer Institute. A national multicenter feasibility trial is developing a DNA/RNA blood test to diagnose breast cancer in its early stages. Another trial aims to better diagnose lung cancer so patients will need fewer scans and biopsies.

Detection is just one of the hopes for liquid biopsies. A third clinical trial is identifying specific genetic markers or mutations that can help physicians choose the most appropriate course of care. Though all studies are in the development phase, the promise of liquid biopsies is great, and Torrance Memorial is at the forefront of this exciting technology.

12 Team Collaboration

Sometimes one plus one equals three. That’s what thoracic surgeon Clark Fuller, MD, says of the partnership between Torrance Memorial and Cedars-Sinai. “It’s a blending that truly benefits patients,” he explains.

Take Fuller himself. A full-time faculty member at Cedars-Sinai, his current collaboration with Torrance Memorial and Cedars-Sinai was a good model for how the two teams could work together. His specialty is lung surgery, which traditionally requires a large incision—but the minimally invasive techniques he pioneered reduce both the incision and the recovery time. Hospital stays decrease from an average of nine days to two, and recovery times are measured in weeks not months. Only 40% of thoracic surgery performed in the United States is minimally invasive, Fuller says, and Cedars-Sinai is “the epicenter of that certainly in the Western hemisphere, if not the world.”

World-class care relies on an interdisciplinary approach, bringing surgeons, oncologists and others together to take on and defeat cancer. Torrance Memorial, Cedars-Sinai and doctors like Fuller will take that teamwork to new heights.

13 Cancer Support Groups

“The first thing people say [after diagnosis] is ‘Why me?’” says Kristel Quinto, the new psychosocial coordinator of oncology services at Torrance Memorial. She’s charged with starting new groups to support the existing women’s, men’s, head and neck, lung cancer, breast reconstruction and mastectomy groups.

“When you’re in a peer support group, you don’t feel so alone,” Quinto asserts. “You might still feel overwhelmed, but there’s nothing like knowing you can talk to people going through the same thing. The groups provide a safe environment where everyone embraces you with love and kindness.”

Quinto says the gatherings are very positive and are led by expert facilitators—some of whom are cancer survivors themselves—who have a special passion for advocating and supporting the members. “Our goal as a team is to make sure that our patients and their families receive a balance of support in achieving physical, emotional, social and spiritual wellness for better health outcomes.” All the groups deal with a wide variety of types of cancer.

For more, search support groups at TorranceMemorial.org
Teaming Up to Beat Breast Cancer

Torrance Memorial’s entire cancer care team—which includes male and female breast cancer specialists—is committed to delivering leading-edge breast cancer care in a warm, compassionate and supportive environment. But some women who have breast cancer may feel more comfortable or supported discussing certain health issues with a female health care provider.

That’s why our breast cancer patients have the option to choose female health care providers—including a radiologist, medical oncologist, radiation oncologist, breast cancer surgeon, plastic reconstructive surgeon and nurse navigator—for all aspects of their breast cancer care.

“A female breast cancer patient may feel more comfortable expressing concerns or talking about sensitive issues with a female health care provider,” said Vanessa Dickey, MD, an oncology hematology specialist at Torrance Memorial Physician Network. “If we can cut through that embarrassment, it will make the patient feel more at ease and give them one less thing to worry about.”

The da Vinci Robot

R2-D2 in the operating room? Well, almost. Under the watchful eye—and hands—of skilled surgeons, major operations become minimally invasive procedures thanks to a robot. The da Vinci Surgical System offers surgeons increased precision compared to other types of surgery, and patients experience less pain, decreased blood loss and shorter recuperation time.

Torrance Memorial began using the system in 2006 and has a skilled robotic surgery team led by Hoa Van, RN, BSN. Robotic surgery greatly improves the experience of cancer patients, says surgeon Ramin Mirhashemi, MD.

“"We are at the cutting edge at Torrance Memorial Medical Center, there is no doubt in my mind," he says.
**17 Cancer Survivors Day**

“It’s a celebration of survivors and their loved ones, an acknowledgement of the team that got them through. It’s a celebration of success,” Miriam E. Sleven, RN, MS, OCN enthuses about National Cancer Survivors Day at Torrance Memorial, observed annually with a dinner, a banner to sign and speakers who include doctors and patients telling their stories. “Dinner is served by our Luminaries and Novas volunteers. One year we had a patient who juggled while he spoke; another we had a jokologist,” Sleven continues. “From my perspective it’s a great, uplifting event, and I know the patients, families and staff who attend feel the same. It’s a beautiful celebration.”

**16 Woman to Woman Program**

Since 1993 the Woman to Woman Image Enhancement program has helped hundreds of female cancer patients feel attractive. Losing hair due to cancer treatment can trigger depression. This free service, which provides assistance with scarves, hats, wig-liners and other resources, bolsters women’s confidence, says Miriam Sleven, RN, MS, OCN, cancer survivorship coordinator at Torrance Memorial’s Cancer Resource Center. For an appointment, please call 310-517-4660.

**There’s No Place Like Home: Torrance Memorial Home Health**

Torrance Memorial has a reputation as an excellent hospital. But the medical center provides top-notch services beyond its walls. Case in point: its award-winning home care-providing agency. The truth is, I don’t know how we would have made it through this past year without Torrance Memorial Home Health. My 86-year-old dad, Thomas Farrell, has been participating in a clinical trial for acute myeloid leukemia—a disease with a very dire prognosis at his age. The trial put him in remission, but he has needed twice weekly blood draws to monitor his counts and home hydration to help him recover from chemotherapy treatments.

This award-winning department, headed by Theresa Ferry, RN, BSN, MBA, CHCA, supplies nurses and other staff who make visits to patients’ homes to provide services such as blood draws and infusions. “We’re focused on a high bar for quality,” Ferry says.

The amazing nurses also helped us organize his medications. Their skill, compassion and professionalism helped us get through a few really rough patches. They truly are angels from heaven. •
Steve Baker is a creature of habit: bedtime at 10 p.m., morning alarm at 6 a.m. and in the shower by 6:15. That's why when he was awake and agitated at 5:15 on the morning of February 22, his wife, Namele, knew something wasn't right. When she saw that the left side of his face looked weaker than the right, she immediately suspected he'd had a stroke.

Fortunately Namele didn't waste time. She called 911, told the dispatcher her husband was in their bedroom and opened the doors to the house so the paramedics could come in. She then went back to their bedroom to wait with Steve. Healthy and active at 60, Steve found it inconceivable that he could be having a stroke, and he was convinced he would be back home from the hospital in time to go to his human resources job at the Port of Los Angeles.

But Steve didn't go to work. Instead he was rushed to Torrance Memorial Medical Center's emergency department, where he was diagnosed with a massive stroke, the type that can cause lifelong disabilities. To prevent further catastrophic damage, Steve needed a thrombectomy, a highly specialized catheter-based procedure to remove the clot.

He underwent the procedure shortly after arriving at the hospital and is now expected to make a full recovery. The odds were in Steve's favor that day thanks to two factors: 1) Namele got him help right away, and 2) he had access to highly-specialized care.

When minutes count, proximity matters

When someone has a stroke, every second counts. The Los Angeles County Emergency Medical Services Agency has developed a Comprehensive Stroke System to ensure patients with acute stroke are taken to the closest appropriate facility. Torrance Memorial was recently recognized by the Los Angeles County EMS as a designated Comprehensive Stroke Center, further recognition of Torrance Memorial's ongoing commitment to the expansion of its stroke program—already one of the most comprehensive in the South Bay area. The designation means that emergency services are directed to take acute-stroke patients directly to Torrance Memorial.
Additionally, to guarantee round-the-clock stroke coverage for the South Bay, Torrance Memorial has partnered with Cedars-Sinai to develop a telestroke program that offers 24/7 access to stroke specialists. The system uses teleconferencing technology to allow neurologists at Cedars to diagnose patients at Torrance Memorial’s emergency department.

This 24-hour coverage is critical to saving lives and protecting quality of life. “When patients are having a stroke, minutes matter. The telestroke program is designed to get patients diagnosed and treated as quickly as possible without having to be transported to another hospital,” says Shlee Song, MD, associate director of the Cedars-Sinai department of neurology stroke program, who was on-site at Torrance Memorial when Steve arrived. Steve was diagnosed via telestroke by a neurologist and stroke specialist at Cedars-Sinai.

**LIFE-SAVING THROMBECTOMY**

The telestroke system saved Steve's doctors precious minutes, but there was still no time to spare. A highly specialized thrombectomy procedure was needed immediately before his blood clot could cause more damage. Thrombectomy is a minimally invasive procedure during which a catheter is guided up through an artery in the leg and into the brain. Once inside the brain, the clot is removed using a specialized clot retrieval device.

Thrombectomies are appropriate for patients who, like Steve, have a large clot in a large vessel. These are often the types of stroke that trigger the worst disabilities or death. Tissue plasminogen activator—more commonly known as tPA—is effective at treating smaller clots, but not always as helpful for strokes so large. Steve was also outside the 4½-hour safety window after the onset of stroke for tPA to be administered. So without thrombectomy the best a patient like Steve could hope for in the past was recovery and rehab.

Stroke experts estimate that 20% or more of severe stroke patients should receive thrombectomies, but in some parts of the country as few as 2% receive it. This is primarily due to a lack of resources and training to perform the procedure. Torrance Memorial’s highly trained staff was first in the South Bay to begin performing thrombectomy years ago and expanded the program further in 2015 with purchase of a biplane imaging suite in the recently built Lundquist Tower.

Biplane imaging is the most advanced interventional medical imaging technology available. The digital X-ray technology uses two mounted rotating cameras to take simultaneous pictures and form a 3-D portrait for doctors to study onscreen. Biplane imaging also allows doctors create a “roadmap” for reaching and treating the precise location of clots.

Nanele was given minutes to make a decision about the thrombectomy after doctors presented the risks: A piece of the clot could break off and cause more damage to the brain, or Steve could experience further bleeding at the clot site. But her son Alex was blunt: “Dad would not want to live without a good quality of life. Mom, we need to go for it.” And so they did. Nanele and Alex were taken to the Torrance Memorial waiting room where Richard Krauthamer, MD, the radiologist who performed the procedure, and Song came out to tell them the surgery had been a success.

Krauthamer even showed Nanele an image of the clot. She was surprised. “It didn’t look that big,” she says. “Amazing that something so small could cause that much damage.”

Nanele still remembers what Song told her as they were taking Steve to the ICU after his procedure: “Your husband’s result is exactly why we work so hard to prepare and train for stroke emergencies. This makes it all worthwhile.”

Steve is now on blood-thinning medication to ensure he doesn’t experience another stroke. Otherwise his recovery has been remarkable. Even before he was discharged, the hospital’s physical therapy team had determined that he didn’t need the stroke recovery and follow-up care services available to Torrance Memorial stroke patients.

The Bakers are busy appreciating each day. They spend time with their son and new daughter-in-law. Steve has already spent time back at work, and they are planning a trip to France in September. Nanele wants to make sure that everyone knows their story. “I want people to know that there is hope [after a stroke],” she says.
Are you walking yet? No, we mean really brisk walking—for fitness, bone strength, nature therapy, weight loss. Walking can also boost your energy and mood and help control blood sugar levels, and the mindful, meditative quality can reduce stress in minutes.

The pure health benefits of walking 45 minutes a day—lower blood pressure, stronger heart, reduced heart disease—make it well worth the time. Even better, you don’t need any equipment—just a good pair of walking shoes. And it’s great for newbies and exercise devotees alike.

All that said, we’re not talking about a slow stroll. For the biggest fitness bang, walking should be strenuous, which might mean power-hiking hills and stairs, even adding a slight jog as you become stronger. If you’re a new parent, strap on that baby for some added work. (Never use ankle or wrist weights, as they can cause joint injury.)

Walking smart will also help you avoid injuries and the kind of soreness that can be a deterrent to adopting a regular routine. Our progressive walking plan will take the uninitiated from beginning through about seven months and beyond. Feel free to switch days; for instance if you’d rather do your long walk or hike on Sunday, go for it.

Here’s how to make walking, the perfect exercise even better.
Walk this Way

Your seven-month progressive walking workout
The South Bay is home to a wide variety of innovative and interesting people. The newest Pulse department, Our Community VIPs, celebrates some of them. This issue: The Kuhr boys skateboard for schools; a beloved Torrance Memorial nurse looks back at service that began 70 years ago; a cancer survivor creates a business.

Written by NANCY STOKLER STEINER
He was only a kindergartner when Sebastian Kuhr learned about a jog-a-thon school fundraiser. But Sebastian loved skateboarding, not running. And he knew his school could use extra funds. So he suggested a similar effort featuring his favorite sport.

With some assistance from his family, Sebastian launched SK8 for the Schools in 2006. The event, which raised $400, has grown in size and impact each successive year. To date it has raised more than $50,000 for Hermosa View and Hermosa Valley schools.

“I love the sense of giving back to the community and helping my school become even better than it was when I was there,” says Sebastian, now an incoming high school senior. His efforts include soliciting donations of money, products and refreshments, and of course demonstrating his skateboarding skills.

Sebastian was named the 2013 Young Emerging Leader by the Hermosa Beach City Council and Leadership Hermosa organization. In 2014 Southbay magazine named him one of the ‘Top Teens to Watch.’ He’s also received special recognition awards from California state senator Ben Allen and state assembly members David Hadley and Al Muratsuchi.

In addition to skateboarding, Sebastian loves surfing and snowboarding. According to his mother, Samantha, Sebastian was the first person to snowboard down Pier Avenue at Hermosa Beach’s SnowFest event in 2010. “He personifies the Hermosa Beach lifestyle,” she says.

Community service seems to run in the family. Sebastian’s younger brother, Julian, has co-chaired SK8 for the Schools for the past four years and will take over when Sebastian leaves for college next fall. (He is looking for a new co-chair.) After their mom was diagnosed with breast cancer three years ago, the brothers began skating in pink to raise awareness for breast cancer and to remind women to get annual screenings.
Fond Recollections

When Anne Hayward began her 30-year career at Torrance Memorial Medical Center in 1948, Harry S. Truman occupied the White House, gasoline cost 16 cents per gallon and the newly expanded Jared Sidney Torrance Memorial Hospital located on Engracia Avenue boasted 90 beds.

“There were five or six doctors on staff,” recalls Hayward who proceeded to name the physicians. She worked as a post-surgical nurse on the 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. graveyard shift, initially on weekends and later on weeknights.

Lights were kept low at nights to promote sleeping. “It was dark,” she says. “I had to walk down the hall with a flashlight.”

Particularly on the night shift, nurses had to take on multiple roles. “We had to work the switchboard at night—there was no one else to answer the phones.” She says that nurses did a greater variety of tasks back then, compared to the specialization of roles that nurses seem to have today, and that tasks were more manual.

“Now there’s a system that rings when IV medication runs out. We had to keep watch on that ourselves.”

Hayward, the seventh of 12 children, was born in Pueblo, Colorado. She attended Seton School of Nursing in Colorado Springs. After graduating in 1941 she set out for California with two fellow nurses and initially worked at Cedars of Lebanon (now Cedars-Sinai Medical Center). “I saw Bing Crosby there,” she says, “and I took care of Rita Hayworth.”

Hayward and her husband of 63 years moved to Torrance in 1946. She began working at the hospital in 1948 and retired in 1979—one year after the East Wing was built.

Despite all the changes she has seen, one thing has remained consistent: Torrance Memorial’s exceptional patient care. Hayward says she worked with wonderful doctors and continues to be treated by wonderful doctors today. She delivered both daughters at the original Torrance facility, underwent orthopedic surgery on her ankle (at the age of 94!) and has high praise for her primary care physician, William E. Kim, MD.

With her daughters, three grandchildren and five great grandchildren, Hayward remains active today. She makes weekly trips to the hairdresser and nail salon, attends mass each Sunday and is an avid Dodger fan.

Her timeless advice to today’s nurses: “Do your best. Think of the patient.”

Top: Anne Hayward today.
Above and at right: Hayward as a nurse in the 1940s and 1950s.
When Iris Lee Knell was undergoing treatment for breast cancer in 2010, she found that enhancing her appearance made her feel better. Krell, a psychotherapist and school counselor, wanted to remain positive for her three daughters and husband. A lover of jewelry and clothes, she got dressed each day, donning a turban and wearing scarves and jewelry.

“Feeling put-together lifted my spirits,” she says. “I wondered if I could help evoke that feeling in other women experiencing the side effects of chemotherapy.”

After giving some of her accessories to a friend whose mother was being treated for cancer, Krell hatched the idea of distributing such care packages on a larger scale. She made and brought kits to the Cancer Support Community in Redondo Beach and received an enthusiastic response.

Demand for the packages continued to grow and Krell formed a nonprofit, Chemocessories, to formalize the endeavor. Each coordinated set includes a turban, scarf, necklace, bracelet and earrings.

Today the sets are available at Torrance Memorial Medical Center (in the HealthLinks Resource Center), the Cancer Support Community and Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. Patients around the country can request a set—even specifying their preferred color—via Chemocessories’ website, chemocessories.org. Last year the organization distributed 2,284 sets.

Recipients appreciate the effort. “Such a blessing and kindness! It made me smile on a tough day,” wrote one recipient to Chemocessories. Another wrote: “I’m always a very positive person, but I’ve been sooooo tired lately ... and this was a super pick-me-up.”

The project has become a true community endeavor. Members of the Neptunian Woman’s Club of Manhattan Beach sew turbans and assemble sets. Patterson Cleaners provides complimentary dry cleaning of donated scarves, and Manhattan Repro donates printing. Congregation Tikvat Jacob holds annual assembling sessions (see the Chemocessories website to volunteer August 19 or 20). Donations of funds or items are always welcome and Krell, who operates the charity in a small office space, would love to find larger donated space where more community members can volunteer.

“Our goal,” Krell says, “is to provide some bright light in a dark time and help women smile.” •
Much-Needed Help for the Homeless

A new liaison at Harbor Interfaith Services helps the most vulnerable patients at their most vulnerable times.

Written by MARY JANE HORTON

According to the South Bay Coalition to End Homelessness, there are more than 4,200 people experiencing homelessness in the South Bay. Often homeless people live on the street and stay unnoticed, but a hospital stay can be an opportune time to get them the help they might need—including permanent shelter.

To that end, a new hospital liaison position has been created by Harbor Interfaith Services, a nonprofit organization tasked with helping the homeless and working poor to achieve self-sufficiency by providing support services that include shelter, traditional housing, food, job placement, advocacy, childcare, education and life-skills training.

“We recently received funding for this new position,” explains Shari Weaver, director of the coordinated entry system for homeless families, adults and youth. “The liaison works with Torrance Memorial to identify patients experiencing homelessness when they come into the hospital—an opportune time to provide support including shelter.”
five South Bay area hospitals (including Torrance Memorial Medical Center). The liaison will work with any homeless patient coming to the hospital or emergency room.”

This new program has been up and running since last October, and according to Weaver it already has quite a bit of success to show. “More than 118 people have been referred from hospitals,” she says. “Twenty-two people have been connected with interim housing for recuperative care; two have been referred to detox; six veterans were linked with appropriate programs; five disabled people were helped to get social security disability; 10 people were helped to obtain permanent housing; and 45 people were connected with community services.”

HOW IT WORKS
Jessica Bailey, regional hospital liaison for the coordinated entry system, explains how her job works. “The program entails teaching social workers, nurses and all of the people who work in inpatient and outpatient areas of the hospital about resources in the community for homeless people. I will receive a call from one of the five hospitals we work with when they have a homeless person admitted into the ED (emergency department). The first thing I do is to search our databases to see if the person has been reached out to in the past.”

Then Bailey says she goes to the hospital to complete an assessment. As Weaver notes, “Sometimes this can get complicated because the same patient may visit various hospitals addressing continuity of care.” Bailey’s assessment will address the situation after a person has been admitted to the hospital. Which can also be tricky: “Sometimes I get there, and the person is already gone,” she notes.

“Some homeless people will only come to the hospital if they feel that it is a life-or-death situation. They often don’t want to go to the hospital until they can’t even walk. This is an important moment for them, because once they come to the hospital sometimes they make the decision to get permanent help.”

Weaver and Bailey describe this time period as a specific moment that can serve as an on-ramp for help for long-term or newly homeless people. “It is the goal to find permanent, long-term housing but we also do quite a bit in between,” says Bailey. “If it is a youth, we will find a youth organization to serve them—or veteran resources for a veteran. If a person wants to know where to take a shower, we can direct them. And we can help them find a food pantry if they need food.”

MEDICAL HELP BEYOND THE ED
Sometimes homeless people with complicated medical issues who are admitted to the hospital need specific care when they are discharged. “Housing for Health is a resource that we have for people with complex health issues,” explains Weaver. “Often people go in and out of the ED, and this program gives them medical help and wraparound care.”

And then there are the people who need even more help to recuperate when they leave the hospital—not an easy task if you are homeless. “We offer recuperative care resources for those people who can’t be discharged to the street and need some extra time and help to recuperate. This program is funded by the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services,” says Weaver.

“Our liaison program is working so well that I would love to see it expanded to more hospitals,” says Bailey. “It is so encouraging to me; I love the work I am doing, and I get to see a smile on people’s faces when they move into new housing. We know that sometimes a hospital visit comes with a decision to get help and find permanent housing, so this is a great time to get people the help that they need.”
Open Mind, Open Heart

Experience and Teamwork turn Heart Failure into Success

Written by MICHELLE ABT / Photographed by PETER COOPER

“Their goal was to save the heart, and they absolutely did.”
Jessie Savolt of Torrance was only 36 when she developed acute mitral valve regurgitation, a condition that occurs when the mitral valve doesn’t close properly and allows blood to leak backward into the heart. Savolt had become extremely sick very quickly with troubling symptoms that included extreme fatigue and shortness of breath. After being diagnosed she underwent two consecutive mitral valve replacements—one mechanical and one tissue.

But even after the valve replacements, Savolt continued to suffer from heart disease complications. She lived with ever-worsening heart failure for nearly 20 more years before finally, at age 55, receiving the heart transplant that saved her life—a transplant that was facilitated through a unique partnership between Torrance Memorial and Cedars-Sinai medical centers.

MISSING OUT ON LIFE

Savolt described her journey through the various stages of heart failure as exhausting. Happily married, a mother and a grandmother, Savolt enjoyed her family. However, her illness meant that she couldn’t fully participate in many important family milestones. She also had to give up her job as a computer analyst at Northrop Grumman. “I missed an awful lot,” she says.

Throughout most of her illness Savolt was under the care of the team at the Torrance Memorial heart failure program. The group included cardiologists Benjamin Rosin, MD, Erol Kosar, MD, and Mark Lurie, MD, as well as nurse practitioner and program manager Roxanna Balter, RN.

“That team was amazing,” shares Savolt. “They were incredibly thorough, and they really cared about what happened to me. They became like family.”

And that feeling is mutual. Balter remembers Savolt well. “Jessie was always upbeat and refused to let her illness get her down. She was pretty remarkable,” she says.

Still, as time went on it became increasingly clear that Savolt’s best option was to get a heart transplant. She was added to the heart transplant list at a local medical center, but after a two-year wait her overall health was deteriorating and her situation was becoming more complicated.

THE JOURNEY TOWARD TRANSPLANT

Given these issues, Savolt needed to go to a transplant center that could handle a very complex case. That’s when Lurie decided to send Savolt to the Smidt Heart Institute at Cedars-Sinai—a decision that saved her life.

A top-notch academic medical center with the largest heart transplant program in the United States, Cedars-Sinai was uniquely prepared to care for Savolt. And the close working relationship between the Torrance Memorial and Cedars-Sinai specialists facilitated the transfer of her care to the Smidt Heart Institute transplant program. The transition was seamless and quick, and the Torrance team was in touch the whole time.

Savolt was put on the transplant list at the Smidt Heart Institute on August 19, 2015, and received her call just three weeks later on September 5. Her reaction was total shock. “I was running around the house not knowing what to do first. After waiting for so long, I couldn’t believe this was actually happening,” she says.

The surgery went extremely well, but her story doesn’t stop there. She went into cardiac arrest twice while at Cedars-Sinai, and the second time the surgeons performed an open-heart procedure right in her room to stabilize her before they brought her to the operating room. “Their goal was to save the heart, and they absolutely did. That heart is doing just great, thank you very much!” Savolt says.

A TEAM WITH HEART

She can’t say enough about the Smidt Heart Institute team. They saved her life—several times—and without their expertise and experience she would not have made it through the transplant and her subsequent complications. She is also extremely grateful to Mark Lurie and his team at Torrance Memorial. Without them she probably would not have gone to the Smidt Heart Institute for her transplant care.

In 2016 Savolt and her husband renewed their wedding vows in Hawaii. She is now a grandmother for the second time. She walks her three dogs, spends time with her family and just completed a Super Bowl 5K.

Savolt went back to Smidt last week for a routine checkup. Her heart is perfect, and she was able to see all of her doctors again. “They always stop by to say hello. There is a lot of hugging. I feel really, really lucky,” she says.

Talk to your primary care physician to make an appointment with a heart failure specialist.
AMBASSADOR WOMEN’S LUNCHEON

March 21, Shade Hotel, Redondo Beach

The women of Torrance Memorial Medical Center’s Ambassadors came together to network, socialize and enjoy a specially prepared menu from Shade Redondo’s Chef Aaron Brown at Sea Level Restaurant. Stephanie Franz, executive pastry chef at the Strand House, demonstrated making a flourless chocolate meringue torte.

Guest speaker Melanie Friedlander, MD, talked about Torrance Memorial’s affiliation with Cedars-Sinai, why she joined the Ambassadors program and her pride in being a physician at Torrance Memorial. Mary Matson, director of service excellence, shared the news of Torrance Memorial’s prestigious double rating of earning five stars overall from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid and four stars for the patient experience from the CMS Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) Survey.

Ambassadors financially support Torrance Memorial’s Burn Center, The Hunt Cancer Institute, Turpanjian Rehabilitation Services and health education. For membership information visit TorranceMemorial.org/Ambassadors.

Photographed by DEIDRE DAVIDSON
This year’s tournament was a sell-out success. Proceeds will support renovations to the Donald and Priscilla Hunt Tower, which is dedicated to women’s and pediatric services. Clear skies and a gentle breeze welcomed guests teeing off for 18 holes at Rolling Hills, which also recently underwent a facelift. The day kicked off with a putting contest and concluded with a cocktail reception, silent auction, dinner and awards banquet inside the brand new clubhouse. City National Bank once again sponsored the tournament. Don Douthwright served as the tournament chair. The honorary chair was the late George L. Graziadio Jr., who founded the tournament.

Photographed by DEIDRE DAVIDSON
HERITAGE SOCIETY ANNUAL LUNCHEON
June 12, Rolling Hills Country Club

Heritage Society members and donors who have made a contribution annually for 10 or more consecutive years were acknowledged and appreciated at the annual luncheon. Emergency room director Zachary Gray, MD, spoke to the attendees about Torrance Memorial’s advanced, high-tech treatment of stroke patients, how to recognize the signs of stroke and the importance of calling 911 to get immediate attention. The Heritage Society consists of individuals who have included a future gift to Torrance Memorial in their estate plan.

For more information about this and how to include Torrance Memorial in your estate plan, please contact Sandy VandenBerge, director of planned giving, at 310-784-4843 or sandy.vandenberge@tmcmc.com. You may also visit TorranceMemorial.org/PlannedGiving.

Photographed by DIEDRE DAVIDSON
HUNT CANCER CENTER GROUNDBREAKING
June 20, Torrance Memorial Medical Center

Family and friends of Donald and Priscilla Hunt, Torrance Memorial Foundation members, Auxiliary members, board members, major donors, medical staff, cancer survivors, dignitaries and construction representatives gathered to celebrate the Hunt Cancer Center groundbreaking on the Torrance Memorial campus. The 37,000-square-foot facility will consolidate and strengthen cancer care in the South Bay. The center is named for the late Donald Hunt, founder of South Bay-based Hunt Enterprises, and his wife, Priscilla. The Hunt family has pledged $34 million to Torrance Memorial—the second largest family gift in the more than 90-year history of the medical center. Hunt Cancer Center patients will benefit from Torrance Memorial’s recent affiliation with Cedars-Sinai through access to new and innovative clinical trials and a team of subspecialists who treat more than 60 types of cancer, from common to rare to complex. Completion is scheduled for September 2019.

Photographed by DEIDRE DAVIDSON & REMY HAYNES
VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION BRUNCH
April 14, Torrance Memorial Hoffman Health Conference Center

To kick off National Volunteer Week, managers served members of the Torrance Memorial Auxiliary. Hospital volunteers were recognized for their services, including clowning, playing the piano, acting as greeters, serving the information desks, knitting, sewing, pet visitation and escort services. Torrance Memorial is supported by more than 1,000 volunteers, including adults and high schoolers, Luminaries and Novas, Las Amigas, and Hospice and bereavement volunteers.

Dorothy Huntington, Nicole Duckworth-Herrera, Denise Navarette

YPPA BEER TASTING AND NETWORKING
April 19, Scholb Premium Ales, Torrance

At the Torrance Memorial’s Young Physicians and Professionals Alliance (YPPA) beer-tasting event, guests networked while enjoying handcrafted brews and pizza. Proceeds from the event support the renovation of Torrance Memorial’s pediatric and neonatal intensive care units. For more information on membership and upcoming events, visit TorranceMemorial.org/YPPA.

Photographed by STEVE CHIU
Blooming Amazing

The DAISY Award and The Reason Is You Award honor the best at Torrance Memorial.

Excellence is a given at Torrance Memorial Medical Center. And acknowledging it in our staff is important to our success. Two awards are especially appreciated because they invite comments from patients, families and colleagues. The DAISY Award was created in honor of J. Patrick Barnes who at 33 died of a rare autoimmune disease and whose family wanted to pay tribute to his devoted nurses. DAISY is an acronym created by Patrick’s wife, Tena, which stands for “diseases attacking the immune system.” Due to the success of the DAISY, The Reason Is You (RIY) Award was created by Torrance Memorial to recognize those in non-nursing roles who also have an impact on a patient’s experience.

We want to share some of the touching comments that accompanied both accolades, and recognize these wonderful staffers. These are from patients and family members, some of whom wish to remain anonymous.

Mary Boontung, RN, 7 East Medical Surgical Unit, DAISY Award

“When I was admitted to the hospital on Easter weekend I was scared. I was bleeding a lot, and I had four blood transfusions. It was my first time in the hospital and the first Easter away from my family. My nurse Mary was something special—her radiant and beautiful personality literally lit up my room. I was no longer afraid. I work here at Torrance Memorial, and my expectations for nurses is high—not just their knowledge but how they treat others. But Mary’s smile and personality were beyond anything I’d ever seen. My friend brought poke, and when we asked her to eat with us, she did! I didn’t miss my family as much because I felt I was with family. The experience I had was just AMAZING! Mary, The Reason Is You!!!”

—Anonymous
FINISH LINES

Infusion Center, RIY Group Award
“Every nurse in the infusion unit needs recognition for all they do. They are the most generous and caring group and work very well together. They are extremely talented in their field, very professional and always ready to help. No one is ever rude or short; always “up,” friendly and helpful. I always feel good when I enter the infusion center and better when treatment is over. It is always a pleasure to have the nurses take care of me with such efficiency. Thank you for all your hard work!”
—Patient Irene Donatoni

Winner of “The Reason is You” group award, the staff of the Infusion Center, where oncology patients receive chemotherapy.

Jacqueline Perez, RN, (Jacqui), Progressive Care Unit, RIY Individual Award
“Jacqui went above and beyond to always make sure my aunt felt important while she was a patient. There have been plenty of times when patients end up waiting a long time for what they need, but Jacqui made sure that we received everything in an incredibly fast manner. When I asked her how many patients she had, I was in shock to hear that she had 12! Never once did she let on that she was rushed or had too much on her plate to give everyone the best attention they needed. She is truly a shining light for our whole family in this dark time. Jacqui is genuinely such a kind soul, and we are so grateful for all the comfort she provided us.”
—Anonymous

“The Reason is You” Individual Award winner Jacqui Perez, RN, center, shown here with the staff of the Progressive Care Unit, which is an integral part of a patient’s journey toward recovery and return home.

Doug Erwin, RN, Lundquist Tower 6 West Medical Surgical Unit, DAISY Award
“Lead nurse Doug is fantastic! I came into emergency department with severe lower back and leg pain, numbness and excessive pain. I was admitted into the hospital for microsurgery. Doug could tell by the tone of my voice and the look on my face that I was nervous. He took the time to come over to me and introduce himself and started telling me about his surgery which was similar to mine and with the same doctor. He totally put my mind at ease and made my night before surgery so much better. He also came by the day of surgery and spent 15 to 20 minutes talking to me about surgery, what to expect after surgery, etc. I can’t begin to explain how comforting this all was. He is a fantastic nurse with outstanding bedside manner. Employee of the day, week, month, year—however you do it, he deserves it! Please let him know again how much I appreciated everything he did for me!”
—Anonymous

Doug Erwin, RN, a DAISY award winner who works in the 6 West Medical Surgical Unit.
More Experts in Matters of the Heart

THE LUNDQUIST LURIE CARDIOVASCULAR INSTITUTE IS PARTNERING WITH CEDARS-SINAI TO OFFER THE MOST ADVANCED CARDIAC CARE IN THE REGION. Our affiliation with Cedars-Sinai will offer even more cardiac expertise and innovation to our patients with additional access to specialists and research at Torrance Memorial from one of the world’s leading academic health systems. Learn more at TorranceMemorial.org/Cardio

Mark D. Lurie, MD, Michele A. Hamilton, MD, Roxanna Balter, NP, Simran Grewal, NP, Jaime D. Moriguchi, MD
A LEGACY OF CARE

Our lives are defined in many ways, some which reflect the level of our accomplishments. But for those with a deeper interest, few qualities endure longer than the expression of our love—whether it’s aimed toward our family, our community or the thousands of lives we help transform along the way. Your support and contributions, of any amount, help expert community care thrive for years to come.

Learn more about starting your own legacy at www.TMLegacy.org