

UC Patient Care WATCH

March 2008 - Alert #6
www.UCPatientCareWatch.org

Are UC's Medical Centers Really the "Best"?

U.S. News and World Report ranked the University of California Medical Centers among the "Best Hospitals" in 2007. But what does *U.S. News* take into account when they define "best"?

U.S. News DOES NOT take into account the conditions facing patient care staff:

UC workers believe that below-market wages, a high stress environment and increasing benefit costs cause UC to lose experienced workers and create the need to rely on temporary staff in certain departments.

We believe that all these factors can adversely affect the quality of patient care, including the possibility that they may, along with other factors, contribute to elevated complication rates.



"I am a Certified Phlebotomy Technician. I am proud that U.S. News & World Report rated UCLA third in the nation. There is amazing work done here. Unfortunately, due to uncompetitive wages, too many experienced phlebotomists leave for better pay to support their families. My department is not able to train enough employees to meet the turnover, which may result in patients getting stuck by needles more than is necessary. UC should do better, because this is not what is "best" for our patients."

- Aaron Magpali, Certified Phlebotomy Tech. III

U.S. News DOES NOT take into account complication rates:

An analysis of 2005 data¹ that UC submitted to the State indicates that for some lines of service that are associated with specialty areas where *U.S. News* found UC to be "among the best," complication rates² were higher than expected *and/or* higher than at peer institutions.³ For example, *U.S. News* ranks UCLA #4 in the nation for Urology, yet UCLA's Westwood hospital performed worse than or equal to at least one of its peer groups in 76% of Urology-related lines of service⁴.

It is time for UC's Medical Centers to stand up and really be the BEST — for workers *and* for our patients!

NEXT WEEK: ... More on UC's "Best" Hospital Awards ...

Brought to you by the 11,000 UC Patient Care Technical Employees at UC's Medical Centers represented by AFSCME Local 3299. AFSCME is currently in contract negotiations with UC. We are fighting for wages, benefits and working conditions which would close the gap with other medical centers. Please support us!

1-888-856-3299 X121 • www.UCPatientCareWatch.org • ucpatientcarewatch@gmail.com

No request to cease services or stop deliveries.

Footnotes: 1 - Based on an analysis of 2005 Office of Statewide Health Planning & Development (OSHPD) Inpatient Discharge Data Set commissioned by the union. UC attests under penalty of perjury that the data they submit to OSHPD is accurate and complete. Data has been risk-adjusted. 2 - Rates calculated as actual / expected. 3 - To account for variations of patient mix, a peer group was defined that included 16 private medical centers and 10 county medical centers that also operate academic programs on their campuses. A list of the peer group can be found at www.ucpatientcarewatch.org/peergroup. 4 - Of the 25 urology-related lines of service at UCLA Westwood in 2005, UCLA Westwood had a higher rate of complications than one or both of its peers in 7 lines of service, was equal to one or both of its peer groups in 12 lines of service and out-performed both peer groups in 6 lines of service.