

# UC Patient Care WATCH

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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.



*"UCSD brags that U.S. News & World Report rated our medical among the best in the nation. However, UCSD does not adequately respect its workers' years of service, so too many experienced workers leave. After 25 years of dedicated service, my department cannot attract Sterile Processing Technicians at the wages I make and every year we are forced to do more with less, which is not what is "best" for our patients."*

- Salvador Victorio, HA III, Sterile Processing

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

An analysis of 2005 data<sup>1</sup> 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 rates<sup>2</sup> were higher than expected *and/or* higher than at peer institutions.<sup>3</sup> For example, *U.S. News* ranks UCSD #30 in the nation for Gynecology, yet UCSD performed worse than or equal to at least one of its peer groups in 71% of Gynecology-related lines of service.<sup>4</sup>

**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!*

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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](http://www.ucpatientcarewatch.org/peergroup). 4 - Of the 14 gynecology-related lines of service at UCSD in 2005, UCSD had a higher rate of complications than one or both of its peers in 8 lines of service, was equal to one or both of its peer groups in 2 lines of service and out-performed both peer groups in 4 lines of service.