

18,000 OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT

The entire health system has about 10,000 staff members, 2,000 physicians, 1,500 residents, and 3,000 volunteers. “That’s about 18,000 people who connect to us,” Feinberg says. “Right up front, we hire people we believe are service minded.”

All potential employees, from nurses and physicians to those who perform billing and housekeeping services, are screened by a process developed by the Ritz Carlton. “Despite the nursing shortage, we get about 2,000 applications for every open nurse position here at UCLA. We can be very selective to get the absolute best, not only from a technical standpoint, but also from a compassionate standpoint,” he says.

They’ve created a series of DVDs that walk all employees through the proper way to interact with patients. They cover everything from how to enter a room to introduce yourself to how to inform a patient what your purpose is. Are you cleaning a room? Are you a physician asking permission to examine a patient? All employees are taught to communicate what is happening and to let the patients know what they can expect next.

“It’s in your job description and we monitor it. Every charge nurse is watching every nurse. Did they go in the room and properly introduce themselves? Did they go over personal questions,

UCLA HEALTH SYSTEM



The UCLA Health System is made up of four hospitals; Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center, Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center and Orthopaedic Hospital, Stewart and Lynda Resnick Neuropsychiatric Hospital, and Mattel Children’s Hospital UCLA. The system also includes a faculty practice group. The hospital system sees about a million and a half patients each year and receives approximately five of those patients each day via helicopter. They do more organ transplants than any other hospital in the United States and are ranked as the #3 hospital in the nation.

“We are thrilled that we’re ranked by US News and World Report as the number three hospital in the United States behind Johns Hopkins and the Mayo Clinic,” says Dr. David Feinberg, Chief Executive Officer of UCLA Hospital System and Associate Vice Chancellor of UCLA Health Sciences. “But most importantly, what makes us get up every day and every night to go to work is what our patients tell us. We are very, very patient centered.”

Individual units of the hospital typically rank in the 96th through 99th percentile on patient satisfaction surveys of 6,000 United States hospitals. “We’re a very large academic medical center, but we get very small when we connect with you and your family,” says Feinberg.

positioning questions, pain questions? Did they exit appropriately?” Feinberg says. “That goes all the way through the organization. I probably spend 40% of my time literally walking around and meeting with patients in their rooms. Everybody gets my business card and everybody gets my cell phone number.”

LEADING HIGH TECH

The newest hospital on the UCLA campus, opened in 2008, is likely the most technologically advanced hospital in the world. Every room of the 520-bed hospital can be converted into an intensive care unit. Advances include robot surgery for prostate, gynecological, and cardiovascular conditions. “We’ve also used a lot of robots to make rounds and to connect our doctors with patients when our doctors are not at our hospital,” says Feinberg.

Using robots developed by InTouch Technologies, physicians can make rounds with a laptop and a joystick. The doctor could be across the street, or on the other side of the world. Robots can enter and exit elevators and go pretty much anywhere they are needed. “Literally, the doctor drives the robot

on his own using the joystick. The robot comes into the room. It has the doctor’s face on the screen. It interacts with the patient. It can use the stethoscope. It can look in a patient’s ears. It can bring up the medical record and can talk to the patient about what they are seeing on the screen,” says Feinberg.

“From a patient standpoint, it’s phenomenal. After about two seconds the idea that they are talking to a robot vanishes and they are back, talking to their doctor,” he says. “It’s really about connectivity. One of our doctors here does it almost every night before he goes to bed ... He will go and make rounds before he goes to sleep and the families literally come out and say, ‘Oh, Doctor, are you going to come in to see us tonight? They’re talking to the robot as if it was him. Well, it is him.”

PATIENTS FIRST

“I believe that everything else will work itself out if we focus on taking great care of the patient,” says Feinberg. “We take care of our friends and neighbors.”

As an academic medical center, about half of UCLA hospital business is from the local community, but the extraordinary high tech measures also mean they are



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“OUR ENTIRE STRATEGY IS BUILT AROUND TAKING GREAT CARE OF PATIENTS.”

the hospital for much of the western United States and, in some cases, the world. “There is nobody else doing what we do and that’s about half of our business,” says Feinberg. “If we take care of those two communities, I’m sure those two communities will make sure that UCLA remains healthy regardless what happens in healthcare reform or surrounding financial issues.”

“Our entire strategy is built around taking great care of patients. We have the best doctors and the best nurses, but ultimately, making sure that the care is what I would want for my own family, that is my strategy.”

BY T.M. SIMMONS