

## UC San Diego Sulpizio Cardiovascular Center Program Receives National Recognition

*Pulmonary Thromboendarterectomy program honored as "Center of Excellence"*

October 24, 2012 |

The physicians, surgeons and team members who pioneered the lifesaving pulmonary thromboendarterectomy (PTE) procedure at University of California, San Diego Health System are being honored for excellence at the annual CHEST conference, hosted by the American College of Chest Physicians, in Atlanta, October 20 to 25, 2012. The PTE program based at the UC San Diego Sulpizio Cardiovascular Center is among 11 specially selected "Centers of Excellence" showcasing the defining characteristics and practices that make them unique among health-care providers.



Dr. Bill Auger speaks with a colleague at the 2012 CHEST conference, hosted by ACCP in Atlanta.

"To be nationally recognized by our ACCP colleagues as a Center of Excellence is an honor our entire team shares," said William Auger, MD, Pulmonary PTE program, UC San Diego Health System and clinical professor at UC San Diego School of Medicine. "This work is our passion. We are a family of caregivers who truly believe in delivering the best possible care to patients with chronic pulmonary hypertension from first-contact through surgery to annual check-ups."

Pulmonary thromboendarterectomy (PTE) is a surgical procedure to remove deadly clots from the pulmonary arteries, the large yet thin blood vessels



Dr. Bill Auger, Alicia Gormican, and Dr. Nick Kim: proud to lead the PTE Program at UC San Diego Sulpizio Cardiovascular Center.

that carry blood from the heart to the lungs. The delicate 8 to 10 hour surgery takes out part of the wall of the pulmonary artery and the thick scar-like clot material that causes the obstruction. Developed by UCSD cardiothoracic surgeons and pulmonary-critical care medicine physicians, the team has led the way in the successful evaluation and treatment of patients of all ages.

Surgeons at UC San Diego Health System have performed nearly 2,800 PTE procedures– the majority since 1990 – and experienced a 2.2 percent mortality rate between 2006 and 2010 and less than one percent rate for the past two years. This is the lowest known postoperative mortality rate worldwide. The procedure can reverse heart failure and is considered more effective than lung transplantation.

UC San Diego Sulpizio Cardiovascular Center physicians and surgeons pioneered the PTE program.

“When we began this program, many people said it could not be done, that this was not a disease,” explained Stuart Jamieson, MD, FRCS, head of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, UC San Diego Health System, and Endowed Chair and Distinguished Professor of Surgery at UC San Diego School of Medicine. “Now, patients come from all over the world to receive this life-saving, curable treatment and we have trained the lion’s share of the surgeons who specialize in this procedure.”

“It used to be difficult just to walk a flight of stairs and now I snowboard and can do just about anything I want to do,” said Cassie Rodriguez, who had the life-saving PTE surgery at 13 and is now 22 years old. “I call Dr. Auger every year on the anniversary of my surgery. He was the first person, after my parents, who I called after I got engaged this year.”



## About The American College of Chest Physicians

The American College of Chest Physicians is the global leader in clinical chest medicine,

representing 18,500 members who provide patient care in the areas of pulmonary, critical care, and sleep medicine in the United States and throughout the world. The mission of the ACCP is to promote the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of chest diseases through education, communication, and research. For more information about the ACCP, visit the ACCP website at [www.chestnet.org](http://www.chestnet.org) or follow the ACCP on Facebook and Twitter.

## About UC San Diego Sulpizio Cardiovascular Center

UC San Diego Sulpizio Cardiovascular Center is dedicated to innovative care and the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cardiovascular disease. The state-of-the-art facility, which opened in La Jolla in 2011, is the region's first academic-based facility to combine all heart and vascular-related services, programs and technology under one roof.

For more information on CHEST Centers Of Excellence:

<http://2012.accpmeeting.org/clinical-resource-center/centers-of-excellence>

###

Media Contact: Kim Edwards, 619-543-6163, [kedwards@ucsd.edu](mailto:kedwards@ucsd.edu)

---

## Related Specialties

---

[Cardiothoracic Surgery](#)

[Pulmonary](#)

[Thromboendarterectomy \(PTE\)](#)



## Share This Article

---



## Related News

---

[Mobile Life Support Delivered to Area Hospitals During COVID-19 Pandemic](#)  
5/26/2020

[ICU Survivors Commonly Experience Job Loss after Critical Illness, Study Confirms](#)  
11/12/2019

[UC San Diego Health Top Ranked by U.S. News & World Report](#)

7/30/2019

4,000th Lifesaving Heart and Lung  
Surgery at UC San Diego Health  
2/7/2019

[View All News >](#)

## Follow Us

---

 Follow @ucsdhealth

