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UC San Diego Health Expands Leading-Edge Cancer Care in Hillcrest

Living with cancer means frequent visits to the doctor during a time when illness can be debilitating and utterly exhausting. To make it easier for patients to receive world-class care from San Diego's only National Cancer Institute-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, UC San Diego Health has added a new multidisciplinary cancer clinic in Hillcrest, staffed with physicians who specialize in some of the most commonly diagnosed malignancies.

"Through Moores Cancer Center, UC San Diego Health has been at the forefront of developing and testing advanced cancer therapies that are changing how we treat cancer, not just in San Diego but around the world," said Joseph Califano, MD, Moores Cancer Center physician-in-chief. "Our priority is delivering innovative therapies that save lives. By expanding cancer services at UC San Diego Medical Center in Hillcrest, we are fulfilling our mission to provide compassionate care to our community by offering cutting-edge services at a more convenient location for people who live in central, eastern and southern San Diego neighborhoods."

Abel Beltran reached out to UC San Diego Health for a second opinion after getting a stage 3b colon cancer diagnosis. He met with Benjamin Abbadessa, MD, a colorectal cancer surgeon who sees patients at UC San Diego Health cancer services in Hillcrest and La Jolla. Knowing he would receive the same level of care at Hillcrest as he would at Moores Cancer Center, Beltran elected to meet Abbadessa in Hillcrest.

"While it was important to me to be closer to home because I couldn't drive to La Jolla while undergoing treatment, my decision to undergo surgery and treatment at UC San Diego Medical Center was because of Dr. Abbadessa," said Beltran. "The first time I met him I knew he was



In addition to a new multispecialty cancer clinic, UC San Diego Health expanded its infusion center from six chairs to 20 for both oncology patients and others in need of infusion services.

the right surgeon. He was very confident. He gave me confidence that he and the team would take good care of me.”

Beltran underwent laparoscopic surgery, received an infusion of chemotherapy and had imaging and bloodwork performed in Hillcrest.

“The care that we provide in Hillcrest and our other UC San Diego Health locations fall under the umbrella of Moores Cancer Center so there is seamless coordination of care at the highest level,” said Abbadessa. “This gives our patients access to our rapidly expanding, state-of-the-art clinical trials and other advanced therapies in convenient locations to help with quality of life during this challenging times.”

In addition to colorectal cancer, UC San Diego Medical Center physicians will also serve patients with breast, gastrointestinal, prostate and blood cancers, as well as provide palliative care services and state-of-the-art clinical trials offered throughout UC San Diego Health.

Patients with and without cancer who are in need of infusion care may now choose Hillcrest, North County or La Jolla for services. Expanded infusion in Hillcrest includes 20 chairs for both oncology patients and others in need of infusion services.

“In addition to standard infusion treatments, enhanced infusion capabilities at UC San Diego Medical Center allow us to provide Lutathera, a new FDA-approved drug to treat neuro-endocrine tumors, as well as Radicava to help with recovery following stroke and to treat amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS),” said Rebekah White, MD, surgical oncologist and clinical medical director for cancer services at Hillcrest.

Patients receiving care at any UC San Diego Health location, including Hillcrest, have access to promising new therapies and bench-to-bedside innovations, as well as offering the latest surgical technologies and more than 300 interventional treatment trials, such as 40 investigational immunotherapies and stem cell-based approaches.

UC San Diego Health also offers outpatient oncology clinic visits, radiation oncology treatment, and infusion and lab procedures at several locations throughout the county to serve the entire region.

“My care and stay at UC San Diego Medical Center was amazing because they listened to my concerns,” said Beltran. “The level of care was five stars. I got the same care I would have received at Moores Cancer Center but I wasn’t tied down to one location. I appreciate the convenience of choosing what worked for me in that moment.”

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