

ST. MARY MEDICAL CENTER'S UCLA-Affiliated Internal Medicine Residency Program

by Chester Choi, MD, FACP, Medical Education Director and Jasminka Criley, MD, FACP, FHM, Associate Residency Program Director



With the current crisis in healthcare, the training of competent and caring physicians assumes great importance both nationally and locally.

St. Mary Medical Center proudly continues this educational tradition in order to further its healing ministry and assist in the delivery of compassionate, high-quality, affordable health services to Long Beach and the surrounding communities.

St. Mary Medical Center has established a history and well-recognized tradition of medical education combined with patient care, having trained residents in a variety of specialties for more than 55 years. The original program of eight rotating interns, directed by Dr. C.C. Calessibetta, changed in 1969 to a full three-year training program in Internal Medicine, directed sequentially by Drs. Ronald Swerdloff, Yale Bickel, and Peter Barrett, affiliated with the UCLA School of Medicine. Subsequent residencies in Family Medicine, Radiology, Pathology, and General Surgery were added, but unfortunately, later closed after 5, 12, 15, and 23 years of very successful educational efforts respectively. Fellowship training occurred in Interventional Radiology, Neonatology, Vascular Surgery, Nephrology, Hematology-Oncology, Cardiology, and Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine. Currently, the hospital supports training in Internal Medicine and Emergency Medicine with the latter boasting a resident rotation from Harbor-UCLA which has been in place for over 30 years, strongly supported by our Emergency Medicine physicians under the direction of Drs. Steven Shea and Barry Heller.

INTERNAL MEDICINE RESIDENCY:

The Internal Medicine Residency Program at St. Mary is an UCLA affiliated program that offers the very best of academic medicine in a community setting. The program's mission is to train superb primary care community physicians, hospitalists, as well as future leaders in Internal Medicine. Currently, the program has a diverse group of 30 Internal Medicine residents who help to care for a large number of patients at St. Mary. Most of the patients in the Intensive Care Unit and many of the patients admitted through the Emergency Department are cared for by residents under the direct supervision of faculty attending physicians and voluntary teaching attendings. Several studies have shown that the care of patients is improved in teaching hospitals and the presence of residents 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year is an important asset to the hospital. Over 50 attending Internal Medicine physicians and specialists participate as teachers at St. Mary with "core" leadership from Dr. Chester Choi, Director of Medical Education, Drs. Joyce Yeh, Jasminka Criley, Maged Tanios, Hemal Kadakia, Kendra Gil, and Derek Phan, Chief Resident.

The Residency Program has produced over 300 Internal Medicine graduates, many of whom remain

in successful private practices at St. Mary and in the Long Beach area, providing excellent attention to the healthcare needs of our community. Over the years, approximately 40-50% of the graduates proceeded to fellowship training and now focuses their care of patients in cardiology, pulmonary/critical care, gastroenterology,



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endocrinology, geriatrics, and other fields. Some graduates developed interests in Administrative Medicine and are now Medical Directors for organizations and medical groups, while others have embarked on careers in Academic Medicine and are themselves involved as teachers, administrators, and researchers. Many subspecialists (especially in radiology, anesthesiology, ophthalmology, and emergency medicine) served their internship year at St. Mary and are now practicing in our community.

PATIENT SERVICES:

A key part of the Internal Medicine training program, which requires three years, is the education of residents in both inpatient and outpatient medicine. Residents see their continuity patients at the Family Clinic of Long Beach, a modern and efficiently-run office on the St. Mary campus. They see both common and uncommon problems of primary care under the direction of Drs. Yeh and Gil and also gain experience from managing subspecialty problems including bariatrics, rheumatology, endocrinology, neurology, pulmonary medicine, and travel medicine with the added participation and input of volunteer subspecialists. Medicine Teams are responsible for caring for patients with a broad spectrum of illnesses, acute and chronic primary care conditions, medical emergencies and challenging diagnostic and therapeutic problems, and work with specialists to ensure their patients receive the best care.

UCLA-AFFILIATED FACULTY:

Internal Medicine Residency Program attendings are all Board Certified Internal Medicine physicians who are specifically trained to treat hospitalized and general internal medicine patients. Their specialized training ensures that patients receive the best care while at St. Mary Medical

Center. St. Mary's teaching attendings have academic appointments through UCLA and maintain close ties with Harbor-UCLA Medical Center in Torrance. Many primary care and subspecialty attending physicians in the Department of Medicine are clinical or voluntary UCLA-affiliated Teaching Faculty and are committed to excellence in educating both general internists and sub-specialists.

The Residency Program, spearheaded by Drs. Criley, Kadakia, and Tanios, is also directly involved in patient safety and quality improvement measures, including development of order sets and checklists, assistance with St. Mary's Observation Unit, cooperative work on care coordination, assistance with rapid response teams, studies of the best use of certain medications and diagnostic tests, and investigations of best practices in the Intensive Care Unit. Each of the residents is also responsible for a scholastic project which helps to educate other physicians and healthcare professionals about difficult diagnostic dilemmas or specific treatment problems. They present these studies at regional or national meetings held by organizations such as the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, the American College of Physicians, the Society for General Internal Medicine, and the Society for Hospital Medicine. ❖