

# MEDICAL STAFF BRIEFS

A Publication from the Chief of Staff and Chief Medical Officer



December 2024/January 2025

## Excellence Recognized



U.S. News & World Report has recognized SJO for its high performance in maternity care. The methodology was based on objective measures of quality such as low C-section rates and severe unexpected newborn complications; exclusive breast milk feeding rates, birthing-friendly practices and reporting on racial/ethnic disparities.

## October 7-11 Medical Mission to Yerevan, Armenia, led by Sudeep Kukreja, MD

Arpan Global Charities (AGC) embarked on its 26th medical mission and second to Yerevan, Armenia, bringing together anesthesiologists, neonatologists, obstetricians, orthopedic surgeons, thoracic surgeons, and nurses, who collaborated with local professionals to share expertise, advanced medical knowledge and improve patient care.

### COLLABORATIONS ACROSS SPECIALTIES

**Anesthesia** – Dr. Armen Chalian, anesthesiologist, worked at Izmirlian Medical Center to demonstrate advanced techniques, including nerve blocks, central line placements and spinal anesthesia. Participating in over 15 surgeries, Dr. Chalian introduced strategies to manage hypertension and postoperative pain for bariatric patients undergoing gastric sleeve procedures. His visit culminated in a round table discussion on Armenian vs. U.S. anesthesia practices.

**Pediatric Anesthesia** – Pediatric anesthesiologist Dr. Vinod Kothapa and nurses Patrice Robison and Ashley White collaborated with Wigmore Women's and Children's Hospital. He assisted in several complex surgeries, including those for neuroblastoma, craniosynostosis, and spine conditions. The team explored line placements, medication protocols and equipment use, laying the foundation for future professional exchanges through social media. Nurses Robison and White provided bedside training for NICU nurses and educated new moms on calming massage and feeding methods, while providing resources to the NICU director to secure essential materials.

## Entering Medications Information in Your EPIC Orders

The Pharmacy reports that some providers are entering medications in the "Note to Pharmacy" field, which is not seen by Nursing. The "Note to Pharmacy" field does NOT appear on the MAR and is ONLY seen by the pharmacist once during the verification process. Solution: Place any medication instructions or notes in the Admin Instruction field and NOT the Note to Pharmacy field.

Admin Instructions appear in the MAR and both RN and pharmacist can always see it. You can update your preferences and order sets to make sure comments are in the ADMIN INSTRUCTIONS field.

If you have questions or concerns, please email Melissa Rudolph, MD, Vice Chief of Staff and Physician Lead for Clinical Information Systems, at [Melissa.Rudolph@stjoe.org](mailto:Melissa.Rudolph@stjoe.org).

**Thoracic Surgery** – Thoracic surgeon Dr. Brian Palafox and Nurse Practitioner Mercedes Gossett joined the team at Astghik Medical Center. They participated in advanced procedures for 25+ patients, including lobectomies, wedge resections and surgeries addressing thoracic outlet syndrome and lung AV malformations. Dr. Palafox is set to continue this collaboration when their director of Thoracic Surgery visits Los Angeles in 2025 for the STS Conference.

**Obstetrics and Gynecology** – Dr. Bedros Kojian collaborated with Shengavit Hospital, performing 11 surgeries, including hysterectomies and uterine cancer treatments, while conducting daily patient rounds. Extending his mission to Gyumri, he performed 10 more surgeries and treated over 20 patients, building on his 25-year relationship with the region.

**Orthopedic Surgery** – Orthopedic surgeons Drs. Philip Krueger and Shahan Yacoubian introduced the anterior total hip replacement technique at Izmirlian Hospital, a novel method for local surgeons. Over five days, they performed 10 surgeries, including hip and knee replacements and a complex ulna reconstruction, while consulting with 30 additional patients.

**Neonatology** – Drs. Angela Noltemeyer and Sudeep Kukreja visited Wigmore and Shengavit Hospitals, joining daily NICU rounds to share insights from CHOC Children's NICU protocols. They supported care improvements for 10-12 neonates per day.



### MISSION IMPACT

The AGC team provided care to 250 patients and performed 46 major surgeries. Each interaction was an opportunity to share knowledge, foster friendships, and leave a lasting impact. This effort was made possible through AGC volunteers' dedication and the warm hospitality of host hospitals. Special thanks are extended to Dr. Gevorg Msryan of Shengavit Hospital for his exceptional work coordinating logistics. To all contributing time, expertise and resources: thank you for making a meaningful difference.

### AGC'S NEXT MISSION – HUE, VIETNAM

This trip will be Feb. 24-28, 2025. For details or to participate in future volunteer medical missions, contact Dr. Sudeep Kukreja at 714-585-1920 or email [ArpanGlobal@gmail.com](mailto:ArpanGlobal@gmail.com).

**SAVE THE DATE**

## GRAND ROUNDS: "A Practical Approach to the Dizzy Patient"

Wednesday, January 8, 2025, 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. in Zoul Auditorium

Presented by: Steven Zuniga, MD, Double Board-Certified Otolaryngologist and Neurotology Specialist, Shohet Ear Assoc.

<http://bit.ly/442EccB> for virtual option via Teams

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[www.providence.org/stjoseph](http://www.providence.org/stjoseph)

## SUBMISSIONS SOUGHT:

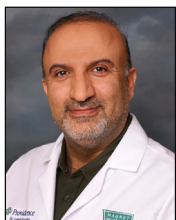
Please send news items to 714-771-8056  
or [SJO-MEDICAL-STAFF@stjoe.org](mailto:SJO-MEDICAL-STAFF@stjoe.org)

Happy  
New Year



Santa at St. Joe's, flanked by  
elf-care team members Drs. Kurt  
Openshaw and Mahmood Razavi

## Welcome, Medical Staff



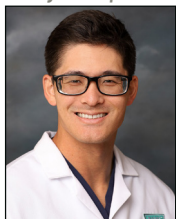
**Peyman Alaghband, MD**  
Obstetrics/Gynecology



**Laurie Brunette, MD**  
Gynecology/Oncology  
City of Hope OC



**Carly Crowder, MD**  
Female Pelvic Med & Surgery  
The Center for Pelvic Health



**Patrick Chisum, MD**  
Peds Critical Care  
CHOC CS Critical Care



Providence St. Joseph Hospital's Structural Heart Team, led by cardiologists Jeffrey Tyler, MD, Brian Kolski, MD, and Aiden Raney, MD, successfully implanted the hospital's first two EVOQUE tricuspid transcatheter valve replacements. Previously, patients with significant heart failure had no treatment options. The new system is able to replace the native tricuspid valve, virtually eliminating tricuspid regurgitation in a wide range of patients. Congratulations to our award-winning Heart & Vascular team for again leading the charge in cardiovascular health in Orange County.

## Naming, Numbering Conventions for Building 2, Critical & Intermediate Care Patient Rooms

Building 2 Floor	Nursing Unit	Old #	Room #	Notes
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Intermediate Care, aka Inter-2	N/A	INT 201 INT 202	New unit Step down level of care
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Critical Care (formerly DSU)	DSU 1-10	CC 301 CC 302 Etc.	301– 310: Step down level care 311– 320: ICU level care
4 <sup>th</sup>	Medical ICU (MICU)	MICU 1 MICU 2	No change	All ICU

Please be aware of an important change to the naming of Building 2 patient rooms under the umbrella of Critical Care Services. These are the names/numbers called during overhead codes and pages.

Critical care patient rooms do NOT use the numbering convention used for acute care patient rooms. The first number of the room does NOT indicate the building number.