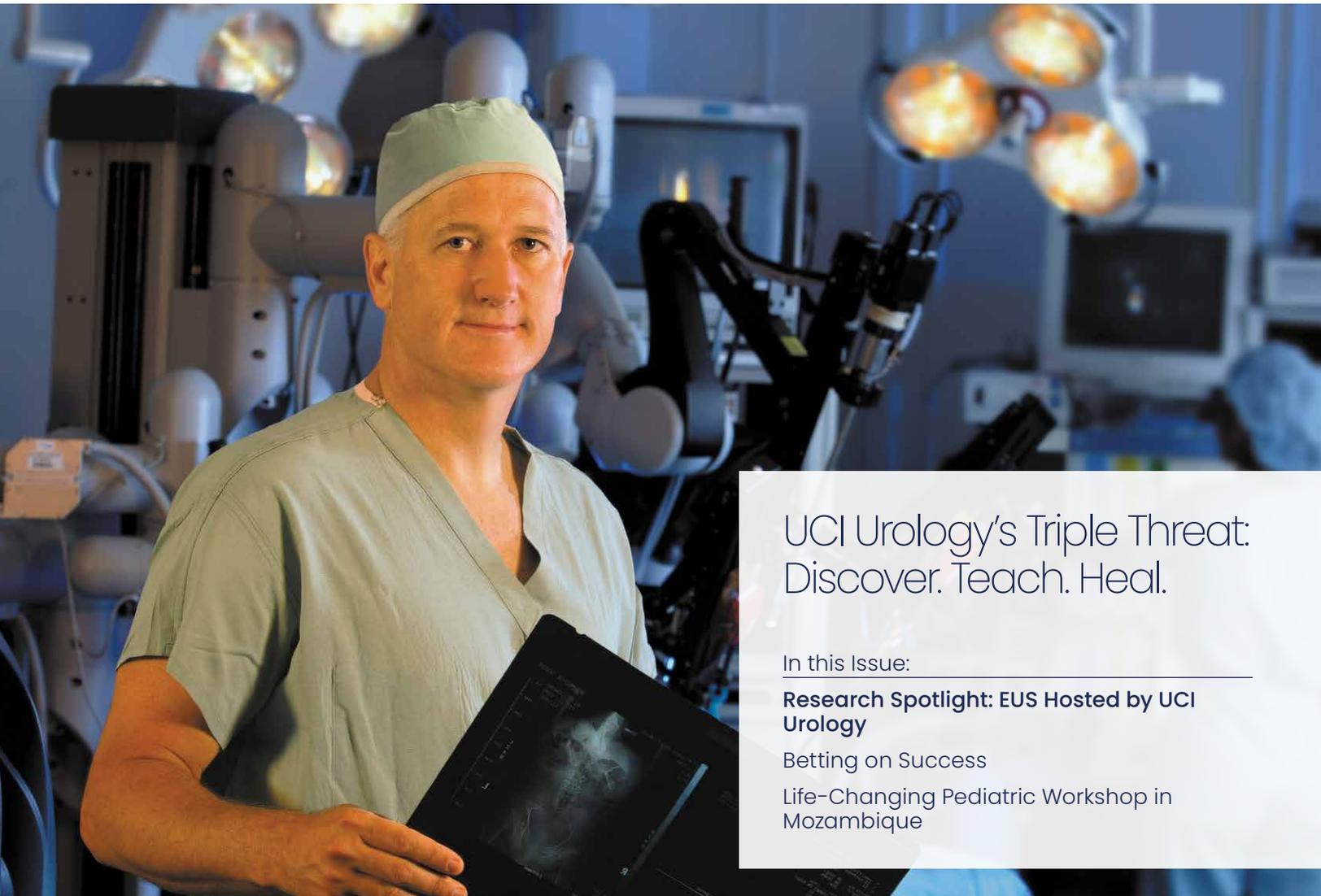


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## UCI Urology's Triple Threat: Discover. Teach. Heal.

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Betting on Success

Life-Changing Pediatric Workshop in Mozambique

DISCOVER. TEACH. HEAL.



# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear friends and colleagues,

It's indisputable that Dr. Thomas Ahlering is a "triple threat" when it comes to embodying UCI Urology's mission of "Discover. Teach. Heal." Just this year alone, he has received recognition from both the UC Irvine Alumni Association Lauds and Laurels Outstanding Faculty Achievement Award and the Institute for Clinical & Translational Science Mentor of the Year Award. Read more on page 3.

This year one of our chief residents, Dr. Garen Abedi, was the recipient of the prestigious IVUMed scholarship, as well as the first resident to benefit from the Margaret Eskola Endowed Resident International Travel Fund. Read more on page 4.

David and Evelyn Simon's generosity is well known in UCI Health circles. Five years ago, David was diagnosed with prostate cancer and found his way to Dr. Ahlering. The Simons are now described as betting big on UCI Health, having started with the support of Dr. Ahlering's research in robotic surgery, then to UCI Health pediatric oncology. They now they have connected with Drs. Khoury and Davis-Dao to support breakthrough research in pediatric urology. UCI Urology's fourth scientist, Dr. Carol Davis-Dao, PhD, is a talented epidemiologist focused on improving the health and outcomes of children. Read more on page 5.

UCI Urology hosted the 34th annual Engineering and Urology Society meeting in Chicago during the annual AUA meeting, in service to about 500 urologists from all over the world. This meeting had a poster presentation component which showcased Engineering and Urology innovative research, best poster awards, and for the first time in the history of the meeting, the CEO Roundtable included 5 most successful CEOs from CONMED Corporation, Accuron Technologies Limited, Kronos Bio, Inc., AquaBeam System, and Neocis Inc. Read more about this on page 6.

We must also take a moment to congratulate our residents and fellow graduates of 2019. We are delighted that graduating chief resident Dr. Pengbo Jiang is continuing as our UCI Urology Endourology Fellow. Dr. Lira Chowdhury, Fellow in Female Urology Pelvic Reconstruction Surgery & Voiding Dysfunction, will be going into practice in Fort Worth, TX. Dr. James Furr, Fellow in Eric S. Wisenbaugh Genitourinary Urologic Reconstructive Surgery will be joining the faculty at University of Oklahoma as assistant professor. Dr. Joshua Chamberlin, graduating Fellow in Pediatric Urology is off to Loma Linda University. We wish them the best of luck in their future careers.

Hope you enjoy lucky edition XIII of the UCI Urology newsletter, and thank you for your continued interest and support.

Jaime Landman, M.D.

## UCI UROLOGY'S TRIPLE THREAT: DISCOVER. TEACH. HEAL.



Dr. Thomas Ahlering (right) receiving the University of California, Irvine Alumni Association, Lauds and Laurels Outstanding Faculty Achievement 2019 award from Dean Michael Stamos (left).

**Triple Threat (noun):** A person who is proficient in three important skills within their particular field.

Although this term is not routinely used to describe surgeons, it is indisputable that Dr. Thomas Ahlering is the “triple threat” when it comes to embodying the UC Irvine mission of “Discover. Teach. Heal.” While it is globally recognized that he is the premier robotic prostate surgeon, in May 2019, UC Irvine Alumni Association awarded Dr. Ahlering the Lauds and Laurels Outstanding Faculty Achievement award – a campus-wide recognition of a single UC Irvine faculty member achieving great professional prominence in their field for their contributions to this three-fold mission.

**Discover:** Over the past year, the research Dr. Ahlering has taken on is what many would describe as the road less travelled. Of his 12 peer-reviewed publications, his team’s novel findings on testosterone replacement therapy outcomes as well as his work on the consequences of decreased prostate cancer screening are changing the way we approach patient care.

#### *“Testosterone Replacement in Men with Prostate Cancer Reduces Biochemical Recurrence”*

In this significant exploration of 850 patients over a 6-year follow-up, Dr. Ahlering’s team found that testosterone replacement in men with low testosterone reduced the likelihood of cancer recurrence by 53%. This study will not only change our stigma against testosterone replacement, but it also lays the groundwork for large-scale multi-institutional clinical trials.

#### *“Unintended Consequences of Decreased Prostate-Specific Antigen-based Prostate Cancer Screening”*

After the 2012 recommendation against prostate cancer screening by the United States Preventative Services Task Force (USPSTF), numerous epidemiologists warned that a diminished screening policy would lead to an increase in high-risk cancer presentation. Rather than following the status quo of the scientific community and waiting for population-based data to mature, Dr. Ahlering undertook the immense project that was collecting high-fidelity metrics to predict changes in prostate cancer risk: grade (aggression) stage (volume), and metastases status. Data was collated from over 19,000 patients across 9 academic institutions in the United States, making this effort the largest study published to date on prostate cancer screening. Just as the epidemiologists had warned, the data showed the quadrupling of lymph node metastases, a doubling of high-grade disease, and a doubling of recurrences after the recommendation took effect.

**Teach:** In the words of G.K. Chesterton: “education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another.” The intent and drive of which Dr. Ahlering approaches his research is matched with his dedication in ensuring that his students receive the best education and mentorship possible. In the past year, Dr. Ahlering has performed two live robot-assisted radical prostatectomy surgeries broadcasted to over 1,000 individuals, served as a personal research mentor to 10 undergraduate students, 2 medical students, and 1 graduate student, as well as moderating numerous poster and podium sessions at academic conferences.

**Heal:** Many know Dr. Ahlering as a world-renowned pioneer after completing the first robotic prostatectomy in Southern California in 2002. Just that statement alone would be the tipping point in one’s career. But, in Dr. Ahlering’s eyes, it all comes back full-circle to the patient. Dating back to 1998, Dr. Ahlering has one of the most extensive outcomes-oriented databases in the country, consisting of thousands of data points per patient. To this day, his meticulous data tracking and analysis ensures that no change in procedure, shift in policy, or improvement in outcome goes undetected.

To view all of Dr. Ahlering’s 2018-2019 Discover.Teach.Heal accomplishments and press, visit [urology.uci.edu/newsletter](http://urology.uci.edu/newsletter).

## LIFE-CHANGING PEDIATRIC WORKSHOP IN MAPUTO, MOZAMBIQUE



Heidi Ann Stephany, M.D. and patient

It's been one year since Dr. Heidi Ann Stephany created the Margaret Eskola Endowed Resident International Travel Fund, in honor of her grandmother, who supported Dr. Stephany's biannual trips to Africa, in collaboration with the International Volunteers in Urology Med (IVUMed) pediatric urology workshops.

In keeping with the IVUMed mission, the spring trip to Mozambique, Maputo, led by Dr. Stephany, included a total of twenty local participants encompassing all areas from urology, anesthesia, pediatrics, nephrology, and medical and nursing students. A total of 35 patients were evaluated in the clinic and 27 surgeries were completed throughout the workshop ranging from complex hypospadias repair, genital reconstruction for disorders of sexual differentiation, and treatment of posterior urethral valves.

In addition to the continual teaching of local surgeons with each workshop, this year one of our chief residents, Dr. Garen Abedi, was the recipient of the prestigious IVUMed scholarship, as well as the first resident to benefit

from the Margaret Eskola Endowed Resident International Travel Fund. Ultimately, this fund will provide UCI urology residents a unique perspective to their current curriculum with the incorporation of a global health experience.

Dr. Abedi also has the privilege of presenting his experience as a IVUMed scholar at the Western Section of the AUA annual meeting this fall.

"While this was my first international volunteering experience in urology, it will certainly not be my last. Having been on this mission allowed me to see the effect one can have internationally in third world countries by volunteering and teaching local staff. Seeing the growth of the local surgeons and the grateful patients and families before and after surgery was very rewarding. After having been involved in this experience, I can definitely say that international volunteering in urology will be part of my career in the near future." – Garen Abedi, MD.

To learn more how you can help fund these workshops so that future surgeons have a similar educational and cultural experience, please visit [urology.uci.edu/newsletter](http://urology.uci.edu/newsletter).



Drs. Stephany and Abedi, performing surgery



Urology team: Christina Ching, M.D., Nationwide Children's Hospital, Heidi Ann Stephany, M.D., team leader, Katrina (Tina) Zeigler, retired RN, and Garen Abedi, M.D., UCI Urology chief resident; Anesthesia team: Norifumi Kuratani, M.D., Hiroshi Endoh, M.D., and Yoshiharu Kamata, RN

## SUMMER SURGERY PROGRAM

This year, our Summer Surgery Program was prominently featured in the press with articles in the LA Times and OC Register. The featured articles used titles: "Your future surgeon could be one of these local high school students" and "High School Students try their hands as surgeons during summer program at UCI Medical Center."

For eight consecutive years, the program has continued to ignite a passion in our future medical leaders. By the time you graduate as a summer surgeon you will know if you are made for this life in surgical medicine.

Take for example this year's medical student leader Doug Schneider, who was in the first graduating class in 2012. Doug went on to attend UCLA for his undergrad and is now a 2nd year medical student at University of California, Irvine. Or Andyshea Afyouni, graduate class of 2013, who also graduated UCLA summa cum lauded, now accepted to UCI medical school 2020, and is spending a research year in UCI's Endourology laboratory.

Please visit [urology.uci.edu/newsletter](http://urology.uci.edu/newsletter) for more information.



Andyshea Afyouni (left) Doug Schneider (right) with Jaime Landman, M.D. (center), founder/director of Summer Surgery Program

## BETTING ON SUCCESS



David Simon is used to playing the odds. An avid card player who makes an annual pilgrimage to Las Vegas to participate in the World Series of Poker, he understands the stakes involved in every game – and he knows how to seize the opportunity when he has a winning hand. Channeling that instinct, Simon and his wife, Evelyn, have bet big on UCI Health.

The Simons recently made a generous donation to support breakthrough research in pediatric urology. The funds helped secure the recruitment of UCI Urology's fourth scientist, Dr. Carol Davis-Dao, PhD, a talented epidemiologist focused on improving the health and outcomes of children. Joining the research team of renowned physician-scientist Antoine Khoury, MD, UCI Health chief of pediatric urology, Dr. Davis-Dao is leading efforts to harness cutting-edge technology to promote the well-being of children in need of urologic care.

"Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are very common among children and usually benign, but in some cases, these infections are recurrent and can lead to severe kidney damage," Dr. Davis-Dao says. "Currently, there is no easy way

to stratify patients to determine their risk of serious outcomes. The Simons' gift will play a key role in advancing our research, positioning us to develop a sophisticated risk prediction algorithm that can help individualize patient care."

It is, notes Dr. Khoury, a critical project with positive implications for children far beyond UTIs. "Take the case of kids with reflux," he says. "The current recommendation is for all of them to be on antibiotics. Yet, out of a sample of 100 kids with the problem, if you analyze properly to isolate risk factors, 75 don't need medication. Our job, and Carol's principal objective, is to identify the one in four kids who do need it. No matter the illness – and whether we're zeroing in on which kids would benefit from medicine or which ones actually require surgery – the algorithm will ultimately improve care for everyone."

For the Simons, partnering with UCI Health continues a longstanding practice of investing in organizations that help children. Their interest began when they were living in Chicago, where David worked as a successful corporate finance executive. In addition to raising their two sons, Evelyn taught in a school for disabled kids. "It was powerful seeing how much of a difference we were making in these children's lives," she recalls.

In 1997, the couple retired to Southern California, where they had family and where they had lived for a dozen years before moving to Chicago. They put down roots in the desert and also began searching for a home base near the beach. Today, the Simons split their time between residences in Palm Desert and Newport Beach, and they support nonprofits in both communities.

"We both feel extremely lucky to have achieved some measure of financial independence, and we are committed to sharing our good fortune with others," David says.

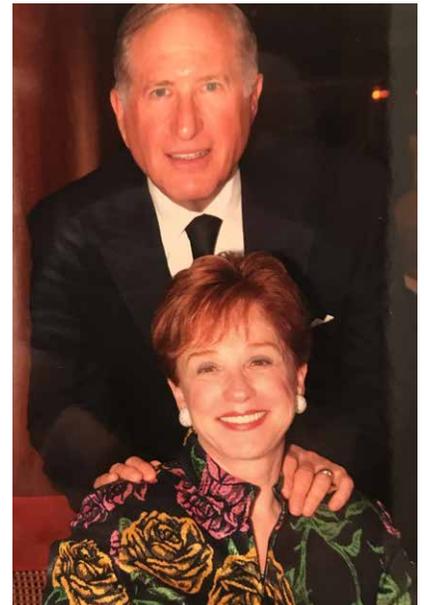
They are also dedicated to keeping their philanthropy local. "They say charity starts at home, and when we're close enough to see the impact first hand, that's more meaningful to us than simply sending a check to an organization thousands of miles away," David says.

Over the course of two decades, they have contributed to a broad range of causes including numerous local specialty hospitals, the Merage Jewish Community Center and the Jewish Federation of the Desert."

In their Palm Desert golf community, they fund a scholarship program that helps send children of the club's employees to college.

The Simons' generosity was well known in UCI Health circles even before the couple connected with Drs. Khoury and Davis-Dao. Five years ago, David was diagnosed with prostate cancer and found his way to Thomas Ahlering, MD, a highly regarded UCI Health urologic surgeon. "My experience there was great, and the care was incredible," David says. "We were so impressed that we decided to support Dr. Ahlering's research to further methodologies in robotic surgery. In addition, we had been supporting physicians in UCI Health pediatric oncology."

Now, as they deepen their collaboration with UCI Health, the Simons are excited by the prospect of making life better for patients of every age. That potential for progress keeps them engaged and eager to move the work forward. "In the final analysis, we don't care about recognition or accolades," Evelyn says. "We're in it for the results." The UCI pediatric urology team will work to make this a sure bet!



# 34TH ENGINEERING AND UROLOGY SOCIETY HOSTED BY UCI UROLOGY



(Left to right): Zhamshid Okhunov, M.D., Kurt Azarbarzin, Jaime Landman, M.D., Abel Ang, Arie S. Belldegrun, M.D., and Ralph V. Clayman, M.D.

Jaime Landman, M.D. and Zhamshid Okhunov, M.D. from UCI Urology organized and co-chaired the 34th annual Engineering and Urology Society (EUS). The goals and mission of this society are to facilitate the development & application of new technology, unite urologists, engineers, scientists from industry and academia, provide a unique multi & interdisciplinary platform, and provide technological & engineering solutions to critically important clinical problems.

Topics for this year’s podium session included world class lectures on thulium fiber laser technology, MRI fusion imaging, aquablation, applications of novel simulation technologies and role of artificial intelligence and machine learning in Urology.

Dr. Ralph V. Clayman delivered a keynote lecture on the role of immersive virtual reality as a disruptive technology in diagnostics and management of stones and renal masses and its application in transplant surgery. Additionally, expert lectures were delivered on next generation approaches for urologic tissue repair and regeneration in lower urinary tract disease.

Finally, for the first time in the history of the meeting, the CEO Roundtable included 5 most successful and technologically disruptive CEOs: Kurt Azarbarzin VP of R&D at CONMED Corporation, Abel Ang, COO of Accuron Technologies Limited, Arie S. Belldegrun, M.D., FACS, Chairman of Board of Kronos Bio, Inc., Dr. Aljuri, principal architect of the AquaBeam System and its core Aquablation technology, and Frederic H. Moll, M.D., director at Neocis Inc. and founder of Auris Surgical Robotics, Inc. Each CEO delivered a presentation on his experience overcoming challenges in translation and delivering product from bench to bedside.

To read more, watch the video at [urology.uci.edu/newsletter](http://urology.uci.edu/newsletter).

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**Congratulations to our Super Doctors and Rising Stars**

*Super Doctors:* Thomas E. Ahlering, M.D., Ralph V. Clayman, M.D., Melvin Leon Seard II, M.D.

*Rising Stars:* Elias Wehbi, M.D., Faysal A. Yafi, M.D.

**Congratulations** to our residency and fellowship graduates of 2019; Drs. Philip Bucur, Pengbo Jiang, Lira Chowdhury, James Furr, and Joshua Chamberlin.



**Congratulations** to our award winning Endourology/ Kidney Disease and Prostate Oncology/Men's Health research teams for receiving best posters at AUA Chicago 2019. Learn more about AUA 2019 at [urology.uci.edu/newsletter](http://urology.uci.edu/newsletter).



**"GRANDEST" UROLOGY ROUNDS  
2019-2020 SCHEDULE**

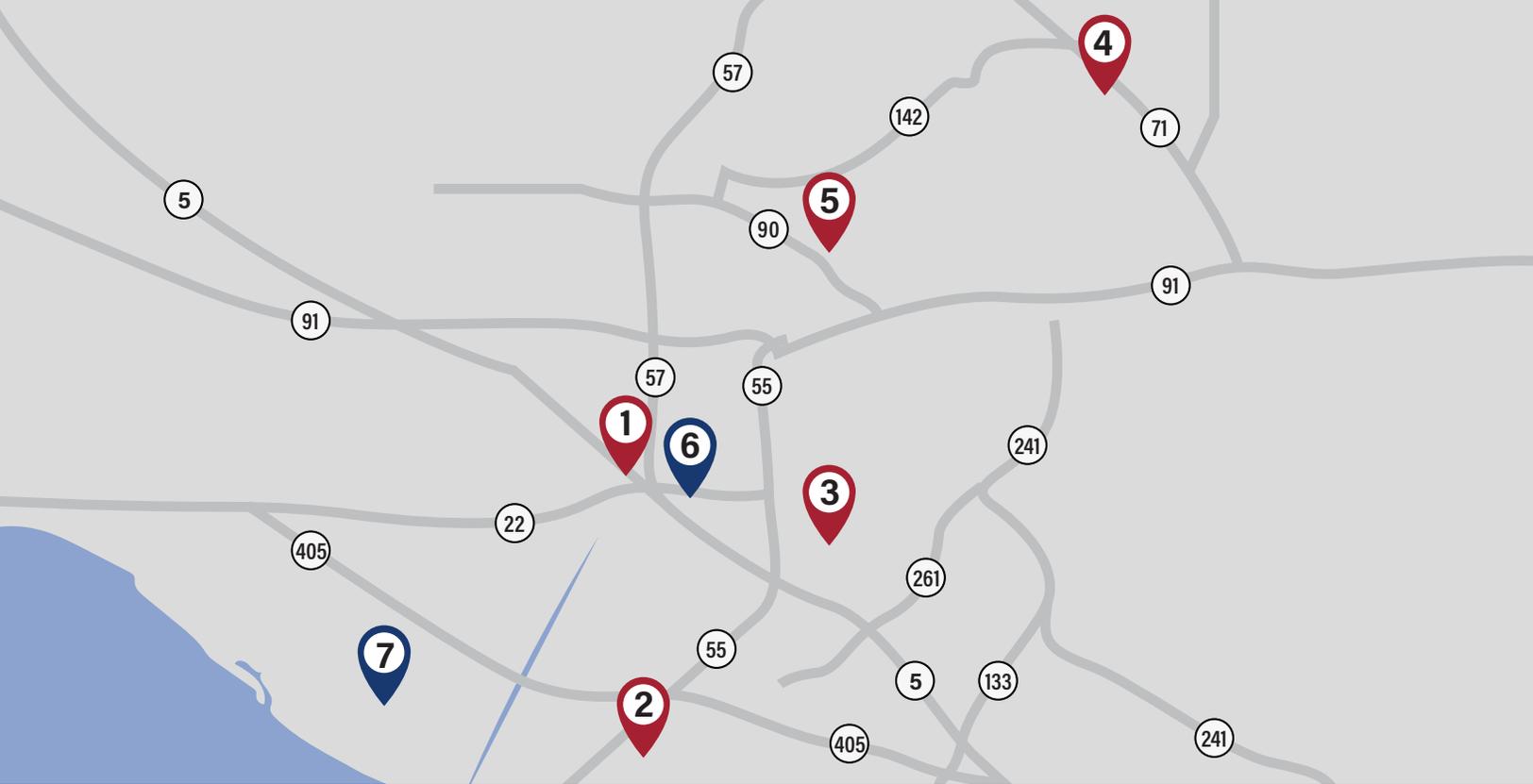
<http://www.urology.uci.edu/pdf/Urology-GrandRounds-2019-20.pdf>

**"Mesh implants for women: Scandal or Standard of Care?"** JAMA April 9, 2019 Volume 321, Number 14, page 1339. Dr. Gamal Ghoniem, female pelvic medicine and reconstructive surgery quoted:

*"Because of the growing concerns about the safety of mesh slings and manufacturers abandoning the production of some, a nearly century-old procedure using woman's own tissue to fashion a sling is making a comeback."*

Read the full article at [urology.uci.edu/newsletter](http://urology.uci.edu/newsletter).





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### 3 – Tustin

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714-838-8408

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Chino Hills, CA 91709  
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### Pediatric Locations

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