

Health *for* Life

PRESENTED BY KERN MEDICAL

Spring 2017



**BOUNCING
BACK** From Traumatic
Brain Injury

**CAUTION:
HOT!** Child Safety
from Scalds

Courage
in
Bloom

The Doctors and Patients
Fighting Cancer Head-On



ART BY MARIA.
HEALTH BY KERN MEDICAL.

 **KernMedical** | *Health for Life.*

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We hope you enjoy this edition of Health for Life. Comments about the publication can be directed to the Marketing & Communications Department:

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Produced in association with:



growing for you



Welcome to the third edition of Health for Life. It seems like just yesterday that we embarked on this project. But that's the nature of business here at Kern Medical. We're adding and upgrading services at a rapid pace to assure that, when you need healthcare, we are your first choice. Let me take this opportunity to announce a few of the exciting new physicians and service expansions we've added recently to Kern Medical:

- After a national search, we were able to recruit Dr. Everardo Cobos, a specialist in hematology/oncology, as chief of medicine. He is busy enhancing services, from establishing the 'Doc for a Day' community education, to enhancing our internal medicine academic training program, to overseeing the expansion of our chemotherapy services to the Columbus Street offices.
- We've added Dr. Aslan GhandForoush to our cardiology team as chief of cardiology. His specialty is interventional cardiology and he is a strong addition to both our teaching and clinical staffs.
- His brother, Dr. Arman Froush, an accomplished interventional radiologist, also has joined us. Yes, they spell their last names differently.
- Dr. Andrew Cassidenti has joined us full-time as the area's only uro-gynecology specialist and director of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery. He's been in practice in Orange County and was working at Kern Medical part-time.
- Dr. John Schlaerth has joined us as the only gynecology-oncology specialist in the area. His practice is on 19th Street.
- A team of USC neurosurgeons joined us to provide 24/7 trauma and neurosurgical coverage at Kern Medical. In addition to having top surgeons on duty for trauma cases, the team brings us a unique blend of sub-specialties that will give us expanded capacity to handle issues from epilepsy to motion disorder movements without sending patients to Los Angeles.
- And we achieved accreditation as a primary stroke care center, a designation that reflects our commitment to best practices.

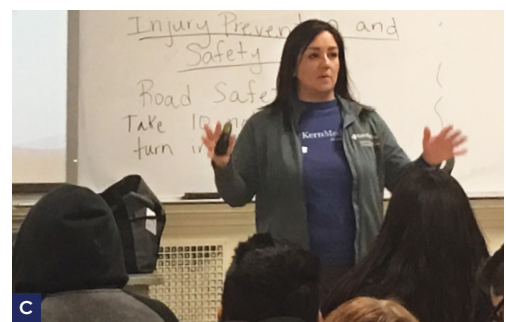
Yes, we've been busy. And we're not stopping. We've come a long way in a short time. Now all we need is you.

Russell Judd
CEO, KERN MEDICAL

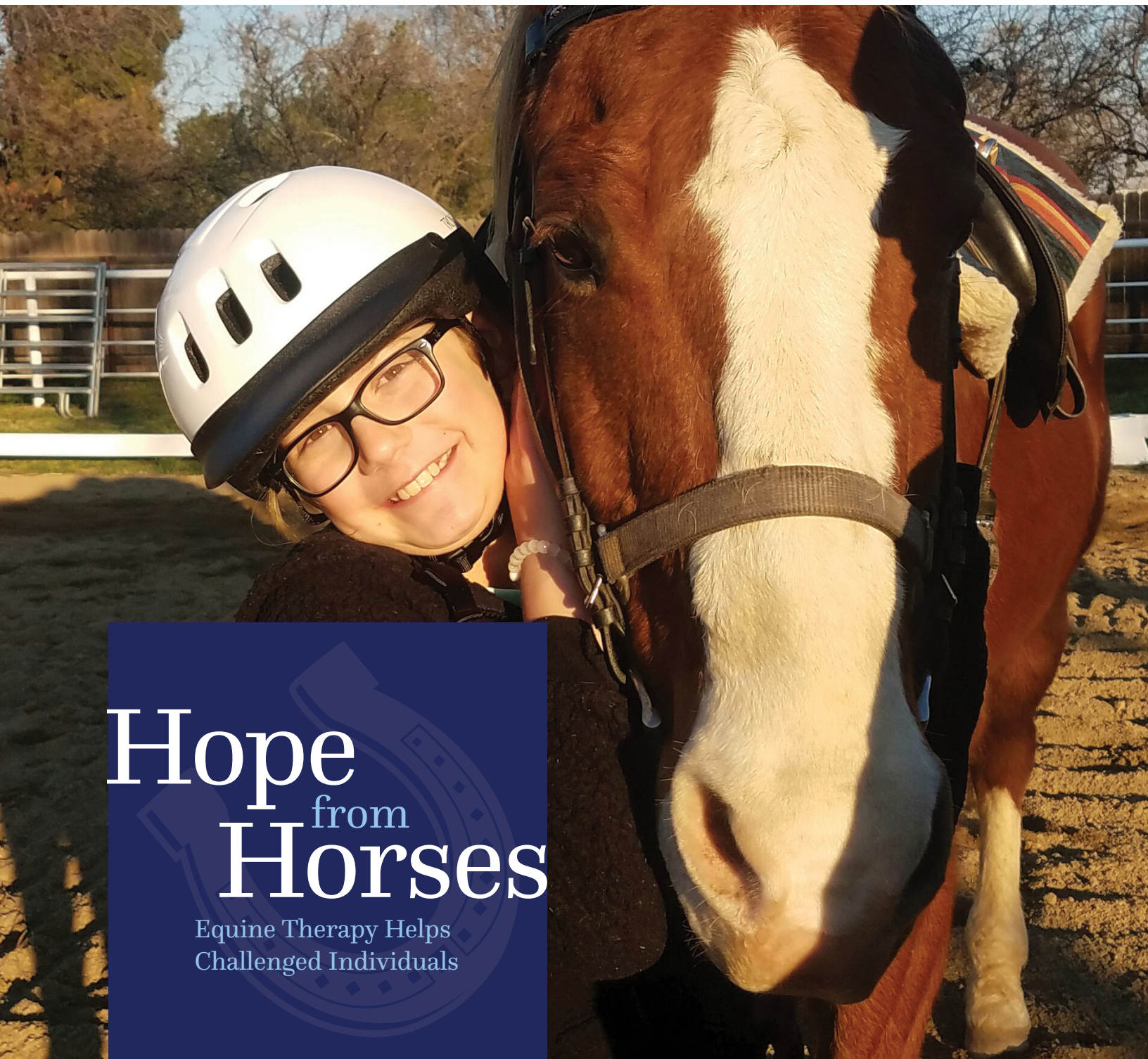
in the Community



Kern Medical is privileged to serve the community of Kern County and the Central Valley. Here are a few highlights from our outreach to support the community's healthcare needs: the Dryer's Employee Pampering Event where Kern Medical provided health screenings; presentations to a high school on preventing distracted driving; and a Safe Surrender Baby awareness press conference.



Pictured clockwise from top left: A) Kern Medical provided health screenings at the Dryer's Employee Pampering Event. B) Lorraine Gonzalez, medical assistant, and Heather West, director of community health and education, at the Dryer's event. C) Santa Ponce, clinical director of trauma services, teaches a class at East Bakersfield High School on preventing distracted driving. D) Kern Medical hosts a Safe Surrender press conference, educating the community on the Safe Surrender law giving parents or guardians the choice to legally and safely leave a baby three days old or younger, no questions asked. E) Russell Judd, Kern Medical CEO, and Dena Murphy, director of Kern County Dept. of Human Services, stand in front of Kern Medical, which is a drop off location for Safe Surrender.



Hope from Horses

Equine Therapy Helps
Challenged Individuals

Contributed Content by
Sonya Brewer

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The Ancient Greeks were the first to recognize that interacting with horses is good for humans. In the 17th century, therapeutic riding was prescribed for neurological disorders and low morale. In 1949, equine therapy began in Scandinavia during a poliomyelitis outbreak. Then in 1960, therapeutic riding was brought over to the United States and Canada.

Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT) uses horses for the purpose of contributing to the cognitive, physical, emotional and social well-being of people living with disabilities and special needs.

During an EAAT session, the horse's movement and gait are used to influence the mounted rider's body. While seated upon a horse at the walk, the multidimensional movement stimulates the hips and pelvis of the rider as though they were walking naturally. The main objective is to exercise or stimulate the muscles of the trunk to enhance each person's ability for purposeful movement of their extremities, cognitive stimulation and balance.

All these areas then make a direct link to life goals such as mobility, gross and fine motor control, muscle strengthening and much more. This will translate into activities of daily living from holding a pencil and feeding one's self, to getting dressed, riding a bike or taking a first step.

Equine Therapeutic Riding lessons are taught by PATH. Intl. (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship) certified therapeutic instructors, who specialize in teaching riding to individuals with disabilities. During Equine Assisted Therapy, sessions are conducted with a certified instructor and under the direction of a licensed therapist, such as occupational or physical therapists and counselors.



Who Can EAAT Help?

According to the United States Census, from 2011-2015, 8.1 percent of people living in Kern County under the age of 65 have a disability that affects their normal activities of daily living.

People living with many physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioral and chronic disease can benefit from participating in EAAT programs, including autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, ADHD, dementia, delayed mental development, genetic syndromes, trauma and brain injuries.

Sonya Brewer is executive director of MARE Riding Center in Bakersfield. Contact the center at (661) 589-1877 or visit mareridingcenter.com.



The Benefits of EAAT

- Improved balance and strength
- Increased self-confidence
- Learned impulse/emotional control
- Expanded coping skills
- Improved communication
- Development of socialization skills and decreased isolation
- Motor function improvement
- Hope

Providing

PREGNANCY CARE, COMFORT & EDUCATION

Contributed Content by
Linda Davis

Like you, I'm far too familiar with the headlines: "Kern Birthrate for Teen Moms Among Highest in California," "Premature Births Tied to Lack of Prenatal Care," "Single Moms Face Hurdles in Breaking the Cycle of Poverty," "Sexually Transmitted Disease Rates Reach Epidemic Levels."

Bakersfield
Pregnancy Center
Helped Over 3,000
Clients Last Year

Persistent trends like these, along with the personal stories we hear every week in our community, remind us that the state of pregnancy and parenting in Kern County is troubled. Far too many young women and men are becoming parents before they're grown up, before they're prepared, and without the resources to give their children the best possible start to life.

I've been associated with the Bakersfield Pregnancy Center (BPC) over 25 years, beginning as a volunteer, and being appointed executive director in 2006. During that time frame, I've watched the face of unplanned pregnancy change, and the services of the BPC adapt to serve emerging needs.

Since opening our doors in 1985, BPC has provided no-cost pregnancy tests, information about pregnancy options, and ongoing peer counseling support to anyone who asked with no insurance requirements, no income tests, and no questions about national origin.

During our first decade of service, most women came seeking free pregnancy tests, because home test kits were expensive, and clients feared that their confidentiality might be breached if they visited the family doctor. Ultrasound scans were not offered routinely as part of prenatal care, and many women lacked knowledge about when a heartbeat or brain activity could be detected in their child. As laws, medical technology, and attitudes toward pregnancy outside marriage have changed since then, the BPC has grown and adapted to meet new challenges.

In 2004 we obtained a medical clinic license that allowed trained nurses to perform ultrasound scans as the first step in the patient's transitioning to ongoing obstetric care. Just last year, a mobile pregnancy clinic, branded ICU Mobile, was launched. Teen health education, recovery groups for mothers and fathers experiencing grief after an abortion or other pregnancy loss, and parenting classes have also been added over the years.

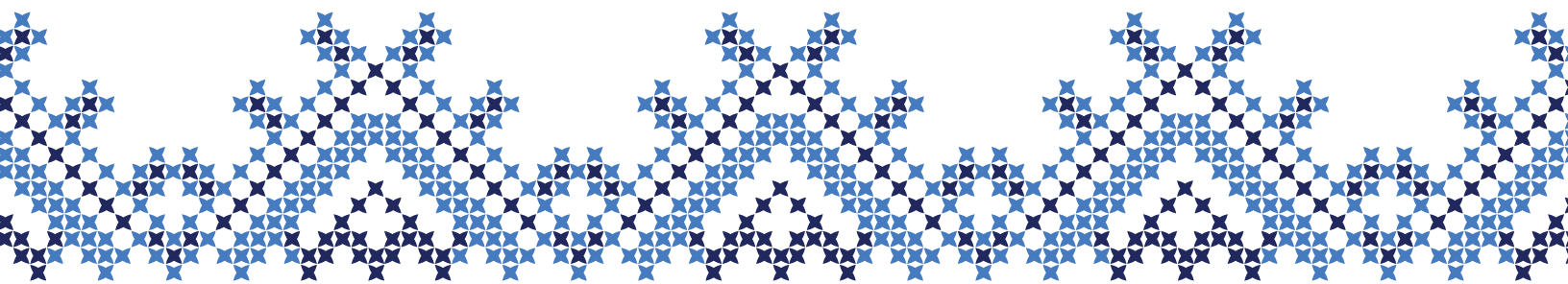
Last year the Bakersfield Pregnancy Center logged over 3,000 client visits. In addition to the teens and adults served, more than 1,000 pre-born children "came along for the ride." That means that at least 1,000 mothers-to-be became better prepared for the challenges and decisions they faced. And, Kern County became a little more welcoming to their children.



Linda Davis is executive director of Bakersfield Pregnancy Center. For information about volunteering or contributing, call (661) 326-1915 or go to bpcpartners.org.





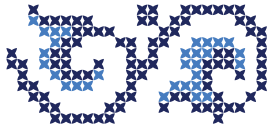
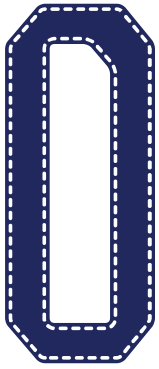


Moving a **MOUNTAIN**

With an iron will and an unbreakable spirit, Militsa Brennan came back from traumatic brain injury with the help of physicians at Kern Medical.



NORM BELL
Staff Writer



On a September day that seemed like any other, Militsa Brennan climbed aboard her favorite horse, Kiowa. The woman known as the 'mountain's angel' in Frazier Park was preparing for her role in the Cuddy Valley's 9/11 Ride to Remember event.

At 17 hands, the part mustang/part draft horse had been a sturdy friend for years. But on this day, just as Militsa reached to fasten her helmet, Kiowa lurched.

Militsa was thrown and struck her head, setting in motion a wild series of events that would change her life forever.

A medical helicopter rushed Militsa to Kern Medical where trauma doctors went to work dealing with her fractured skull. There was bleeding in the brain, which had started to swell. The decision was made to remove part of Militsa's skull and allow the brain to expand freely.

Her accident cast a pall over the 9/11 event as word of her accident spread. For many, she was the driving force behind community events on the mountain. For much of her more than quarter century on the mountain, she had organized the annual health fair; she had decorated the downtown area for the Christmas Fair; she had been a force in the Girl Scouts; she had been everywhere the community needed a hand.

In her day job as an x-ray technician at Clinica Sierra Vista, she touched many lives, but as a volunteer, she touched the entire community.

What quickly became clear was that Militsa would face many months of rehabilitation, first to regain normal breathing, then to regain motor skills. Then there would be more surgery.

The community sprang into action. Officials at Clinica Sierra Vista vowed to

hold her job for her and became an advocate for her with their insurance carrier. The local newspaper, the Mountain Enterprise, provided the community an update on her condition regularly and ran a photo page of residents wishing Militsa well. A GoFundMe account, designed to offset some of the medical expenses, quickly exceeded the original goal of \$10,000.

Back at Dreamweaver Ranch, husband Terry Brennan was educating himself on Militsa's condition, pressing doctors for details and a full explanation of treatment options.

**“...Kern Medical’s
trauma center
had swung
the odds in
Militsa’s favor.”**

Dr. Charles Liu, the neurosurgeon who will eventually install a titanium plate to match the skull area removed initially, cautioned Terry that the injury was life-threatening. “He told me most don’t survive,” Terry recalled. But quick work in Kern Medical's trauma center had swung the odds in Militsa's favor.

“Terry was really strong,” recalled the couple’s longtime friend, Lori Hallmark. “He wasn’t afraid to get in peoples’ faces. He was going to get nothing less than 110 percent for his wife.”

He praised the Kern Medical team – from doctors to social workers – for working with him and answering his every question. “They were just great,” he said.





Militsa and her horse Kiowa.

After the initial injury was stabilized – and a heavy-duty cover was put in place to protect the area where the skull had been removed – the long road to rehabilitation started.

It was a dizzying round through medical facilities – from Kern Medical to Barlow Respiratory Hospital in Van Nuys for its 30-day intensive constant respiratory rehab program, then it was back to Bakersfield for in-patient occupational therapy at the Centre for Neuro Skills (CNS).

She was a determined patient, husband Terry reported. At one point, he threatened to take away her cell phone, but she brushed off that idea as she used free time to check in on her many community projects.

When it was suggested that a wealth of online brain games could help her regain some memory function faster, Terry was quickly back with an iPad, Hallmark said.

By Christmas, Militsa was back at Dreamweaver Ranch, sporting what looked like a 1950s-era football helmet to protect her head.



Terry Brennan

“Terry was really strong. ...He was going to get nothing less than 110% for his wife.”

When Militsa first arrived in Kern Medical's Level II trauma center, Dr. Joseph Chen was the neurosurgeon on duty. He's a senior member of the neurosurgical department at the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine.

Last summer, Dr. Chen and Dr. Liu, along with two colleagues, all from the Neurorestoration Center at USC, began providing 24/7 neurosurgery coverage at Kern Medical. (See story on Page 13.)

The approach Drs. Chen and Liu adopted is paying dividends. Her motor skills and her memory are coming back.

As Militsa worked through her therapy routine as an outpatient at CNS in March, her community health fair was top of mind. During breaks, she consulted with other organizers and mapped strategy. It turns out the Relay for Life organizers had picked the same date – May 29 – as the Mountain Community Health Fair. And that just won't do, she said. “Wait until I give them a piece of my mind,” she said with a wink. Her sense of humor is alive and well.

When she's back on the ranch, life resumes a sense of normal rhythm. “I'm holding my own,” she said. She dresses and cooks; she works on her projects. It took her a while to go out to see the horses again. She's reconciled herself that her future involves riding in a horse-drawn cart, not on a horse. But it still stings. She knows neither she nor Kiowa did anything wrong. But sometimes things happen.

The toughest part of the whole ordeal, she said, was “being taken out of a routine.” She bristles at being told

when to eat and when to rest. But she sees a light at the end of the tunnel and is looking forward to her return to Kern Medical for surgery.

So is Dr. Liu, who serves as the director of the USC Center for Neurorestoration as well as the surgical director of the USC Comprehensive Epilepsy Program, and is one of Los Angeles' most experienced neurosurgeons.

“That's what I want in a surgeon,” Militsa said, “somebody who looks at a problem and says ‘I've got this.’”

What lies ahead is unknown, but Hallmark has a suggestion: “Militsa would be a great example, a spokesperson, for the idea there is meaningful life after traumatic brain injury.”

And as the Brennans were awaiting surgery this spring, the bond between the family and the mountain community has never been stronger. Militsa wrote in the Mountain Enterprise, “The Mountain Community has truly helped a family in need, my family. Words cannot express the gratitude I have for all of you.”



It's All Coming Together

KERN MEDICAL'S
NEUROSURGERY PROGRAM
MADE MILITSA'S CARE POSSIBLE

Norm Bell STAFF WRITER

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From his position as director of the Neurorestoration Center at the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine, Dr. Charles Liu has had a unique opportunity to survey the landscape of neuroscience. And he hasn't liked the view.

"Complex neurological services are increasingly available only at teaching hospitals in major cities," he observed. "That's not right."

He envisions a sort of democratization of the specialty, with highly-trained doctors branching out from centers like Los Angeles.

"More of America looks like Bakersfield than like Los Angeles," Dr. Liu said, suggesting that care needs to be delivered closer to home.

The test bed for his concept has been Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center in suburban Downey. He took over as director of neurosurgery there in 2007 and built the program by leveraging the talent available through

USC. Soon, Los Amigos emerged as a Level 4 center for the treatment of epilepsy.

The concept worked, but Dr. Liu was looking to prove the model is scalable and could travel.

So when an opportunity to build a neurosurgery program at Kern Medical in Bakersfield presented itself, Dr. Liu was all in.

Dr. Joseph Chen, Dr. Liu's colleague at the Neurorestoration Center and a longtime neurosurgery chief at Kaiser Permanente Southern California, was looking for a new challenge and embraced the opportunity to take the lead at Kern Medical.

"It's a great opportunity to build a specialty," Dr. Chen said, adding he was impressed with the earnest approach of the Kern Medical team and its commitment to improving healthcare for the community.

He bought a house in Bakersfield and set up shop as the lead neurosurgeon on call for trauma cases and started seeing patients weekdays.

But developing a comprehensive 24/7 neurosurgery practice is a team game. It takes a mix of sub-specialists and it takes extra hands to staff a program 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The team at the Neurorestoration Center was up to the challenge.

Dr. Liu, whose sub-specialty is epilepsy, signed on. So did Dr. Brian Lee,

a neurosurgeon whose sub-specialty is motion disorders, and Dr. Jonathan Russin, a micro neurosurgeon whose sub-specialty is cerebral vascular surgery.

Each doctor rotates during the month as the neurosurgeon at Kern Medical.

"We are thrilled that the USC neurosurgeons have joined Kern Medical's faculty."

But the advantages to local residents reach well beyond emergency and trauma care. Each of these highly-trained neurosurgeons is seeing patients in his sub-specialty.

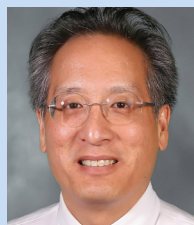
For epilepsy patients, Dr. Liu points to Kern Medical's upcoming Epilepsy Center, which is set to debut this summer.

Similarly, Dr. Lee is seeing patients with Parkinson's and other motion disorders.

He is trained in implanting electrodes in the brain, much like a cardiac pacemaker, that can significantly improve the lives of those

The Doctors Will See You Now

Meet the USC Neurosurgeons at Kern Medical



Dr. Joseph Chen



Dr. Brian Lee



Dr. Charles Liu



Dr. Jonathan Russin

Kern Medical to Open Epilepsy Center this Summer

coping with these neurological disorders. The once cutting edge technology has become the standard of care, Dr. Lee explained. But this is the first time it's been available in Bakersfield.

And Dr. Russin is offering a new level of care for aneurysm patients. He performs aneurysm clipping and open aneurysm surgery. While he acknowledges some complex cases – like revascularization bypass surgery – still need to be done in Los Angeles. He said Kern Medical has made the commitment to infrastructure upgrades that will be a game-changer.

As part of these upgrades, Kern Medical achieved designation as a 'primary stroke center' just last September, said Jina Pappas, stroke center coordinator. She explained that there are detailed criteria that must be met before Kern Medical could apply for the comprehensive stroke center designation. Some – like a dedicated intensive care unit for stroke patients – are in place. Others – like 24/7 on-site neurosurgeons with aneurysm experience – are now available with the USC connection.

The power of this USC team to upgrade care in the region is a major factor in strengthening Kern Medical as a highly specialized tertiary referral center.

"We are thrilled that the USC neurosurgeons have joined Kern Medical's faculty," said Russell Judd, CEO of Kern Medical. "Their presence significantly enhances the neuroscience capabilities in our community."

Dr. Chen has taken the lead in establishing links with neurosurgeons in Bakersfield. "We're not carpetbaggers, not just LA people coming up," he said. The goal is not to take cases back to Los Angeles, but rather to build a comprehensive program at Kern Medical, Dr. Chen said. "I'm in it for the long haul," he said.

Kern Medical plans to open the area's first epilepsy center July 1. It's a project that has special meaning to Dr. Charles Liu, director of USC's Neurorestoration Center, and a driving force behind the upgrade of neurosurgery at Kern Medical. Dr. Liu has developed similar epilepsy centers at Rancho Los Amigos in Downey and Hoag Hospital in Newport Beach.

Epilepsy is the third most prevalent neurological disorder, and can have a devastating effect on both the patient and the patient's family.

But a combination of medicine and surgery can make many patients seizure-free, Dr. Liu said.

Dr. Liu expects to be performing epilepsy surgeries later this year at Kern Medical, a first for Bakersfield.

Epilepsy centers are graded on four levels. The Rancho Los Amigo center is a Level 4, the highest level; Hoag Hospital is a Level 3 but 'soon to be a Level 4,' Dr. Liu said with obvious pride.

He said there's no reason Kern Medical shouldn't be a Level 3 facility with the staff and infrastructure on hand. A key component – an Epilepsy Monitoring Unit, where doctors can capture a seizure in progress – will be ready. Bakersfield neurologist Hari Veedu, MD, will play a key role as will the "network of care" provided through USC.

At that point, only a few especially complex cases would need to be diverted to Los Angeles.

The center will have a patient focus, Dr. Liu said. Epilepsy treatment requires multiple patient visits and asking somebody to drive to Los Angeles repeatedly is just too high a barrier. Having a full range of treatment options – from medication management to surgery – available in Bakersfield is a huge step forward for healthcare in the region, he said.

The creation of an epilepsy center at Kern Medical is a step that will draw national attention and demonstrate a model for care across the nation, Dr. Liu said. "We're showing it's possible."

He plans a kickoff event that will include lectures and talks by epilepsy experts, followed by a tour of the facility on Kern Medical's main campus.

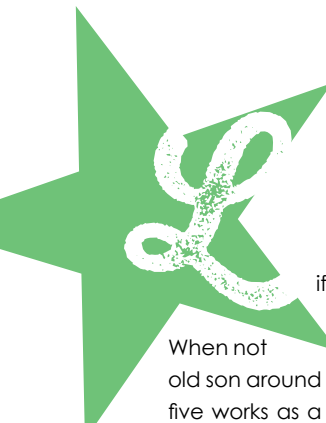
Epilepsy is estimated to affect seven of every 1,000 Americans. With Kern County's population near 900,000, that suggests 6,300 people have epilepsy in our county!

Whipping Cancer

Danielle Carrillo isn't letting cancer keep her on the sidelines

Norm Bell STAFF WRITER





“I live for the competition, the team, the whole scene.”

Life moves quickly in Danielle Carrillo's world. When not chasing her one-year-old son around the house, the mother of five works as a server at the Bakersfield Country Club.

And then there's her schedule as a member of Bakersfield's Unforgiven Roller Girls.

That life changed dramatically last August. As she showered, she felt a mass in her left breast. An ultrasound, then a biopsy, confirmed cancer.

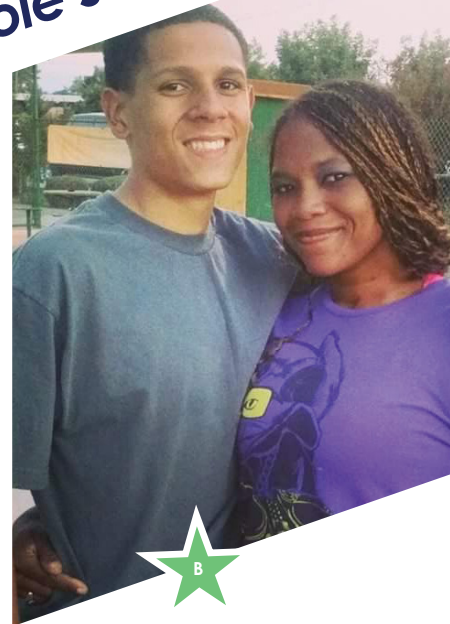
While there's no history of breast cancer in her family, her sister has ovarian cancer. That genetic link was a red flag, said Dr. Everardo Cobos, chair of medicine at Kern Medical and one of Carrillo's doctors.

The rapidly expanding science of genetics-based medicine has doctors exploring links once thought remote in the name of finding improved treatment options.

In Carrillo's case, the BRCA test revealed a 'triple negative.' That means she's at heightened risk of breast, ovarian, colon and other cancers.

It's the same diagnosis Angelina Jolie received, Dr. Cobos explained. The actress opted for a double mastectomy, a decision that sparked an ethical debate and served as an educational wake-up call for a generation of women.

It should also be a wake-up call for men, Dr. Cobos warned. The same genetic logic applies to men. If there is prostate or bladder cancer in the family, genetic testing is warranted and



Pictured from left:
A) Danielle laces up for a bout.
B) Danielle with her son Emey.

covered by most insurance. A negative finding is a relief; a positive finding allows early intervention. It's a win-win, Dr. Cobos said.

In Carrillo's case, Dr. Cobos said he knew he was talking to a special patient when she asked if she could remain active during chemotherapy.

Many people workout and jog during chemo, he told her.

"She said she had something else in mind," Dr. Cobos said. "She pulled out her phone and showed me a photo of her in her roller derby uniform."

Chemo is draining and she has up and down days. But she's keeping up

with practices and matches whenever possible.

"It's who I am," she explained. "I live for the competition, the team, the whole scene."

Carrillo, 35, has many miles of treatment ahead. There's surgery, perhaps radiation and more surgery, followed by reconstruction. She's off work from the country club, at least through the end of surgery.

With a support team of family and roller derby teammates, she's managed to keep her upbeat nature and her sense of humor. She's just got too much going on to be down.



DR. EVERARDO COBOS | Chair, Kern Medical Department of Medicine

Dr. Cobos comes to Kern Medical from Grace Health System in Lubbock, Texas, where he was director of hematology at its Blood Disorders and Cancer Therapeutics Center. He also was a full-time faculty member at Texas Tech Health Science Center where he was associate director for oncology programs. He was active in the Lubbock community and was named Hispanic Physician of the Year there. Since arriving in Bakersfield, he has also established the 'Doc for a Day' community education program and is overseeing the expansion of our chemotherapy services to the Columbus Street offices.

The Power of Knowledge

Ibania Medina's medical background and committed research became a valuable asset to her health.

Norm Bell STAFF WRITER

Ibania Medina (centered) with her father Ricardo and mother Rogelia.

Before she had turned 20, Ibania Medina had moved from her family's home in McFarland to Southern California in pursuit of a career in healthcare.

As a paramedic in the Imperial Valley, she'd studied and she'd learned. One of the things she learned was the unexplained weight gain she'd been experiencing wasn't good.

She saw a doctor in Palm Springs who referred her to oncology specialists at Loma Linda University Hospital. Tests confirmed Medina had a rare form of ovarian cancer.

"My life changed in a heartbeat," Medina recalls.

While doctors attacked her cancer, she contemplated the 'what if' and 'what's next' questions of life.

The treatment was a success and her cancer has been in remission for about seven years now. Medina used the time to get a bachelor's degree in healthcare administration, move back to the Bakersfield area and start work in medical records.

Ibania's analysis of her situation quickly led her to Kern Medical.

But her cancer hadn't disappeared. She still needs specialized care so she applied her medical knowledge to researching care options. She wanted a teaching hospital and expertise in gynecological oncology. That analysis quickly led her to Kern Medical.

Dr. Everardo Cobos, chair of the Dept. of Medicine and an oncology specialist, is one of the doctors she saw.

"Treating a complex cancer like hers requires a team approach with both medical oncology and gynecology oncology specialists," he said. "Our facility can offer that expertise."

During her time under Kern Medical care, Medina has had a couple of "scares," Dr. Cobos said. But the suspi-

cious findings were resolved and she remains in remission.

From Medina's perspective, "The care has been great." While she notes Kern Medical's facilities can't compare to the space-age feel of Loma Linda, "the doctors have taken extra time to make me understand every step."

Dr. Cobos sees Medina as a powerful advocate for her own health and for those around her. He took the unusual step of arranging a meeting between Medina and Russell Judd, Kern Medical's CEO, so that she could share her thoughts on how to improve facilities and care.

EARLY DETECTION IS KEY



As doctors learn more about the complexities of cancer, mortality rates are falling. However, the sooner a cancer is spotted, the better the chances for successful treatment. Many cancers have no early symptoms, but some produce signs that can be spotted earlier:

FEMALE BREAST CANCER

For women, the most immediate concern is breast cancer. Find a step-by-step guide to early detection at [breastcancer.org](https://www.breastcancer.org)

MALE BREAST CANCER

Men can develop breast cancer too. It's not as frequent, but it can be just as deadly. Find a step-by-step guide at [ubcf.org](https://www.ubcf.org)

TESTICULAR CANCER

Men should also check for testicular cancer. A self-exam is quick and painless. Find a step-by-step guide at [testicularcancersociety.org](https://www.testicularcancersociety.org)

SKIN CANCER

Skin cancers can be deadly if left untreated. Find a step-by-step guide to identifying potential trouble spots on your skin at [skincancer.org](https://www.skincancer.org)

ORAL CANCER

Screening for oral cancer is part of a routine dental visit. But you can find a step-by-step guide to do it at home at [sixstepscreening.org](https://www.sixstepscreening.org)

COLON CANCER

The 'gold standard' in testing for colon cancer is the colonoscopy. But patients considered at low to moderate risk may be candidates for a home test that involves collecting a fecal sample and mailing it to a lab. Check with your doctor to see if you're a candidate for this kind of testing.

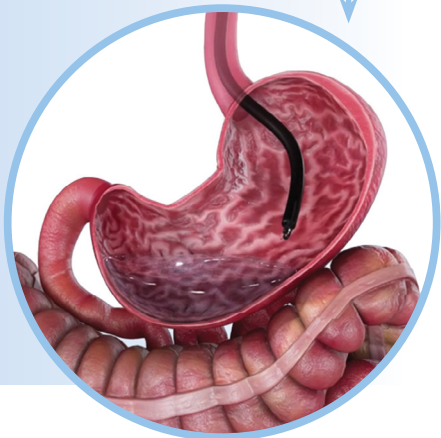
STITCH-BY-STITCH PRECISION

The OverStitch™ Endoscopic Suturing System allows surgeons to stitch through a flexible microscope.



Kern Medical has become the first in the area to employ the OverStitch Endoscopic Suturing System to reduce invasive surgery in revisions to bariatric surgery.

OverStitch allows a surgeon to work endoscopically – through a tube passed down the throat and into the stomach of the sedated patient. From there, lap bands and sleeves can be adjusted to fit the changing needs of the patient. It's a significant advancement over traditional approaches that required opening the patient in a surgical setting.



IN THE DOCTOR'S WORDS

OverStitch makes the difference, explains Dr. Andrea Pakula, associate director of the Surgical Critical Care unit, between a 23-hour hospital stay and a 2-3-day stay plus a new scar. "I like to keep patients overnight after an OverStitch procedure, just in case there are complications with swelling," Dr. Pakula explained.

She first encountered the OverStitch system last year at a medical conference and immediately became its champion, convincing Kern Medical administrators of the wisdom of adding OverStitch to its surgeons' toolbox.

While Dr. Pakula has been using OverStitch in her bariatric cases, she points out that the device has many other uses, especially in cases of bleeding in the upper GI tract and other procedures performed by gastroenterologists.

Throughout 2017, Dr. Pakula said she expects the use of the system to grow as more doctors embrace the technology.



Dr. Pakula



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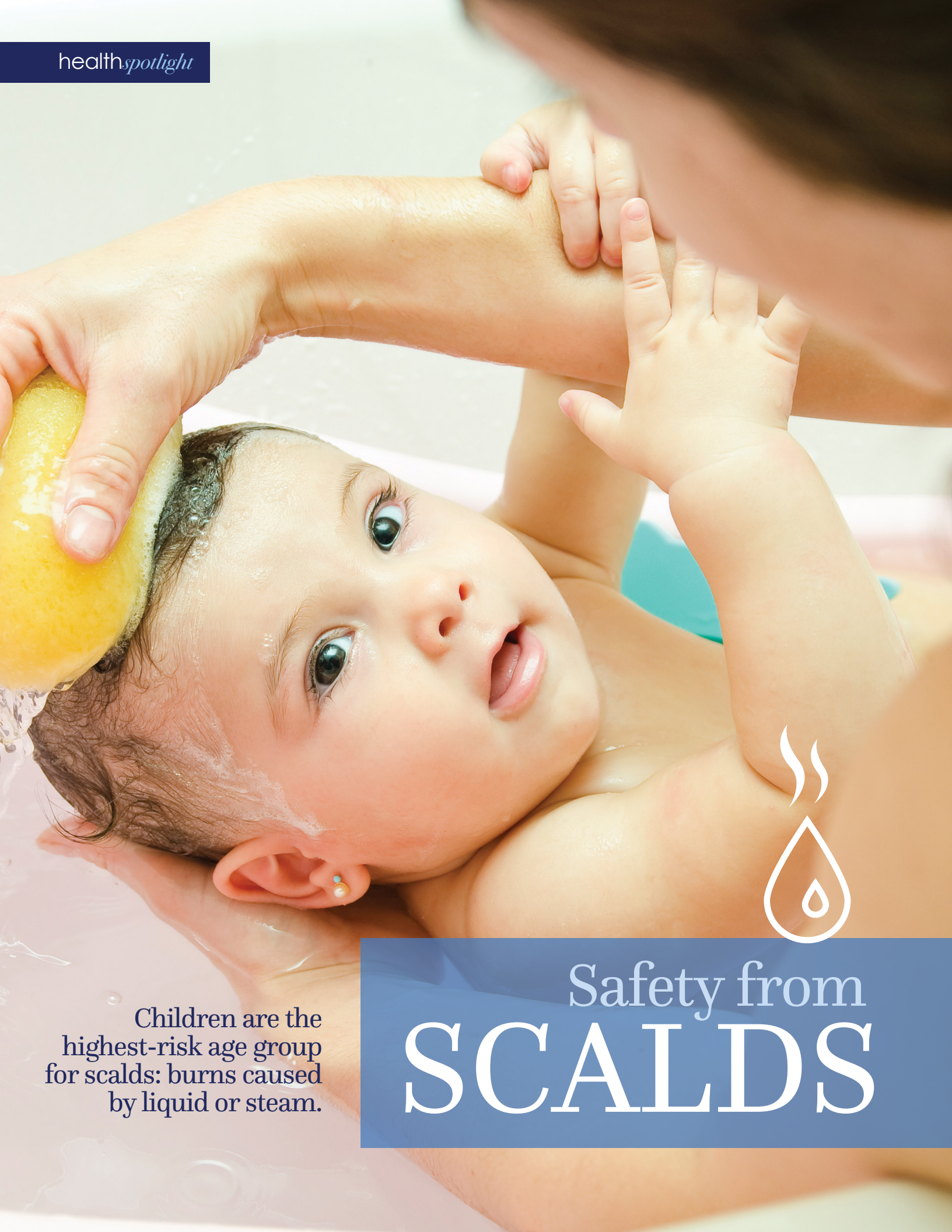
Drs. Ralph Garcia-Pacheco, Ayham Aboeed and Augustine Munoz are experts in preventive and treatment therapies for chronic lung problems, including asthma, bronchitis, ARDS (acute respiratory distress syndrome), cystic fibrosis, lung disease and cancer, SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome), COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), emphysema and sleep apnea. Services include:

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- Pulse Oximetry
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- Valley Fever (Cocci)
- Interstitial Lung Diseases
- Sarcoidosis
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Children are the highest-risk age group for scalds: burns caused by liquid or steam.

Safety from SCALDS

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For children under the age of five, scalds are a major concern. In fact, they are the leading cause of admissions to burn centers across California.

Nationally, there are as many as 500,000 scalding cases a year with about 100,000 requiring treatment at a burn center. And about 100 cases a year are fatal, according to the American Burn Association.

The average scald victim suffers injuries across 10 percent of the body and are hospitalized for five days.

Scalds differ from burns in one important way: Burns are caused by dry sources; scalds are caused by something wet, usually liquids or steam. Scalds can damage multiple layers of skin.

Scalds can – and do – happen to people of any age. Children are the most at risk, followed by older adults and those with disabilities.

Figures from burn centers paint a predictable picture of scald injuries. One-third of scald injuries involve heated water and another half involve a hot liquid such as coffee, tea, soup or grease.

And that data provides guidance for scald prevention.



KITCHEN SAFETY

- Designate a "no enter zone" that keeps children at least three feet from the stove.
- Place hot liquids and foods in the center of the table or toward the back of a counter.
- Avoid using placemats or tablecloths because children can pull them down.
- Use back burners while cooking and always position the handles of pots & pans toward the back of the stove.
- Don't let children carry hot food or drinks.



BATHROOM SAFETY

- Lower the temperature of your home's water heater to no more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Check the water temperature with a thermometer before placing your child in a bath.
- Check the water for hot spots by running your hand around in the water.
- Do not leave a child unattended in a bath.



HANDLING LIQUIDS

- Never drink coffee, tea or any other hot beverage while carrying a child.
- Never heat a baby bottle in the microwave. Heat baby bottles in warm water from the tap.
- Use a travel mug with a tight lid while drinking hot liquids on the go.



SCALD FIRST AID

- Remove any clothing that could keep the hot liquids against the skin. However, DO NOT remove any clothing that is sticking to the skin.
- Run the injury under cool water for 3-5 minutes. Cooling can decrease the depth of the burn.
- Cover the injury with a clean dry cloth. DO NOT apply butter or ointment.
- Ice should not be used as it may shut down circulation to the damaged skin.
- Do not break blisters. For severe burns – ones that are larger than the size of the hand or cause white or charred skin – go immediately to the nearest emergency room or doctor.
- Remember the pain of a burn is not directly related to its severity. For most minor, second degree burns, use painkillers like ibuprofen.



VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME & HEART



Erica Easton
*Executive Director of
Kern Medical Foundation*

For more than 50 years, Kern Medical has benefited from the support of a team of generous, kind individuals – the Kern Medical Auxiliary. Together these volunteers staff areas throughout Kern Medical and provide support whenever and wherever needed. Their generosity extends to more than their volunteer time, because each year they purchase technology and equipment, as well as amenities for our patients.

As Kern Medical's largest donor, the Kern Medical Auxiliary helps fund items that would not be purchased otherwise. The projects they support are

often focused on providing comfort for our patients and their families and echo the spirit of what it means to be a Kern Medical Auxiliary.

This past year alone, the Kern Medical Auxiliary has funded comfort bags that include earplugs, eye masks and other amenities for our patients, a cuddle cot that allows for extended time at the bedside when a family loses a baby to fetal demise, blanket warmers for the NICU, a transport monitor and diagnostic equipment for the Stroke Program. In addition to these special projects, each year the Auxiliary provides clothing for our Inpatient Psychiatric Unit and Emergency Department, handmade baby hats, memory boxes and Christmas gifts for our patients.

Our Auxiliaries are tasked with a variety of jobs that range from cuddling our finest patients each day in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit to helping generate

revenue in the snack bar and gift shop. They also help provide information and support to the families waiting for patients undergoing lifesaving surgery in our Emergency Department. In addition, there are volunteers that play a critical role behind the scenes to ensure that many administrative functions are completed efficiently. Today, our volunteers provide more than 17,070 hours each year, saving Kern Medical more than \$458,000 in staffing costs.

Caring for the most critically ill and vulnerable patients in Kern County requires an extensive, highly trained team of physicians and staff. Our Auxiliaries are at the heart of the Kern Medical team and help ensure that all our patients receive compassionate, gentle care. We are grateful to the Kern Medical Auxiliary for continuing on the tradition of caring and giving that began so many years ago.

For more information about how you can volunteer at Kern Medical, please contact the volunteer services manager at Sylvia.Walker@KernMedical.com, (661) 326-2108 or visit us at KernMedical.com/support-kern-medical/volunteers. To learn about how you can support the Kern Medical Foundation and our projects for 2017, visit us at KernMedicalFoundation.com.



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