



Family Medicine *News*

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE | DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY MEDICINE

Spring 2012

Meet Emily Dow, MD

Ask Dr. Emily Dow why she decided to practice medicine, and the answer will inspire you.

Twenty years ago, she was teaching English as a second language to adults in Los Angeles when a middle-aged Latina student was stricken with chest pains during class. Dow wanted to call an ambulance to take her to a hospital, but the woman begged her not to. She couldn't afford the ride. The student made it to the ER, but seeing her desperate situation was one factor that led Dow to pursue a second career.



"I chose medicine to serve the neediest and work in an area where I'd make the most impact," she says. "Healthcare is something all humans need." The clinical professor helps fill that need in community clinics and the classroom, where she inspires medical students to join her in treating the poor.

Dow impresses her students as both a soft-spoken humble leader and a fearless woman, says former UC Irvine medical student Negin Agange. Dow practices family medicine in areas where physicians are few – from a high-crime neighborhood in South Central Los Angeles where she directed a community clinic, to Chiapas, Mexico, where she spends a few weeks each year treating patients who live in extreme poverty.

"She gives to the community every day," Agange says. "She teaches future doctors how we can make positive changes in the lives of others through our daily work."

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"I chose medicine to serve the neediest and work in an area where I'd make the most impact. Healthcare is something all humans need."

- Dr. Emily Dow



Innovative Care for Latinos

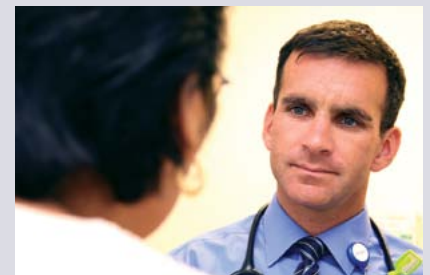
Focus on cariño

Dr. Charles Vega first walked into the UC Irvine Family Health Center as a medical school graduate eager to make a difference in his first job as a physician.

Twelve years later, his impact is felt both within the community of hundreds of grateful patients and their families he sees each week and in the burgeoning field of Latino healthcare.

Vega directs the family medicine residency program and the acclaimed Program in Medical Education for the Latino Community (PRIME-LC), the first medical education program in the country designed to meet the needs of underserved Latinos. As such, he stands at the forefront of one of the most pressing issues in healthcare today.

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"I want to make UC Irvine a center of excellence for Latino healthcare with the best practices in the country."

- Dr. Charles Vega

Letter from the Chair

Dr. Laura Mosqueda, Chair, Department of Family Medicine

I am pleased to say that, due to the hard work and dedication of our faculty and staff, the Department of Family Medicine has achieved considerable momentum in the past year toward our vision of being one of the top 10 departments in the country caring for underserved populations. Our vision for the future is to be a leader in medical education and clinical care, with the goal always being exemplary care for the underserved, including the indigent, aged, disabled, abused and neglected. New trends in the field, including an emphasis on patient-centered medical homes and attention at the national level on the complex conditions of the chronically ill, bring attention, focus and resources to support our vision.



Our department has a diverse team committed to excellence in patient care, teaching, research and community service. We are increasing the size of our faculty as we *expand* our clinical care operations, *strengthen* our medical student teaching through innovations such as Medical Readers' Theater and *bolster* our research division. We are the first in the country to offer the PRIME-LC program, which is designed to train medical students in care for underserved Latinos. In addition to our fully accredited Family Medicine Residency Program, we have an American College of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) – accredited geriatrics fellowship with two fellows per year. We are also proud of our students as they continue to run a free health clinic for the uninsured on Saturday mornings. They not only run the free clinic, they also have taken the next step and designed a class about caring for the underserved. The students recruit speakers and do what it takes to grow our impact as we seek to educate, ultimately, all medical students about these vulnerable patients.

Our research program has major focuses on elder abuse and neglect, innovative medical education, and clinical care. For example, we participate in a grant through the Orange County Coalition of Community Clinics to help our Family Health Center become patient-centered medical homes. Additionally, two of our faculty have received advanced training in integrative medicine. This specialized training allows us to broaden our medical practice to include an in-depth knowledge of integrative medicine. Our faculty are currently funded through the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Justice, Donald W. Reynolds Foundation, Archstone Foundation and UniHealth Foundation.

Family Medicine Physicians Offering Integrative Medicine

Integrative Medicine (IM) blends traditional Western medicine with complementary practices such as acupuncture, hypnosis, mind-body medicine, food as medicine and Cancer Guide (Center for Mind-Body Medicine), touch therapy, nutraceuticals, functional medicine, and bioidentical hormones. Two of our faculty have advanced training in IM. Dr. Wadie Najm, MD, is board certified in Family Medicine and Geriatrics; he is also the Medical Director of the UC Irvine Samueli Clinic for Integrative Medicine. Dr. David Kilgore completed a fellowship from the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine.

Did you know?

■ **FAMILY MEDICINE** is the medical specialty that provides continuing, comprehensive health care for the individual and family. It is the specialty in breadth that integrates the biological, clinical, and behavioral sciences. The scope of family medicine encompasses all ages, genders, organ systems and every disease entity.

■ **FAMILY MEDICINE** is a three-dimensional specialty, incorporating knowledge, skill and process. The family medicine process is unique. At the heart of this process is the patient-physician relationship with the patient viewed in the context of the family. It is the extent to which this relationship is valued, developed, nurtured and maintained that distinguishes family medicine from every other specialty.

■ **THE DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY MEDICINE** is the academic home to nearly 30 UC Irvine faculty members who have a passion for patient care, research and medical education. Faculty members teach medical students at our four faculty practice sites – in Santa Ana and Anaheim (both federally qualified health centers), Gottschalk Plaza in Irvine on the UC Irvine campus and the SeniorHealth Center in Orange at UC Irvine Medical Center. We provide more than 30,000 patient visits each year.



Meet Emily Dow *continued from page 1*

On a recent morning at the UC Irvine Family Health Center - Santa Ana, where Dow sees patients, she helped an elderly woman into a wheelchair, gently admonishing her in Spanish for walking on a fractured ankle she'd treated the previous day. "When she came in yesterday her leg was swollen and bruised; she'd put heat on it instead of ice."

Congratulations to our faculty!

■ **DR. DAVID KILGORE** completed a fellowship in integrative medicine from the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine in 2011.

■ **DR. LAURA MOSQUEDA** received the Family Physician of the Year award from the Orange County Chapter of the California Association of Family Practice (OC-CAFP).

■ **DR. EMILY DOW** received the Family Physician Educator of the Year award from the OC-CAFP.

It frustrates and worries Dow that patients often neglect themselves or delay seeing a doctor because they are poor or uninsured, especially if they suffer from conditions such as diabetes or hypertension, where early intervention can save lives. "The grinding poverty prevents people from seeking care when they should," she says.

In Chiapas, where Dow works as a volunteer physician, most of her patients have never been to a doctor. "We see people who live on less than a dollar a day. They're fortunate to have shoes," she says. "We treat illnesses such as malaria, typhoid and hookworm not seen in the U.S. in decades."

"Despite the frustrations, we can make a difference, however small, in the lives of patients," Dow says. "When we see them rise above their situation, take charge of their lives and take better care of themselves, that's the reward."

By Kathryn Bold, University Communications

Innovative Care for Latinos *continued from page 1*

The expanding U.S. Latino population creates a growing need for competent and culturally sensitive healthcare. According to studies, nearly 30 percent of Latino patients cited difficulty communicating with their physician as a concern.

"I want to make UC Irvine a center of excellence for Latino healthcare with the best practices in the country," Vega says. "When patients, researchers and policymakers think about Latino health, I want them to think about UC Irvine."

The issue of Latino health is of particularly critical importance in Santa Ana, the home of UC Irvine's Family Health Center, where 69 percent of the patients are Latino. The great majority of these patients speak Spanish.

In addition to PRIME-LC, which is enrolling its fifth class this month, Vega has created HEAL-LC, a program in which freshly minted physicians will receive a strong foundation in the language, cultural customs and health beliefs of Latino patients. These physicians will continue to use these skills long after completing their training at UC Irvine.

"While Latino health needs are increasingly being recognized, we need to have solutions and put what we learn into action," Vega says. "That's where PRIME and HEAL come in."

"What we in medicine can learn from Latinos is the concept of *cariño*, which is loving care. We need to bond with our patients and let them voice their concerns. Building that skill with our medical students is important."

By Tom Vasich, University Communications

Share Our Vision, Support Our Work

If you share our vision of improving care for the underserved through excellence, teaching and innovations in care, please consider making a donation to our program. Your gift will contribute to training future physicians in caring for the underserved. For each physician we teach, thousands of patients benefit over the course of each physician's career.

You can donate online by going to www.familymed.uci.edu. If you would like to support clinical care for the underserved, click "UC Irvine Student Run Free Clinic" on the drop-down menu.

If you would rather call us to learn more about our programs, make a donation or get involved in other ways, please call Linda Haghi, director, community relations for Family Medicine and Geriatrics, at 714.456.6317 or reach her by email at lhaghi@uci.edu.



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- Dr. Charles Vega

Students Care for the Underserved

The UC Irvine Outreach Clinics, a student-run free clinic at the Village of Hope in Tustin, continues to expand its services in 2012. The students provide primary care, lab, medications and referrals every Saturday morning under the guidance of Medical Director, Emily Dow, MD, and other faculty. Recently, behavioral health, psychiatry and ophthalmology were added to the clinic services.

“The students wanted to start a clinic of their own where they can treat patients – not just screen them for diseases,” she says. “They’re not only getting early clinical training, they’re seeing the plight of the poor and getting motivated to contribute to their care throughout their career.”



The medical students’ vision is to expand both primary care and specialty referrals. Thanks to a volunteer ophthalmologist, patients have received sight-saving procedures. A second volunteer specialist performed a tongue biopsy for a patient who was able to apply for Medi-Cal after the pathology report showed cancer. This year the student organization, Medical Initiative Against Homelessness, will be joining forces with UCIOC to serve Orange County’s most vulnerable residents.

The medical students designed a class called “Caring for the Underserved” that covers topics such as healthcare policy, health and human rights, and community advocacy. The students coordinate the class and invite faculty to speak on course topics.

UC Irvine Family Medicine physicians practice at four locations:

- *Gottschalk Medical Plaza
Irvine, CA*
- *UC Irvine Family Health Center
Santa Ana, CA*
- *UC Irvine Family Health Center
Anaheim, CA*
- *UC Irvine SeniorHealth Center
Orange, CA*

You can contact us at 1-877-UCI-DOCS (1-877-824-3627) or online at www.healthcare.uci.edu/family-medicine

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY MEDICINE

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