

OrangeCoast
MAGAZINE

How did
the doctors get
on this list? Turn to
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for the selection
process.




TOP DOCTORS

— 2019 —

513 PHYSICIANS in **68** SPECIALTIES

This year's physicians of excellence were judged by the **Orange County Medical Association**
to be among the most accomplished and caring.

Unless otherwise noted, physicians are M.D.s;  designates Kaiser physicians, who only accept Kaiser patients.

ALLERGY AND IMMUNOLOGY

William E. Berger
Asthma and food allergies
Mission Viejo
949-364-2900

Warner W. Carr
Food allergies, asthma, eczema, allergic rhinitis
Mission Viejo
949-364-2900

Wan-Yin Chan
Food allergy, immune deficiency
Orange
714-633-6363

Sarah Samimi Field
Food allergy, eosinophilic esophagitis, asthma
Orange
714-633-6363

Bruce F. Friedman
Asthma, rhinitis, sinusitis, eczema, food allergies
Fountain Valley
714-549-9330

Donald S. Levy
Orange
714-639-7847


Christina Schwindt
Food allergy, allergic rhinitis, asthma, eczema
Mission Viejo
949-364-2900

William N. Sokol, Jr.
Allergic diseases of adults and children
Newport Beach
949-645-3374

ANESTHESIOLOGY

Kyle Ahn
Regional anesthesiology, perioperative medicine, medical education
Orange
714-456-6652

Clifford Char
Cardiac anesthesia, regional anesthesia, obstetrical anesthesia
Santa Ana
714-619-5383

Daniel S. Choi 
Regional anesthesiology
Irvine
949-932-5147

Scott Engwall
Orange
714-456-7414

Kimberly Gimenez
Orange
714-456-6649

Anna L. Harris
Perioperative care
Orange
714-456-5501

Richard Kelly
Cardiothoracic anesthesiology
Orange
714-456-5462

Manoj Kulkarni
Pediatric anesthesiology
Santa Ana
714-580-1580

John Lin
Santa Ana
714-809-2579

Debra Morrison
Pediatric anesthesiology
Orange
714-456-5501


Corey Nelson
Medical education, medical simulation, team training
Orange
714-456-5501

Lynnus Peng
ePreop, web-based medicine, quality improvement
Fullerton
714-279-8665

Afshin Shabanian
Spine injections, radio frequency ablation
Santa Ana
714-619-5383


Shalini Shah
Pain management, pediatric pain
Irvine
949-824-7246


Kathleen Sullivan
Laguna Hills
800-888-2186

Anil Tiwari 
Irvine
949-932-2284

Shermeen Vakharia
Cardiovascular anesthesia
Orange
949-824-7246

Trung Vu
Critical care medicine
Orange
714-456-8754

Karen Wu 
Regional anesthesia
Irvine
888-988-2800

Ramin Zolfagari 
Pediatric anesthesiology
Irvine
949-932-2448

BLOOD BANKING AND TRANSFUSION MEDICINE

Minh-Ha Tran, D.O.
Non-malignant hematology
Orange
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CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

Byron J. Allen
Congestive heart failure, transplantation
Orange
714-456-6699

Jin Kyung Kim
Women's heart, cardiovascular imaging
Orange
714-456-6699

Shaista Malik
Preventive cardiology, integrative medicine
Orange
714-456-6699

Fernando Mendoza
General cardiology, cardiology, diagnostic cardiology
Los Alamitos
562-598-3200

Mark P. Miller
Cardiometabolic disease
Anaheim
714-635-9680

Michael Miyamoto
Preventive cardiology, heart failure, cardiac imaging
Mission Viejo
949-364-3388

Pranav Patel
Orange
714-456-7589

Satinder Swaroop
Interventional and preventive cardiology
Fountain Valley
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CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY

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Evidence-based mental health services
Newport Beach
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Gayle Polsky
Newport Beach
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CHILD NEUROLOGY

Anjalee Galion
Sleep medicine
Orange
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Suresh Gurbani 
Pediatric epilepsy
Anaheim
888-988-2800

Andrew McIntosh
Epilepsy
Laguna Niguel
949-249-3780

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO...

GET RID OF CANCER BEFORE YOU HAVE IT

When **SOMAYA ISHAQ** of Irvine was told she had a 95 percent chance of getting ovarian cancer, she decided to be proactive.

We had two girls in two years. My husband and I planned on four kids. But I had complications after the birth of No. 2 in 2015. A year and a half later, I still wasn't well. I'd studied to be a physician's assistant before I got married, so when an exam showed a lot of ovarian cysts, my background and my intuition told me there might be something else going on. I got a genetic test done at Hoag Hospital.

The test showed that I had a 95 percent probability of getting ovarian cancer due to a mutation in the BRCA2 gene. It also showed a high risk of breast cancer. My family has a huge incidence of cancer—my mom got ovarian cancer after I was born, a 40-year-old cousin has stage 4 colon cancer, many aunts have had cancer.

Ovarian cancer is very hard to predict and often a death sentence. Survival rates are low. Often, by the time you know it, it's too late—it's spread, and you have five years to live. We were lucky to know early. I'd wanted to try for a third child, but when the doctors said I had a 75 percent chance of a miscarriage due to my previous uterine damage, the risk seemed too great.

My husband initially thought I had plenty of time. But once he got educated on genetic testing and how accurate it is, he called the decision a "no-brainer." We want to grow old together and live a long life with the two healthy, beautiful, active kids we have.

Given all that, I decided on a full hysterectomy at 35. I haven't met anyone who has done it this young.



It's a complete mind shift to be proactive. I didn't technically have cancer yet, but the preventive act was necessary for longevity. The hardest part is going through menopause now, 10 years early.

I'll wait until 40 to make the next step on breast surgery. Breasts are lower risks. I'll keep monitoring them for an eventual full mastectomy.

I'd forgotten about Angelina Jolie until I got the BRCA2 mutation diagnosis. But when people hear about my positive screening, they say, "Oh, you got the Angelina gene." So she did raise public awareness. I'm very big now on telling young women to get checked. When I talk to people my age, they say, "I don't want to do that test. I don't want to know. I'd rather just be blindsided." That's scary.

I wonder if I want my daughters to get tested at 21. Will it put the fear in them? By that time, I hope it'll be standard screening. It'll give them an option to make decisions.

It hits home that I won't have more kids when my daughters ask me, "When will you have a baby brother for us?" "Maybe we will," I say, "if we adopt." My husband and I are open to it.

Even now, my grandma still hassles me. "You should've waited to have one more child," she'll say, or "Why did you rush?" or "Why did you do the screening at such a young age?" To her generation, ignorance is bliss.

On the other hand, if I were to get cancer and die, they'd ask, "Why didn't she do anything?" —As told to Roy M. Wallack

photographs by MARIAH TAUGER

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Head injury, stroke, informatics, artificial intelligence
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Lily Tran
Pediatric epilepsy
Orange
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Mary Zupanc
Epilepsy
Orange
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CHILD PSYCHIATRY

Anju Hurria
Autism, physician wellness, anxiety and depression
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CLINICAL BIOCHEMICAL GENETICS

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Lysosomal storage disorders, gene editing
Orange
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CLINICAL CARDIAC ELECTROPHYSIOLOGY

Aseem Desai
Robotic ablation of cardiac arrhythmias
Mission Viejo
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CRITICAL CARE MEDICINE

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DERMATOLOGY

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Laser, cosmetic, skin cancer treatment
Tustin
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Michelle Aszterbaum
Skin cancer prevention and therapy
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Skin cancer, acne, Mohs, cosmetic dermatology
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Kristen M. Kelly
Lasers, vascular birthmarks, energy-based scar revision
Irvine
949-824-0606

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Mohs micrographic surgery
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949-824-0606

Brian R. Toy
Medical, surgical, and cosmetic dermatology
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DIAGNOSTIC RADIOLOGY

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Musculoskeletal imaging and intervention
Orange
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Miles Chang
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June Chen
Breast imaging
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949-272-2095

Crispina Chong-Han 
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Abdominal imaging
Orange
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Stephen A. Feig
Breast imaging and intervention
Orange
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Joon Kim
Musculoskeletal, nuclear medicine, and molecular imaging
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Cardiovascular and thoracic imaging
Orange
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January Lopez
Breast imaging
Newport Beach
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Abdominal and urologic imaging
Orange
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Breast imaging
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Diagnostic Radiology continues

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Neuroradiology
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Hieu Truong
Nuclear medicine, PET scans, musculoskeletal imaging
Orange
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Dan Vu
Thoracic and cardiac imaging
Orange
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EMERGENCY MEDICINE

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Under-served populations
Fountain Valley
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Peter C. Anderson
Indigent care, behavioral health
Fountain Valley
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Michael J. Burns
Infectious diseases, geriatric emergencies
Orange
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Cardiovascular emergency medicine
Laguna Beach
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J. Christian Fox
Point-of-care ultrasound
Orange
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Wirachin Hoonpongsimanont
Education, alcohol-related injury prevention
Orange
714-456-5239

Bryan Hoynak
Trauma, SWAT medicine
Placentia
714-524-4827

Robert Katzer
Emergency medical services
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Richard Kozak
Pre-hospital emergency medicine
Mission Viejo
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Physician leadership, clinical informatics
Orange
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Shahram Lotfipour
Public health and injury prevention
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Pediatric emergency medicine
Orange
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ENDOCRINOLOGY, DIABETES, AND METABOLISM

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Andrew R. Reikes
Thyroid cancer, thyroid diseases, osteoporosis, diabetes
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Priya Shah
Thyroid disease, thyroid cancer, PCOS, diabetes
Orange
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FACIAL PLASTIC AND RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY

Rami K. Batniji
Facelift, neck lift, rhinoplasty, blepharoplasty, endoscopic browlift
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Steven Daines
Face and neck lift, rhinoplasty
Newport Beach
949-209-1622

Alexis D. Furze
Balloon sinuplasty, rhinoplasty, Mohs reconstruction
Newport Beach
800-498-3223

Simon Madorsky
Nasal reconstruction and rhinoplasty
Newport Beach
949-719-1800

Brian J.F. Wong
Rhinoplasty, revision rhinoplasty, nasal reconstruction
Irvine
949-824-7997

FAMILY MEDICINE

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Medical volunteering
Yorba Linda
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Thomas Badin
Preventive health care, annual physical exams
Santa Ana
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Lance Brunner
Patient safety, quality, regulatory, risk, administration
Brea
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Thanh Bui
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Graduate medical education
Santa Ana
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Academic, faculty development, decision support
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Integrative and functional medicine
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Urban under-served care, women's health
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Women and children and the family
Brea
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Fred Galluccio
Full family care including newborns, sports
Newport Beach
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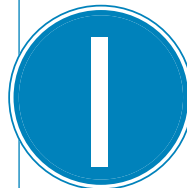
Debra Gutierrez
Brea
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WHAT IT'S LIKE TO...

FIND OUT YOU HAVE A BRAIN TUMOR

KELLI COLLINS, a fitness instructor from Newport Beach, shifted her priorities after a terrifying diagnosis.



divide my life into pre-brain tumor and post-brain tumor.

In my pre-brain tumor life, I never went to the beach or walked on the pier—even though I lived right next to it. I was a workaholic. I was a pro ballet dancer at 14 and flew around the world while I was an all-star high school basketball player. (As an adult), I'd do a 12-hour makeup job at HBO studios in L.A., stop to help at a flower shop in Belmont Shore, then do the night shift as a server at Mutt Lynch's bar in Newport Beach. Three years ago, I

became an instructor at GritCycle in Costa Mesa. I taught mornings and nights and kept the books at another company.

Then in December 2017, my life changed. In Portland for the weekend, I suddenly felt slow and began forgetting things. I couldn't remember what I ordered, what direction I just came from. I brushed my teeth with my right hand—and I'm left-handed. My brain was scrambled. I got lost at the airport and almost missed my flight.

I Ubered home, then got ready for my spin class. With one look, my friend Melissa, who I'd asked for a lift, said, "You are not teaching tonight. I'm taking you to the hospital."

Checking in, I couldn't say my name or give my address. I had lost control of an arm, spoke in a word salad. They put me in the ICU, thinking it was a stroke. But after a CT scan, the guys in white jackets came in—a heart doctor and a neurologist. "You need to call your family," they said. "You have a tumor in your head the size of a golf ball."

My brain surgery required nine days of prep. The tumor was benign but in a sensitive area for personality and memory. Chance of death was 60 percent, they said, with risk of paralysis. By the time they put in a porthole to suck it out, my tumor went from golf ball to tennis ball. But they got it all.

My recovery was way faster than normal—actually, kind of freaky. I was out of commission for just three months. I was even driving, although it was like sensory overload. My fitness and positive attitude definitely helped. I did yoga after a month in bed, then kept moving. In March, 300 people showed up for my "Welcome back" ride at GritCycle. A week later, I taught a class.

But mental healing is slower. Nearly a year later, I can't read or add as fast. I used to have beautiful handwriting and don't anymore. To work out my brain, I do crossword puzzles and number games.

My hardest assignment is sleeping 11 hours a day. That's the only way your brain heals. Before, I never even slept eight hours. I'd get five max.

The tumor is the best and worst thing that's ever happened to me. I took it as a sign I need to slow down. It gave me a new outlook: Live my life, not work my life.

I'd lived at the beach for 12 years but rarely touched sand or saw a sunset. Now I ride a bike, ignore my cellphone, and walk my dog to the pier and do meditation. Before, I'd feel guilty about these things.

Time is of the essence now. Who knows when a brain tumor or something else will come up in your life? I will live this second life as well as I possibly can. —R.M.W.

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Residency program director
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Medical humanities, medical education, under-served medicine
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Michael Provenghi
Diabetes, medical education
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Charles P. Vega
Care for marginalized populations
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FEMALE PELVIC MEDICINE AND RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY

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Urogynecology
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Felicia L. Lane
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GASTRO-ENTEROLOGY

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Endoscopy, obesity medicine, functional bowel disease
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Kenneth Chang
Interventional endoscopy
Orange
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Andrew Q. Giap
Endoscopic ultrasound, biliary and advanced endoscopy
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Hyder Z. Jamal
Hepatology
Yorba Linda
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EUS, ERCP, therapeutic endoscopy
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Haig Najarian
Hepatology, colon cancer screening
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Nimisha Parekh
Inflammatory bowel disease, medical education
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GERIATRIC MEDICINE

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Healthy aging, chronic disease management
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Steven Tam
Orange
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GYNECOLOGIC ONCOLOGY

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Surgical management of ovarian cancer
Orange
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Robotic surgery for gynecologic cancer/gynecology
Newport Beach
949-642-1361

Philip J. DiSaia
Orange
714-456-8000

Kristine Penner
Minimally invasive and cytoreductive gynecologic oncology
Orange
714-456-8000

Leslie M. Randall
Advanced gynecologic surgery, personalized cancer therapeutics
Orange
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Krishnansu Tewari
Ovarian cancer surgery, clinical trials, robotics
Orange
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GYNECOLOGY

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Menopause, PCOS, menstrual abnormalities, endometriosis, vaginitis
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HEMATOLOGY

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INTERNAL MEDICINE

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Yorba Linda
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Susan M. Heller
Prevention and lifestyle coaching
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Ke-Qin Hu
Liver diseases
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Dan Huynh
Hospital medicine
Anaheim
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Internal Medicine continues

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Bariatric medicine
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Maryam Rahimi
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Anthony F. Wong
Preventive health
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Michael Yu
Newport Beach
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INTERNAL MEDICINE WITH FOCUS ON HOSPITAL MEDICINE

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Internal medicine with a focused practice in hospital medicine
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Alex Leung
Hospital medicine
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INTERVENTIONAL RADIOLOGY AND DIAGNOSTIC RADIOLOGY

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Vascular disease, vascular malformations, interventional oncology
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MATERNAL-FETAL MEDICINE

Judith Chung
Diabetes in pregnancy
Orange
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Afshan Hameed
Cardiac disease
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Tamera Hatfield
Cancer in pregnancy
Orange
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James Kurtzman
Prematurity prevention, cervical incompetence, twins, ultrasound
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Carol Major
Diabetes in pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, prenatal diagnosis
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Manuel Porto
High-risk pregnancies involving multiple births
Orange
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Julianne Toohey
Domestic violence, perinatology, postpartum depression
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MEDICAL ONCOLOGY

Haresh S. Jhangiani
Clinical research and target therapies
Fountain Valley
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Edward Nelson
Hematologic malignancies and tumor immunology
Orange
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David J. Park
GI malignancies, lung cancer, brain cancer
Fullerton
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Jason Zell, D.O.
Gastrointestinal cancer, colorectal cancer, cancer prevention
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NEONATAL MEDICINE

Fayez Bany-Mohammed
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David A. Hicks
Neonatal lung disease
Orange
714-509-8632

Robert Hillyard
Substance-exposed infants, small-baby care
Orange
714-509-4373

Anthony Liu
Health informatics
Orange
714-509-3096

Wang-Dar Sun
Orange
714-509-4373

Katarzyna Tesmer
Aesthetic medicine
Orange
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NEONATAL-PERINATAL MEDICINE

Irfan Ahmad
Infants undergoing surgery
Orange
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Muhammad Aslam
Stem cells in chronic lung disease
Orange
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Daryoush Bassiri
Educational outreach
Orange
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Kushal Y. Bhakta
Care of extremely low birth weight infant
Orange
714-509-4373

Christine Bixby
Breastfeeding medicine
Orange
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John Cleary
Cardiac and mechanical support for neonates
Orange
714-509-3096

Rebecca Coleman
Resuscitation and simulation, palliative care, nutrition
Orange
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Sudeep Kukreja
Orange
714-509-4373

Courtney Merchant
Orange
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WHAT'S IT'S LIKE TO...

BE FREE FROM EPILEPSY

CHRIS MARTEN of Santa Ana turned his life around after brain surgery stopped his daily seizures.



From age 18 on, I was a ticking time bomb. That year, while driving, I had an epileptic seizure. Neurons in your brain misfire, sending wild signals to muscles and nerves. I lost consciousness for 30 seconds and lost control of my Nissan. From that point on, my life was radically changed.

I actually had my first seizures as a baby in the hospital—two 20-minute grand mals. But we didn't know I was epileptic during childhood. However, after the grand mal at 18, smaller petit mal seizures hit all the time. It's hard to explain the feeling. Little lapses in time, four to 20 seconds gone. You get what we call "auras"—you feel it coming on. I'd sit down, relax, let it pass, get a headache. It's a sensation of déjà vu; present, past, and future all mixed up.

Meds eliminated the grand mals, but I still had multiple petit mals a month. I quit my job at Ralph's, switched to nighttime security for a few years, then landed my job of the past 16 years: selling women's extra-small shoes—size 2 to 5 1/2—by phone.

Life was OK until age 27. One day, I again lost consciousness while driving and crashed into a pole, luckily not hurting myself or anyone else. I began having grand and petit mal seizures all the time. New meds didn't work. My future looked grim, as the condition gets worse with age.

After I turned 33, my older sister Misty, whom I live with, went to a psychic. "I see better options out there for your brother," she was told. In February 2016, after lots of research, Misty took me to David Millett, a neurologist at Hoag Hospital specializing in seizures and epilepsy.



After a basic checkup and some drug trials, none of which worked, Millett said I might be a good candidate for an operation to cut out the misfiring part of my brain. If the bad section is too deep, they don't do it. Why mess up your life even more? But they found my problem area was isolated on an easy-to-access spot, so Millett recommended I go for it. Worst case was a little short-term memory loss and seizure reduction by 85 to 90 percent.

In May 2016, Millett's team removed a portion of my brain. I wondered: Would I come out normal?

Since then, after reducing medications to zero, I'm episode-free—not one seizure. They tell me they've never gotten someone to the point of no seizures and no drugs.

I started driving again after eight months. I don't get the headaches or the side effects of the pills—depression, anger, snapping at the littlest thing. I walk, go out, feel like doing things. I've lost 50 pounds. My confidence is coming back with women. Not having to rely on anyone else is pure freedom. I'll go hiking, to the beach, golfing—all the stuff people take for granted.

But here's the funny thing: Sometimes I kind of miss the seizures! —R.M.W.

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Sirisha Perugu
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Lavonne Sheng
Infection prevention
Orange
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Sandra C. Short-Bartlett
Neonatal resuscitation, quality assurance, peer review
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WHAT IT'S LIKE TO...

BE CHOC'S
'DANCING DOC'

TONY ADKINS of Villa Park is a physician's assistant whose videos of dancing with pediatric patients went viral.



When I was a little kid growing up on the tough streets of South Central L.A. in the '80s and early '90s, stuck inside the house, I'd put on NWA, Grandmaster Flash, LL Cool J, Run-DMC, and more—and I'd dance. Music made me happy. I had no idea that someday my dancing would help hospitalized kids at Children's Hospital of Orange County and even get me on national TV. I love the brain and always wanted to work with kids, so CHOC's the perfect place for me. Kids are resilient. They heal faster. They're easier. They don't need a lot of pain medications to make them feel bet-

ter, unlike adults. And kids respond much better to joking around, perfect for an old class clown like me.

One day (about a year ago), 11-year-old Elias Gonzales, a leukemia patient, clearly needed a good laugh. His body had begun overproducing cerebral spinal fluid, causing headaches. He needed more surgery. Stuck in the hospital, unable to go anywhere, he was kind of dreary, not talking much, getting depressed.

At that moment, I thought of my childhood: Maybe he needs some dancing.

I quickly huddled with his mom. I turned on some music on my phone—MC Hammer's "U Can't Touch This." I started dancing.

And he started laughing. "Elias, get up and dance with me," I said. At first, he hesitated. "Aw, do we have to?" Then he got up and danced, laughing the whole time for about 60 seconds. His mom filmed it. Elias gave me the thumbs-up. We were now best friends. It was night and day.

The change was a revelation. If I can do this with him, I can do this with any patient! There's no downside. The patient gets active, gets happy, gets back to the innocence of being a child. The mood changes; they don't want to bolt out the door anymore. And I get to check their neurological function—if they can coordinate their arms and legs.

Next was Christa Saul, a spinal muscular atrophy patient. Seeing Elias' video online, she said, "I want one, too." Using a wheelchair, she couldn't dance. So she watched me dance to "Super Freak" by Rick James, moving only her facial muscles but having the greatest time. Her mom put the video on the Anaheim Buzz Facebook page, and it spread like wildfire.

Then came Avery Rogers, a brain-surgery patient who came to appointments in a ballet costume. When she came in for her one-year checkup, she did a ballerina twirl to Justin Timberlake's "Can't Stop the Feeling." Her mom started crying. Avery hadn't been able to do that before.


The media noticed. Stories appeared. "ABC World News Tonight." "Good Morning America."

Twenty to 60 seconds is not a lot of time, but it pays off. A lot of kids and parents now look forward to it. I saw a video of an ICU fellow dancing with a patient at a different hospital. It's not rewriting the rulebook of patient-doctor relationships. It's just another tool we can use.

Some people call me a modern-day Patch Adams. I don't care what you call me. All I know is that my primary focus is making sure the little ones are more comfortable. A little laughter works every time. —R.M.W.


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PEDIATRIC ONCOLOGY

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WHAT IT'S LIKE TO...

SAVE YOUR SON FROM A NEAR-FATAL ACCIDENT

MATTHEW BELDEN of Laguna Beach describes the miraculous recovery of his 12-year-old son, Brayden, after a snowboarding accident last year.

Brayden had gone off that jump a couple of times already. We were at Oregon's Mount Bachelor in February 2018. He'd snowboarded 16 or 20 times and progressed fast, doing stuff set aside for Olympians. Though only 11 years old, Brayden was a top surfer with lots of sponsorships, and his skills immediately translated to snow.

But this time, he went off that jump faster, higher, and a little off balance. When I went around to catch up to him, he was just lying there, lifeless. His eyes were in the back of his head. No pulse. No breath. If I didn't give him CPR, he could have died.

His brain injury was rare. He injured the basal ganglia and thalamus. For that injury, the mortality rate was nearly 100 percent.

When he got choppered down to a hospital in Bend, a priest was waiting for us. The doctor gave him two hours. "If he doesn't show more signs of life, it's over." He did. A Learjet flew him to Randall Children's Hospital in Portland. They told us he might not wake from the coma. After 21 days, he did.

You don't allow yourself to get too optimistic. Yeah, he woke up, but he's a quadriplegic, can't speak, and needs tubes in his stomach and throat.

Fortunately, he's an athlete. As his brain healed for five months, he did what they said he couldn't: talk, walk, breathe, eat, chew, spit, swallow. He came home in June and started training his ass off in CHOC's rehab program. Same thing in Baltimore at Johns Hopkins. Every day, he goes to rehab from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Brayden doesn't complain. He told the doctor who's going to clean out the scar tissue from his shoulder "I'm giving it 110 percent." We all are. I researched



two therapies we're using: MSC (mesenchymal stem cell) therapy and hyperbaric oxygen therapy. We harvested his own stem cells, replicated them by the millions, and put them back to hunt for and fix trauma. He's also one of the first here doing hyperbaric, which is not yet FDA approved. Studies show it can minimize injury by promoting red blood cells and angiogenesis (tissue growth).

Brayden walks with a limp and talks in a whisper. His memory's back, and he converses, but often at 7-year-old level. He needs help getting dressed. His right side is locked up. But there's progress. Every three or four weeks, he's a different kid. The first two years see the bulk of recovery from a brain injury; we're only at eight months (right now).

He's a fighter. He wants to surf next summer. I don't know if it's realistic, but if his shoulder gets fixed, he can paddle and swim.

Being well-known for surfing has helped. World Tour surfer Griffin Colapinto led a fundraiser for him with Stance, and Laguna Surf and Sport did a fundraising party, too.

Sometimes Brayden gets emotional. "Why did I go off that jump?" But now he sees it as, "I have a new purpose in life. Stay happy." He's on a different path now. But he's inspiring people. If you were to ask me, I think God threw him back to help leave this world a better place. —R.M.W.

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RADIATION ONCOLOGY

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RHEUMATOLOGY

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SURGERY

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WHAT IT'S LIKE TO...

SURVIVE A MASS SHOOTING

NATALIE GRUMET of Dana Point suffered a gunshot wound to the face in the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history.



was in Las Vegas with my family and friends for the three-day Route 91 music festival in 2017. On the third night, I met my girlfriends to see the headliner, Jason Aldean, one of my favorites. We were to the right toward the front of the stage, loving the music. Then a few songs in, we heard loud noises. One of my friends looked at me and asked, "Fireworks?"

All of a sudden, I felt something explode on my face. It was immediate, excruciating pain, and it felt like my face was on fire. I was in shock. It was mass confusion—22,000 people under fire, screaming, crying.

We lay on the ground to take cover. I realized I had been significantly injured, but I could breathe and move my extremities. When there was a break in the gunfire, a friend and I got up to run. We saw the field for the first time—the amount of people who had been killed. People who

wouldn't be returning home to their families.

After we escaped, we walked to the Tropicana hotel, and there was hysteria. The sounds of gunfire were still echoing in my head, and I didn't feel safe. They eventually loaded us into ambulances three at a time, and I ended up at the emergency room. A friend called my husband, Jason, who was in our hotel room. They had to sedate me and intubate me. I lost consciousness.

I had been shot in the left side of my face. My jaw was shattered and my chin was fractured in half. I had to have a skin graft from the back of my neck to close the wound. Two major nerves were destroyed.

I've had nine surgeries and procedures in total. In March, I had a seven-hour surgery to get a nerve transplant from my lower leg, and a bone graft from my hip. In July, I had a six-hour surgery to transplant another nerve from my other leg.

It's been hard to move on in any sense of the term. As soon as I get stronger and feel like myself, it's time for the next surgery. When I see the scars on my face, it reminds me that I had this horrific experience. But I just had what is supposed to be my last surgery.

I feel such gratitude to be alive. I don't want to let fear consume me. In the beginning, it was a lot worse. I would have night terrors. I was terrified of loud noises and crowds. But I have been given the gift of surviving. Fifty-eight people were killed that night, and that's a huge weight on my heart. I think about them every single day. There's a sense of responsibility to get out there and live a good life and make positive differences in this world.

My husband started a Facebook page for me ("I am a Warrior—Natalie Grumet") while I was in the ICU at the suggestion of hospital staff to keep family and friends updated. Eventually, I started posting my own updates, and it grew into this therapeutic thing. People told me they found inspiration and hope in my story. If it helps people, that makes it easier to go through this journey.

When I was 27, I was diagnosed with stage 2 cancer. I felt like I had checked some box and that was the worst thing I'd ever have to go through. But I've realized you can never waste a moment to tell people you love them. In those 10 minutes of being under fire, all I could think of was getting back to those people.

On that day, one person showed the worst of humanity. And yet since then, hundreds of thousands of people have shown the best of humanity. There are so many good, loving people who want to help, and that will always win over hate. —As told to Astigik Khatchatryan

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for the continuation of Orthopedic Surgery, plus Thoracic and Vascular Surgery and Urology