

HEALTH NEWS *from*

FALL 2016

# palmdale

REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

*"I've been given back  
my life"*

Chrissy Geiser reclaims her health  
with weight-loss surgery

**BARIATRIC CENTER  
EARNS ACCREDITATION**

Affirming our commitment  
to quality

**FROM HEART CARE TO A  
NEW DISC PROCEDURE**

Patients share their stories about  
advanced treatments



*Compliments of*  
**PALMDALE  
REGIONAL**  
MEDICAL CENTER

## FROM THE **CEO**



More and more patients today are looking for minimally invasive options when they have a serious medical issue that needs treatment. At Palmdale Regional Medical Center, we're pleased to offer a number of advanced procedures that are helping our patients enjoy faster recoveries, less time away from work and, most importantly, safe and effective care.

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In our cover article, we bring you the inspiring story of Chrissy Geiser, a single mom and member of our Education staff, who is now on a lifelong path to good health after undergoing laparoscopic (minimally invasive) weight-loss surgery in our Bariatric Center. You can read more about Chrissy and our Bariatric program on pages 4 through 6.

We also bring you stories on pages 6 and 7 about patients who received advanced treatments for coronary artery disease, cervical disc problems and Barrett's esophagus, a precancerous condition associated with gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).

Last, but definitely not least, we're pleased to introduce you to Andrea Wise, a board-certified clinical specialist in pelvic health who recently joined our Rehabilitation and Orthopedic Institute. On the next page, you can learn how she is addressing personal health issues that can have a significant impact on patients' quality of life. We're very happy to have Andrea on board, and we know she will make an important contribution to the comprehensive, quality care at Palmdale Regional.

Sincerely,



**Richard Allen**  
Chief Executive Officer

## **ACUTE REHABILITATION UNIT** to open at Palmdale Regional later this year

We are excited to announce that our new inpatient Acute Rehabilitation Unit at Palmdale Regional Medical Center is planned to open at the end of this year. This will provide much-needed care closer to home for patients in the Antelope Valley who need rehabilitative support for physical or neurological problems, such as a stroke or brain/spinal cord injury. The rehabilitation center will feature 27 private rooms and training/activity areas to improve patients' function and prepare them to return to daily life. Individualized, quality care will be provided by specialized physical, occupational and speech therapists.



# Meet our pelvic floor therapist

The Rehabilitation and Orthopedic Institute (ROI) at Palmdale Regional Medical Center has expanded its specialty services to include physical therapy for pelvic floor muscle dysfunction. These services are provided by physical therapist **Andrea Wise**, a board-certified clinical specialist in pelvic health.



Some of the conditions Wise treats include pelvic pain, urinary incontinence, changes in bowel habits, fecal incontinence, pelvic organ prolapse, sexual dysfunction and postpartum issues new moms may be experiencing, such as pain, leakage and problems returning to exercise.

"It can be hard for some people to talk about these conditions, but patients should know they are not uncommon," Wise says. "When patients begin to resolve these issues, their quality of life really starts to turn around."

Rehabilitation can involve a variety of things, including strengthening specific muscle groups around the pelvis, improving behavioral and dietary habits, and addressing postural issues that could negatively affect organ function. Also, a therapy called "biofeedback" can sometimes be offered. "With biofeedback, internal or external sensors are hooked up to a computer and can measure muscle strength, so patients can see what their muscles are doing," Wise explains.

"There are conservative ways to manage pelvic problems that don't involve surgery or medication," she notes. If surgery is recommended, Wise can work with the surgeon to help prepare patients. "If good exercise habits are established prior to surgery, the muscles are strong, coordinated and flexible, and they will be better able to recover," Wise says.

"Pelvic physical therapy is not just for women. Men can benefit, too," Wise says. For example, after prostate removal due to cancer, some men may have issues with incontinence, which can be helped with therapy.

Wise joins the ROI's team of board-certified clinical specialists, who provide high-quality services to patients in the Antelope Valley, including orthopedic and manual therapy, hand therapy, lymphedema management and sports rehabilitation. ■

***Patients may be referred to Andrea Wise by their physician, or they may call her office directly for an appointment at 661-206-6250.***

## Did you know...

The National Institutes of Health reports that more than one-third of U.S. women have a pelvic floor disorder (PFD), and nearly one-quarter of women in the United States have one or more PFDs that cause symptoms. PFDs are more likely to occur as a woman gets older.

The pelvic floor is a group of muscles and connective tissue that helps support the pelvic organs. Some of the more common PFDs include:

- Pelvic organ prolapse. This occurs when the pelvic floor can no longer support the pelvic organs, and the organs drop from their normal position.
- Bladder control problems
- Bowel control problems

While PFDs are more common in women, men also have pelvic floor muscles that can become dysfunctional.



# Jump of *joy*

**W**eight was always a sensitive issue for Chrissy Geiser. For most of her life she was on a roller coaster of dieting, with no success. When her weight began to raise serious health concerns and limit her ability to do things with her son, she decided she was ready to make a lifelong change.

"My entire life I dieted and tried everything, including starving myself, which is not healthy," says Chrissy, a single mom. "I always ended up in the same spot."

"My family has a history of diabetes and congestive heart failure," she says. "I had high blood pressure and high cholesterol. I wanted to regain my health. I wanted to be there for my son. I also wanted to be a role model for him." ➤



Chrissy Geiser  
before losing  
85 pounds

In January 2015, she attended a consultation with Bariatric Surgeon John Yadegar, MD, at Palmdale Regional Medical Center. "I'd seen other people go through the weight-loss surgery process with Dr. Yadegar, and I was inspired by them," says Chrissy, who is the Education Coordinator at Palmdale Regional. "They've had nothing but the best things to say."

After carefully considering the options, Chrissy decided that a gastric sleeve procedure was the right choice for her. With this procedure, 75 to 80 percent of the stomach is removed, reducing hunger.

"It's a lifestyle change, it's not a fad diet," she says of the surgery that would help her go from a size 22 to a size 2 to 4. "You start changing your way of life and being healthy months before the surgery. You attend support groups where you can talk with people who have already been through it."

The intensive focus on preparation by Dr. Yadegar and his staff reassured Chrissy throughout the process. "There's no fear because you're well-educated," she says. "The staff

is amazing, and Dr. Yadegar has the best bedside manner. They just make you feel comfortable."

With bariatric surgery, Chrissy lost 85 pounds, and her blood pressure and cholesterol problems have resolved. Today at age 38, she is totally committed to a healthy diet and regular exercise.

"I don't have knee pain every day anymore," she says. "I don't worry that I'm going to have a heart issue at a young age. At an amusement park, I don't feel embarrassed about having to squeeze into a seat."

"I don't want people to think surgery is an easy way out, because it's not," she says. "It's a lot of work, and you have to be ready to embrace the change."

Dr. Yadegar, who says he considers his patients "an extension of the family," remarked on Chrissy's dedication and inner drive to succeed. "Chrissy also has a good sense of awareness and good support. These are all key elements to success," he says.

"I can't thank Dr. Yadegar enough," Chrissy says. "I wanted to be healthy, and I am now in a healthy, happy place." ■

## ***What you should know***

Elective surgery for weight loss can offer extremely good results, but patients need to be mentally and physically prepared, and committed to lifelong changes, says Bariatric Surgeon John Yadegar, MD.

A minimally invasive approach supports faster recovery for patients at Palmdale Regional Medical Center, where three kinds of weight-loss surgery are offered: gastric bypass, gastric sleeve and adjustable gastric banding (LAP-BAND®). While there is not a standard weight loss for everybody, Dr. Yadegar says that on average, patients who are committed and engaged can expect to lose 80 pounds or more for each 100 pounds they are overweight.



**THE BARIATRIC  
SURGERY PROGRAM**

**AT PALMDALE REGIONAL  
MEDICAL CENTER**

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*To speak with our Bariatric Coordinator, Liz Roark, about the bariatric program at Palmdale Regional, please call her at 661-382-5051. For more information about the program, see page 6.*

Individual results may vary. There are risks associated with any surgical procedure. Talk with your doctor about these risks to find out if bariatric surgery is right for you



"They hold your hand and see you all the way through the process," says patient Chrissy Geiser (left) with Bariatric Surgeon John Yadegar, MD; Bariatric Coordinator Liz Roark; and Program Director Jodi Pienta (right).

## Weight-loss surgery program earns accreditation

The Bariatric Surgery Center at Palmdale Regional Medical Center has achieved designation as an accredited center by the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program (MBSAQIP), affirming that it demonstrates "an uncompromising commitment to quality that has earned the confidence, respect, and trust of patients making a commitment to healthier living."

"We're very proud of this," says Bariatric Coordinator Liz Roark. "We've worked really hard at making sure we're the best at what we do."

Program Director Jodi Pienta notes that the Center underwent a stringent survey in order to achieve this accreditation. The surveyors looked at everything from clinical pathways, to furniture and accommodations, to the education provided to patients. "Education is such a vital piece of this," Pienta says.

"It is a nurturing, hands-on, engaged program," says Bariatric Surgeon John Yadegar, MD. Patients can feel good knowing that every single member of the staff they come into contact with is trained in the specialty, he says.



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## Advanced treatment for reflux-related disorder

Palmdale Regional Medical Center now offers advanced treatment for patients diagnosed with Barrett's esophagus, a precancerous condition affecting the lining of the esophagus. For 52-year-old Kevin King, having this procedure proved to be potentially life-saving.



**Jatinder Pruthi, MD**  
Gastroenterologist

Barrett's esophagus can develop when acid backs up in the esophagus and causes damage, explains board-certified Gastroenterologist Jatinder Pruthi, MD. Kevin was diagnosed with this condition about two years ago, after suffering for years with acid reflux. Regular monitoring revealed that early cancer was forming where Kevin's esophagus meets his stomach. Without testing, Kevin says, "I would have never known."

Dr. Pruthi removed the cancer and treated Kevin with ablation therapy, an outpatient procedure that involves no incisions. It uses thermal (heat) energy to eliminate the damaged tissue and prevent the recurrence of cancer.

"My experience was great," recalls Kevin. "Dr. Pruthi explained everything to me." Today, Kevin says he is relieved the problem was caught promptly and treated by Dr. Pruthi. "I feel like I can put my life in his hands and I'm going to be all right," he says.



# Palmdale Regional Medical Center team uses **NEW STENT** for blocked arteries

Board-certified Cardiologist Kanwaljit Gill, MD, recently performed the first coronary stenting procedure at Palmdale Regional Medical Center using the bioabsorbable polymer Synergy™ stent. So far, this has only been available at Palmdale Regional in the Antelope Valley.

A stent is a small mesh tube that's placed in a blocked artery to help restore blood flow. What makes the recently approved Synergy stent different is that the polymers that hold medication in place are completely absorbed by the body.

Seventy-six-year-old Felisa Perez was the first patient at Palmdale Regional to be treated with the Synergy stent. She had suffered a heart attack, and her artery was completely blocked, says Dr. Gill. "It was stented in two places."

Before the procedure, Felisa was very sick and had trouble breathing if she reclined to go to sleep, recalls her granddaughter Vienna Quiroz. Today, Felisa can sleep without any issues and is "doing great," Vienna says. "It's been an easy recovery compared to what I thought it would be like."

"I'm really thankful," Vienna says of the team that cared for her grandmother. "They've just been amazing."



Kanwaljit Gill, MD, pictured with Felisa Perez

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## ***Taking DISC TREATMENT to the next level***

**In July, 46-year-old Aiden Khachi became the first patient at Palmdale Regional Medical Center to receive a two-level cervical disc replacement using the Mobi-C® cervical disc.**



**Kamran Parsa, DO**  
Neurosurgeon

Neurosurgery specialist Kamran Parsa, DO, performed the minimally invasive procedure to help relieve severe pain Aiden was experiencing in his right hand and shoulder. This involved removing two herniated discs that were pressing on nerves that went to Aiden's right arm, and replacing them with the Mobi-C in two levels of Aiden's cervical spine. These artificial discs allow for more natural neck movement and can support faster return to work and less risk of future disc problems, Dr. Parsa says.

Just days after the procedure, Aiden reported that his pain was gone and he had strength back in his hand. "I have no numbness, no weakness, and I don't need to wear a brace," he said. "Dr. Parsa did a great job."

Dr. Parsa notes that the Mobi-C is not recommended for all patients, such as patients with a severely degenerative disc. He has done many successful one-level Mobi-C replacements at Palmdale Regional; Aiden was the first patient there to have the two-level procedure.

*For more information about services at Palmdale Regional, visit [palmdaleregional.com](http://palmdaleregional.com). Also, be sure to check out the podcasts under "Listen now" on the home page for more information about advanced treatments.*



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## *Palmdale Regional and USC work together* to bring advanced cancer care to Antelope Valley communities.

**Palmdale Regional Medical Center** has formed an alliance with **Keck Medicine of USC** to develop specialty urological, colorectal and breast cancer services. Patients no longer have to travel to Los Angeles to receive technologically advanced treatment. This exciting new collaboration makes access to clinical excellence available right here at home.

USC physicians provide patients at PRMC with diagnoses and treatment that reflect USC technology and academic research, including minimally invasive surgery using the daVinci® Robotic Surgical System, as well as minimally invasive laparoscopic surgery.

Palmdale Regional is committed to providing you with greater access to the care you need. By working together with USC, we've expanded the depth and variety of our medical care for the Antelope Valley community. Our goal is to achieve positive outcomes using comprehensive, personalized, quality care.

To find a physician affiliated with Palmdale Regional Medical Center, please call Direct Doctors Plus® at **800.851.9780**.



**PALMDALE  
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*in alliance with*

**Keck Medicine of USC**

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