

HEALTH NEWS *from*

FALL 2017

# palmdale

## REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER



From left are Neurosurgeon Quang Ma, DO; Lisa Hemme; Harry Navarro; and Neurosurgeon Kamran Parsa, DO.

## ***Stronger*** after spinal surgery

ADVANCED CARE AND TECHNOLOGY HELP LISA HEMME AND  
HARRY NAVARRO FIND RELIEF FROM CHRONIC PAIN

### **Back on her feet**

How rehab helped  
Barbara Hofbauer

### **Join the team!**

Come to a career event  
at Palmdale Regional



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REGIONAL**  
MEDICAL CENTER

## FROM THE CEO



Just one year ago we were getting ready to open the Rehabilitation Institute at Palmdale Regional Medical Center to provide acute care for people recovering from serious medical conditions. Today we're excited to be celebrating the success of patients like Barbara Hofbauer, who is featured on the next page. Having this specialized facility in the community enables residents to receive advanced services to help support recovery

from conditions such as stroke, spinal cord injury, brain trauma and serious orthopedic issues or debilitating injuries. You can learn more about this in the "Ask the Doctor" article on page 6.

Also in this issue of *Health News*, we are pleased to bring you the stories of Lisa Hemme and Harry Navarro, who have found relief from chronic pain through minimally invasive spinal fusion surgery at Palmdale Regional. Innovative technology is helping to speed healing, and highly skilled neurosurgeons provide individualized care to ensure the best possible outcomes.

Through patient stories, we are reminded of how life-changing quality medical care can be – not just because of new technology and advanced facilities, but also because of the close connections that are formed between patients and providers. Our patients' success stories are our success stories. We're proud to serve the residents of the Antelope Valley.

Sincerely,



**Richard Allen**

Chief Executive Officer

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## *Walk for a great cause* ON NOVEMBER 5

Palmdale Regional Medical Center is proud to be a sponsor of the American Heart Association Heart Walk, set for Sunday, November 5, at Marie Kerr Park, 39700 30th St. W., Palmdale. The event opens at 7:30 a.m., and the walk begins at 9 a.m. The Heart Walk is a 5K or 3.1-mile non-competitive walk. Money raised will support initiatives to prevent and treat heart disease and stroke.

**Join a Palmdale Regional team today at [palmdaleregional.com/join](http://palmdaleregional.com/join).**



# *TWO NEW KNEES and a new lease on life*

**B**arbara Hofbauer needed intensive therapy to regain function and mobility after undergoing a double-knee replacement procedure at Palmdale Regional last June. “I didn’t have a good knee to truly recover on,” she remembers, noting that the road back would be challenging. To support her recovery, she was admitted to the hospital’s Rehabilitation Institute, where the staff explained to her that the top priority was to get her strong and healthy enough to go home.

A key component of inpatient rehab is to participate in a minimum of three hours of intensive therapy each day, with oversight by a medical team. Through occupational therapy, Hofbauer learned how to tackle daily activities like taking a shower and navigating the kitchen. She also spent dedicated time in the gym working with a physical therapist on exercises like strengthening and bending her knees. Throughout her week in the inpatient unit, the staff helped her manage her pain, so she could get the most out of her therapy sessions.

She has continued to work on her recovery through outpatient therapy since returning home in July. “I’m feeling much better, I’m getting a good range of motion back in my knees,” she says. “Everything’s become easier.”

“I think the Rehabilitation Institute is what got me into the mindset of wanting to recover,” she says. “They pushed me, and for that, I’m thankful. I think they are why I’m at a good place today – because of the positivity and encouragement they provided.” ■

**Take a virtual tour of the Rehabilitation Institute.**  
**Visit [palmdaleregional.com/tour](http://palmdaleregional.com/tour).**

## **Meet the nursing director**



Veronica Gadowski, CRRN, joined Palmdale Regional in May as Director of Rehabilitation Services. “We have a great team,” she says, remarking on the multidisciplinary approach to care in the unit. Patients may be recovering from serious orthopedic issues, or they may need help regaining function after stroke, spinal cord injuries, brain trauma or other debilitating injuries. “Our rehabilitation nurses are meeting the needs of the patients, while reinforcing the skills learned in therapy sessions,” she says.

“We have the benefit of getting to know patients and their families really well,” she adds. “It’s rewarding to see the progress and improvement.”







From left are Neurosurgeon Quang Ma, DO; Lisa Hemme; Harry Navarro; and Neurosurgeon Kamran Parsa, DO.

## Finding relief from *chronic pain*

Minimally invasive spinal fusion surgery at Palmdale Regional is providing an effective treatment option for select patients, using advanced nanoLOCK™ technology to support better, faster healing.

Here, two patients share their stories. ►

**Lisa Hemme enjoyed good health until her car was hit by another driver in September 2016. “I felt the pain right away,” she says.**

After the accident, she had bad headaches and pain in her neck that went all the way down her back. She also had numbness in her fingers and hands. “I was so afraid I was going to make the injury worse,” she says. “I felt like I was in limbo.”

Reluctant about taking medication, she was determined to find a treatment that was right for her. After meeting with four different doctors, she decided on spinal fusion surgery with Neurosurgeon Kamran Parsa, DO. He had an “encouraging” manner that stood out, she says.

A week after she met him, she had the procedure to fuse three vertebrae in her back together (see sidebar). “The procedure went better than I could have ever imagined,” Hemme says. “It was just very organized.”

It takes time to fully recover, and Hemme notes that she has had to manage certain limitations; but she is getting stronger. “It has helped me,” she says. “It has caused me not to have that chronic pain.” ■

**When Harry Navarro was just 19 years old serving in the U.S. Marine Corps, a boulder slid down a hill and hit him on the shoulder while he was building a bridge in Okinawa, Japan.**

He had an X-ray and was found to be okay, but years later, the injury began to cause him severe headaches. “It was worse than a migraine,” he says. “My ears would ring. Some days I wouldn’t sleep at all because of the headache and the pain.”

For years, he took medication, but the pain kept getting worse. “I started getting anxiety because I know that’s not healthy, not sleeping properly,” he says. Through his medical coverage as a

veteran, he was eventually deemed a candidate for surgery. He had a spinal fusion procedure with Dr. Parsa on April 10, 2017.

Since the surgery, Navarro’s chronic headaches have stopped, and he is working on his recovery. He is planning a second surgery with Dr. Parsa on his lumbar spine to treat pain he is having in his lower back. “Dr. Parsa did an outstanding job,” he says. “The staff at Palmdale Regional went above and beyond for all my needs.” ■

**Learn more at [palmdaleregional.com/fusion](http://palmdaleregional.com/fusion).**

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

## What is fusion?

Spinal fusion surgery involves joining two or more vertebrae permanently together. It causes some limitations in range of motion, but the goal is to help stabilize the spine and provide pain relief. Fusion is performed by removing the discs between the vertebrae and putting in titanium implants for stabilization. The objective is for the vertebrae and implants to fuse together and become one solid block of bone, Dr. Parsa explains.

To help speed the fusion process, Dr. Parsa and fellow Neurosurgeon Quang Ma, DO, use a Titan Spine implant that can help to promote bone growth. A key feature is the device’s nanoLOCK Surface Technology, which is specially designed to help cells stick to the implant. “The idea with all fusion surgery is to get the fusion to occur faster,” notes Dr. Ma, who regularly collaborates with Dr. Parsa in surgical procedures. Quicker fusion can support faster return to work, reduced chance of needing more surgery later, less pain and less narcotic use, he says. With nanoLOCK, fusion that used to take nine to 15 months is happening at four weeks for some patients, Dr. Parsa says.

Dr. Parsa and Dr. Ma note that pain is usually treated first with non-surgical options, and surgery is recommended only for select patients. Fusion may be used to treat different conditions, including “revision” surgery for patients who did not get the desired results with a prior procedure. Talk with your doctor if you have pain or other problems.



# Regaining independence through *inpatient rehab*



Recovering from conditions like stroke, spinal cord injuries, brain trauma and other serious

injuries and orthopedic issues can be challenging. Here, **Thomas S. Nasser, DO, FAAPMR**, Medical Director of the Rehabilitation Institute at Palmdale Regional Medical Center, explains how inpatient rehabilitation can help.

## **Q: What happens in inpatient rehab?**

Inpatient rehab entails a minimum of three hours of intensive multidisciplinary therapy per day each week. Patients get up and get dressed every day, and they have meals in a shared dining room with other patients. It's for patients who have serious conditions that require medical supervision. The primary goal is to help prepare for a transition to home.

## **Q: Could I be a candidate?**

In determining eligibility, we think about what patients can do functionally. Do they have a qualifying diagnosis? Have they been identified by a physician as being able to tolerate and benefit from intensive therapy? Do they have a solid support system? Really, inpatient therapy can help many different people who have trouble caring for themselves and being independent.

## **Q: How can the staff help me regain my independence?**

Our staff members understand what patients need to accomplish so they can be successful when they leave inpatient rehabilitation. We talk with family members about things like housing and the challenges patients may face at home. Are there steps going into the house? Is the bedroom on the first or second floor? What kind of car does the patient drive?

## **Q: What distinguishes care at the Rehabilitation Institute at Palmdale Regional?**

We are a hospital within a hospital. In the event a patient's condition worsens, medical providers are available 24/7 to provide specialized care. When patients step into a place that is so positive and encouraging, we show them that they can get stronger. The passion of our staff is the secret ingredient that gets people going. ■



To learn more about rehab services at Palmdale Regional, visit [palmdaleregional.com/rehab](http://palmdaleregional.com/rehab).

# Find your *NEW* career here!

**Palmdale Regional Medical Center is growing, and so are the opportunities for a rewarding career.**

If you're interested in a nursing or clinical position, come to an upcoming event, including:

- Regularly scheduled job fairs for nursing and other job openings; check the website for dates and times.
- Walk-in interviews for registered nurses with at least one year of experience every Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Cactus Conference Room, 38600 Medical Center Drive, Palmdale.

## **A dedicated HR team to guide your career path ... and so much more!**

Leadership in Human Resources and other departments ensures that staff members have the tools and resources they need to be successful as the hospital continues to grow. Among the professional incentives and opportunities are:

- Sign-on bonuses for nurses in PCU/ICU, OR/PACU and ARU
- Competitive benefits and annual compensation assessments to ensure Palmdale Regional remains competitive
- New Grad and Bridge Programs for nurses (requires signing a two-year agreement)
- Training support through a collaboration with America's Job Center of California<sup>SM</sup> (AJCC)



**Join our team today! Visit [palmdaleregional.com/careers](http://palmdaleregional.com/careers).**



*"We are all in this together. We support nursing and other staff by assisting with performance improvement, accreditation and many other quality initiatives. PRMC is like a large family – very friendly."*



**Gina Parker**  
RN, MSN, PHN, CPHRM,  
CPHQ, Quality Director

*"Everybody is there with the patients' interests at heart. You never feel like you're flying solo. There are always resources there for you."*



**Bonnie Shook**  
RN, Nursing Supervisor,  
Nursing Administration

# *Advanced Cancer Care in the Antelope Valley*

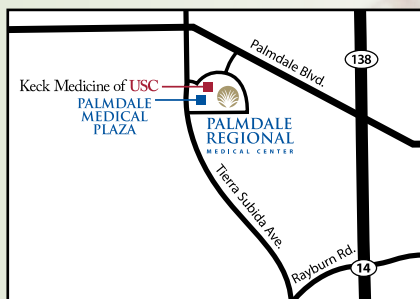
## NEW OFFICE NEXT DOOR

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

Keck Medicine of USC physicians provide patients at Palmdale Regional with diagnoses and treatment that reflect Keck Medicine of USC's technology and academic research, including minimally invasive surgery using the da Vinci® Robotic Surgical System, as well as minimally invasive laparoscopic surgery.

Keck Medicine of USC's new office location is in the Palmdale Medical Plaza building directly next door to Palmdale Regional Medical Center:

**38660 Medical Center Drive  
Suite, A200, Palmdale, CA 93551**



For more information or to make an appointment with a Keck Medicine of USC cancer specialist, call **661-273-9644**.  
**Visit [palmdaleregional.com/usc](http://palmdaleregional.com/usc).**

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### HEALTH NEWS FROM PALMDALE REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

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