



Stepping into Medical Staff Leadership Roles

On Jan. 10, the Providence St. Joseph Hospital's incoming Medical Staff leadership gathered for an orientation to equip them for their 2026-27 roles. Member-leaders discussed strategic priorities and collaborative practices, ways to foster a culture of excellence, optimizing physician wellness and engagement for the entire Medical Staff.



Scan this QR code to see the latest episode of So St. Joe's featuring Chief Executive Brian Helleland along with new Chief of Staff Melissa Rudolph, MD.

Dec. 3, 2025 -
Jan. 8, 2026



Donations Made in Honor of Physicians

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Jeff Deckey, MD, and
Frank Sweeny, MD
- Robert Del Junco, MD
Breelan Kear, MD
Robert Naraghi, MD,
Stavroula Otis, MD
Hari Sawkar, MD, and
Laura Tangredi, MD

Advancing Care via the Inaugural Heart & Vascular Symposium

On Jan. 19, Providence hosted a Heart & Vascular Symposium for 100 service area providers at the Tustin Ranch Golf Course. It was the first of what will hopefully be many Clinical Institute events showcasing Providence's commitment to excellence. Multidisciplinary clinical expertise shared ranged from referral guidelines to advancements in technology.

Providence is establishing an infrastructure across Orange County and the High Desert to elevate its award-winning Heart & Vascular programs, so that all our patients have access to the most comprehensive and innovative heart and vascular care achieving the highest quality outcomes.



Appreciation goes to all the presenters. Internal Medicine provider Michael del Junco, MD, served as moderator for Cardiology panel of Ihab Alomari, MD, Sevak Darbinian, MD, Aseem Desai, MD, Shamail Tariq, MD, and Jeffrey Tyler, MD. Jo E. Pitzer, MD, was the moderator for Interventional Radiology & Vascular Specialties with panelists Kevin Burns, MD, Bradley Jackson, MD, Mahmood Razavi, MD (shown with microphone), Wang Teng, MD, and Tiffany Wu, MD. Opening remarks were given by Chief Executive Brian Helleland, and closing remarks by Genetic Counselor Supervisor and OC Cardiovascular Genetics Program Lead Carol Ko.

Welcome New Medical Staff Members



Christian Awah, MD
Spine & Sports
Specialties MG
Hand Surgery



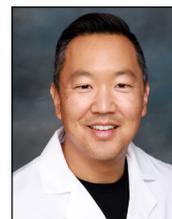
Alyssa Blumenfeld, MD
CHOC CS
Neonatology
Neonatal-Perinatal



Marc Philip Camilon, MD
Allied Anesthesia
Medical Group, Inc.
Anesthesiology



Duong Thuy Chau, MD
St. Joseph
Heritage MG
Family Practice



Edwin Kwon, MD
Main Street Urgent
Care
Family Practice



Patrycja Tesmer, MD
CHOC CS
Neonatology
Pediatrics



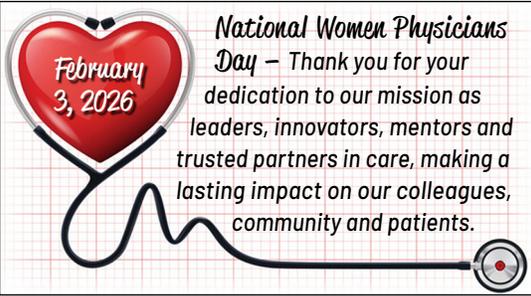
Mohammed Qubba, MD
Chest & Critical Care
Consultants
Internal Medicine



February 2026

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National Women Physicians Day – Thank you for your dedication to our mission as leaders, innovators, mentors and trusted partners in care, making a lasting impact on our colleagues, community and patients.



Happy Heart Month from CMO Elaine Lee, MD; CNO Katie Webster, MSN, RN, CPHQ; and COS Melissa Rudolph, MD.

Treating Osteoarthritis Noninvasively with Low-Dose Radiation Therapy (LDRT)

Osteoarthritis, a progressively debilitating disorder, causes many patients to experience pain that is refractory to traditional treatments such as physical therapy, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, cyclooxygenase-2 inhibitors or surgery. For those experiencing significant impairment in quality of life related to osteoarthritis, low-dose radiation therapy (LDRT) may be an effective noninvasive treatment option. It targets painful joints using radiation doses far lower than those used for cancer treatment.

The Center for Cancer Prevention and Treatment recently started offering LDRT as an alternative treatment for patients living with osteoarthritis, which affects more than 32 million adults in the U.S. Prevalence increases markedly after age 45 and affects approximately 43% of adults age 65 and older, with higher rates observed in postmenopausal women.

“This is an ideal treatment for older patients suffering from chronic pain due to inflammation of tissues surrounding the joints (bursa, fascia, tendons or ligaments) and are not responsive to medications, want to delay surgery or are not good candidates for surgery,” says Venita Williams, MD, medical director of radiation oncology at St. Joseph Hospital. Dr. Williams and her team of radiation oncologists deliver LDRT using a linear accelerator, allowing for precise localized targeting of affected extremity joints while minimizing exposure to surrounding tissues. The process starts with a planning session that includes a CT scan to customize treatment. The patient is scheduled for six treatments, two to three per week, each lasting 10 to 15 minutes.

Unlike oncologic radiation therapy, LDRT employs very low doses designed to modulate inflammatory and immune-mediated pathways



Robert Ash, MD, Tanuja Bhandari, MD, and Venita Williams, MD

rather than induce cell death. This anti-inflammatory effect has been shown to reduce pain and improve joint function. There are no side effects related to low-dose radiation when applied to the extremities, and it does not limit the ability to use surgical treatment if needed in the future.

Radiation oncologist Robert Ash, MD, adds, “Treatments are painless and similar to having an X-ray. Because the radiation dose is so low, most patients have minimal—if any—side effects and no recovery time.”

LDRT is also effective in treating periarticular soft tissue disorders, including enthesopathies, tendinopathies and bursitis. Clinical studies report pain reduction in approximately 70% to 80% of treated patients, with symptom relief lasting 12 months or longer in many cases. Some patients may benefit from a repeat course if symptoms recur.

“After treatment, patients experience a decrease in inflammation in their joints and pain relief,” says radiation oncologist Tanuja Bhandari, MD. “They are able to exercise and do daily activities that were previously difficult or impossible, like walking, knitting and swimming. For osteoarthritis patients with other medical issues like obesity, “LDRT could be applied to reduce or control pain so the patient can begin exercising, lose weight and build strength before surgery,” says Dr. Williams.

“We’re anticipating that as more physicians and patients learn about this modality, more patients will participate,” says Dr. Bhandari. The Radiation Oncology team at St. Joseph Hospital welcomes referrals from primary care providers, rheumatologists, orthopedists, pain specialists and other clinicians managing patients with refractory joint pain. For referrals or information, please contact David Headland at 714-734-6207.