

Navy, Marine Corps Medicine Join UCLA in Wounded Warrior Care

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University of California, Los Angeles's Operation Mend, Navy Medicine and Marine Corps leadership and staff came together to discuss shared initiatives in research and development advancements, clinical infrastructure and wounded warrior care at the Defense Health Headquarters in Falls Church, Va., April 30.



Vice Adm. Matthew Nathan, Navy surgeon general and Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery chief, speaks to Navy Medicine and Marine Corps leadership and University of California, Los Angeles's top leaders at an Operation Mend presentation held at the Defense Health Headquarters in Falls Church, Va., April 30, 2013. (U.S. Navy photo/Released)

Vice Adm. Matthew Nathan, U.S. Navy surgeon general and chief of U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery; Gen. John Paxton, assistant commandant of the Marine Corps; his wife, Debbie Paxton, mental health adviser of Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment, Quantico, Va.; and Bonnie Amos, wife of Gen. James Amos, commandant of the Marine Corps, represented Navy Medicine and Marine Corps's top leadership during the event.

“Thank you to the entire UCLA team and their partners on behalf of that young man or woman and their family for making a difference in their life,” said Nathan. “We have an obligation to get these heroes and their families back to normalcy and the military can’t do it alone. We’re going to rely on the partnerships with the centers of excellence around the world that are already doing this kind of research.”

During his opening remarks, Nathan discussed the future of military medicine and the importance of making advancements in medical research a reality for today’s sailors and Marines.

“We have to figure out how to go beyond transplant, beyond prosthetics, and move to regenerative medicine,” said Nathan. “We know that in the future we will have the ability to regenerate tissue, grow limbs and new tissue, grow spinal cords, vis-a-vis stem cell implantation, artificial skin, genetic manipulation, but as Mrs. Amos would say, ‘More, more, more, faster, faster,’ we need to move the dot to today so that it’s not the 22nd century sailor and Marine who benefits from this but the 21st century sailor and Marine.”

During the event, Shannon O’Kelley, UCLA Health Systems chief operating officer, presented on Operation Mend and the importance of collaboration with the military to heal wounded warriors.

“We are here for our wounded warriors,” said O’Kelley. “At UCLA we have a vision statement that says, ‘Healing human kind, one patient at a time.’ We are hoping we can collaborate to work that is currently undone and advance technologies to make a difference.”

Throughout the day, UCLA clinicians, researchers, engineers and business school faculty presented on such topics as Operation Mend, telemedicine, biological innovations, mental health and outreach programs and business infrastructure.

“Our mission is to improve health and quality of life for military personnel and their families in a timely and efficient fashion,” said Chia Soo, M.D., research director, UCLA Operation Mend, and vice chair for research, division of plastic and reconstructive surgery. “We want to bring all of our resources at UCLA as well as our collaborative partners to help.”

After the presentations, Paxton discussed the critical needs of the Navy and Marine Corps team which includes amputee care, traumatic brain injury, genital/urinary reconstruction and burn care.

“We make Marines fight our nation’s battles and return better citizens,” said Paxton. “We have a sacred commitment to do right for those who put it all on the line. To our colleagues and partners at UCLA, thank you for bringing your talents here to work with the surgeon general, our partners in Navy Medicine and to the entire Navy and Marine Corps team. We look forward to reconvening on this topic.”

UCLA's Operation Mend partners with the United States military to jointly heal the wounds of war by delivering leading-edge patient care, research and education, improving health, alleviating suffering and delivering acts of kindness.

Navy Medicine is a global health care network of 63,000 Navy medical personnel around the world who provide high quality health care to more than one million eligible beneficiaries. Navy Medicine personnel deploy with sailors and Marines worldwide, providing critical mission support aboard ship, in the air, under the sea and on the battlefield.