



News: Vice chief of staff of the Army visits Operation Mend-UCLA Medical Center, Wounded Warriors

Story by Staff Sgt. Shejal Pulivarti

LOS ANGELES – Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. John Campbell visited University of California, Los Angeles Operation Mend, Nov. 1, to gain key insight and knowledge of the groundbreaking program that provides wounded military personnel with specialized care at the UCLA Medical Center.

Operation Mend was established in 2007 to partner with the U.S. military to jointly heal the wounds of war by delivering leading-edge patient care, research, and education by using the best medicine and technology available.

“The program provides specialty services, shares the expertise that UCLA has in various clinical disciplines with wounded warriors to optimize their care and get them back on their feet,” said Dr. Christopher Crisera, executive medical director, UCLA Operation Mend.

The program is adaptive to each individual patient’s case and encompasses all avenues of recovery. “We can give a complete set of service, which is a really holistic package of taking care of their family, their psychosocial wellbeing and their physical wellbeing,” said Ronald Katz, founder, UCLA Operation Mend. “We feel an extraordinary duty to take care of these folks, and every day, they teach us that we’re right.”



Staff Sgt. Shejal Pulivarti
Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. John Campbell, interacts with the TeleHealth & Wellness Technology Platform that University of California, Los Angeles Operation Mend utilizes, during a visit to the UCLA Medical Center, Nov. 1. Campbell visited Operation Mend to gain key insight and knowledge of the groundbreaking program that provides wounded military personnel with specialized care. (U.S Army photo by Staff Sgt. Shejal Pulivarti/released)

Since the program's inception, they have worked with approximately 93 service members with a range of injuries, performed more than 300 procedures, and expanded their services to encompass more than 15 clinical disciplines.

"They've drastically improved my quality of life. I'm now able to do things I used to be able to do and want to do. It has helped me move forward," said Jay Barclay, Army Captain (retired) and Operation Mend patient.

After learning about the extent of Operations Mend's contributions, Gen. Campbell thanked each of the organization's leadership. "This program is quite special and there is a debt to our wounded we can never repay. I'm amazed at the work you are capable of doing and the assistance you've provided the men and women of our military," said Campbell.

After learning of the details of the program, Campbell met with two Operation Mend patients. He spent some time with the soldiers and learned their stories; both soldiers expressed their gratitude towards Operation Mend.

"I'm very lucky, and very happy, and pleased with everything that Operation Mend has done for me just because I've experienced so much more life that I probably would have had I not had the procedures," said Joey Paulk, Army Spc. (retired) and Operation Mend patient.

The eye-opening visit planted seeds of further collaboration and partnership.

"In this time of constrained resources it's even more vital to sustain these kinds of partnerships," said Campbell. "I'm committed as the vice chief of the Army to get the word out and help enhance this program anyway I can."