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## **MEDIA STATEMENT: UCSF Affiliation with Dignity Health**

April 9, 2019

UCSF Health's highest priority is ensuring that our patients receive evidence-based, high-quality, nondiscriminatory care. As the top-ranked hospital in California and one of the best in the nation, our goal is to make this level of care available to every patient who needs it, including the most vulnerable.

The proposed expanded affiliation between UCSF and Dignity Health achieves that goal.

Today, we are unable to meet the growing demand for care for our patients and our community. UCSF Health hospitals are operating at near capacity. This means that patients who are referred to us throughout California for life-saving care often face long wait times to see the specialist they need.

Last year alone, we turned away 2,200 patient transfers to our hospitals because we did not have beds available. Each month, we receive more than 1,000 requests that we are unable to accommodate for new primary care patients. Currently, as many as 70 patients per month are transferred to St. Mary's Medical Center, where we have a 24/7 UCSF hospitalist service, in order to keep beds available for those complex patients who require care at UCSF.

To address these challenges, we are forging alliances with like-minded health institutions across the Bay Area. These affiliations enable UCSF Health clinicians to serve more patients by providing high-quality specialty care in hospitals that often are closer to home for patients.

Through our current collaboration with three Dignity Health hospitals – St. Mary's and Saint Francis Memorial Hospital in San Francisco, and Sequoia Hospital, in Redwood City – we provide rehabilitation, cardiology, electrophysiology and headache services, pediatric burn services, neurosurgery, plastic surgery and thoracic surgery, as well as limb preservation that enables diabetes patients to avoid amputations. We also have a hospitalist program to coordinate specialty care and have partnered to open a critically needed inpatient mental health center for some of our city's most vulnerable patients. These programs are overseen by seven UCSF medical directors at the hospitals who ensure that the care meets our standards.

These expanded UCSF services would not have been possible without our current collaboration.

UCSF's values – of patient-centered, evidence-based, non-discriminatory care for all – are core to what we do and central to our affiliations. To affiliate with us, our partners must have values that substantially overlap with ours. Where our values differ, we work across UCSF to identify and advance solutions that consistently align with our values.



Our current collaboration with Dignity Health and our planned affiliation were developed after significant deliberation and input from faculty. UCSF Health engaged with the UCSF Academic Senate and dozens of faculty leaders, convening two task forces over several years to develop guiding principles for this and our other affiliations. Under these principles, UCSF patients will have access to patient-centered, evidence-based, non-discriminatory care in every affiliation.

The Dignity Health system includes 41 hospitals, of which 25 are Catholic and 16 are not Catholic-sponsored. No Dignity Health hospitals offer elective abortions, assisted reproductive technology such as IVF, or physician-assisted suicide. However, in practice, the most common place for these services is in the outpatient setting, regardless of whether or not an institution is faith-based.

Moreover, our affiliation principles dictate that UCSF physicians at Dignity Health have full latitude to discuss all evidence-based options for services and can refer patients to any of UCSF's programs and services. Additionally, although Dignity Health's Catholic hospitals do not stock or dispense contraception medications, UCSF physicians can prescribe contraception to patients at any Dignity Health hospital.

UCSF Health and Dignity Health are the two longest-serving health providers in San Francisco, with a relationship that goes back more than 20 years. Both systems are committed to serving vulnerable patients and communities. Dignity Health is the state's largest provider of Medi-Cal for the medically underserved, a value that is integral to UCSF's mission, just as UCSF is the largest provider of Medi-Cal inpatient services among hospitals in San Francisco.

In San Francisco, Dignity Health provides critically needed services for our community, including the city's only burn care facility, the only adolescent psychiatry program, and the largest transgender surgery program in the city. Without these programs, some of the most vulnerable members of our community would have nowhere to turn.

The State of California has long recognized the value that Dignity Health brings to our communities and supports the organization as a critical component of the state's health care and safety net system.

This current collaboration and our planned expanded affiliation, are, at its core, about two strong partners who share a commitment to excellent care for all patients. Our experience has shown that engagement with other health systems improves access, quality and availability to health care for patients, especially the underserved. Together, UCSF Health and Dignity Health are improving access to high-quality health care for all patients throughout the Bay Area.

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