

# Woman Receives Double Lung Transplant After Being Turned Away from Over 20 Hospitals

*She was deemed too “high risk” for surgery but the transplant team at UCLA accepted the challenge of treating her*

UCLA Health

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## NEWS PACKAGE

<b>SUGGESTED TEASE</b>	HOSPITAL AFTER HOSPITAL TOLD HER FAMILY SHE WAS TOO SICK FOR A TRANSPLANT AFTER A COMMON VIRUS ATTACKED HER LUNGS. HOW A TEAM OF SPECIALISTS HELPED HER BEAT THE ODDS, COMING UP.
<b>ANCHOR LEAD</b>	WHILE THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF ATTENTION ON HOW COVID-19 AFFECTS THE LUNGS, THERE ARE OTHER COMMON ILLNESSES THAT CAN CAUSE SERIOUS LUNG DAMAGE AND TURN DEADLY VERY QUICKLY, EVEN IN OTHERWISE HEALTHY PEOPLE. THAT WAS THE CASE FOR ONE WOMAN IN CALIFORNIA WHO CONTRACTED THE FLU. ANIETRA HAMPER HAS MORE ON HER STORY OF SURVIVAL AGAINST INCREDIBLE ODDS THANKS TO HER FAMILY’S PERSEVERANCE AND A MEDICAL TEAM WILLING TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO SAVE HER LIFE.
<b>(PACKAGE START) -----</b>	
<b>CG: Courtesy: UCLA Health</b> <b>:00 - :03</b> Shots of Miriam and daughters prepping for baby shower	(Nats - Sound) :02
<b>CG: Eliza Merianos</b> <b>Daughter of lung transplant recipient</b>	MIRIAM MERIANOS (MEER-ee-im merry-AH-nos) IS PREPARING TO WELCOME HER FIRST GRANDCHILD, SOMETHING THAT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE A SHORT TIME AGO. :05  <i>“Where we were sitting last year, we weren’t planning these happy moments. We were kind of having those difficult talks of, ‘What are we going to do in case something does happen to mom?’” :10</i>
Shots of Miriam with her family	MIRIAM WAS A HEALTHY MOM OF THREE IN HER FORTIES WHEN SHE GOT THE FLU, AND FIGURED SHE’D RECOVER IN A COUPLE OF DAYS. :05
<b>CG: Miriam Merianos</b>	<i>“But after the fourth day I started feeling tightness on</i>

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<p><b>Lung transplant patient</b></p> <p><b>CG: Louie Merianos</b> Husband of lung transplant patient</p> <p>Photos of Miriam in hospital</p>	<p><i>my chest.” :03</i></p> <p><i>“I left one morning and I got a text message from Miriam and she says, ‘I can’t breathe.’” :06</i></p> <p>THE VIRUS ATTACKED MIRIAM’S LUNGS, AND FOR NINE MONTHS, A MACHINE CALLED ECMO OPERATED HER HEART AND LUNGS TO KEEP HER ALIVE. :06</p>
<p><b>Miriam Merianos (CG’d earlier)</b></p> <p>Shots of Miriam walking with husband</p> <p><b>CG: Abbas Ardehali, MD</b> Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center</p>	<p><i>“They had told them get all the immediate family to come and to see me because there was really nothing more they could do.” :08</i></p> <p>MIRIAM’S ONLY CHANCE FOR SURVIVAL WAS A DOUBLE LUNG TRANSPLANT, BUT WAS TOLD SHE WAS NOT A CANDIDATE. :04</p> <p><i>“She had developed a certain level of proteins in her bloodstream that would make her reject many organs.” :07</i></p>
<p>Shots of Merianos family together</p> <p><b>CG: Elaine Kramer</b> Daughter of lung transplant recipient</p> <p>Shots of Dr. Ardehali talking to Miriam in exam room</p>	<p>BUT MIRIAM’S FAMILY WAS NOT TAKING “NO” FOR AN ANSWER. :03</p> <p><i>“We stopped counting at 19 ‘no’s. But the ‘no’s were just another no to us. We had to find a ‘yes.’” :07</i></p> <p>THAT YES CAME FROM DOCTOR ABBAS ARDEHALI (AH-bus are-duh-HAHL-ee) AT RONALD REAGAN U-C-L-A MEDICAL CENTER. :03</p>
<p><b>Dr. Ardehali (CG’d earlier)</b></p> <p><b>Louie Merianos (CG’d earlier)</b></p> <p>Shots of Dr. Ardehali talking to Miriam in exam room</p>	<p><i>“We reviewed the documents and we felt that, given a young woman in her condition, we felt that we should offer her a chance.” :09</i></p> <p><i>“I thought, ‘My wife’s going to live.’” :01</i></p> <p>BUT MIRIAM STILL HAD A LONG WAY TO GO. :02</p>
<p><b>Dr. Ardehali (CG’d earlier)</b></p> <p>Photo after surgery</p> <p><b>Miriam Merianos (CG’d earlier)</b></p>	<p><i>“She was on ECMO for nearly nine months, and that, in our experience, has been the longest that I know of for anyone who’s been on life support waiting for an organ such as lung transplantation.” :14</i></p> <p>WITH A TEAM OF SPECIALISTS TO REDUCE HER ANTIBODIES AND PREPARE HER FOR SURGERY, MIRIAM’S TRANSPLANT WAS A SUCCESS. :04</p> <p><i>“After the following week it was like I was back to myself. I felt like I didn’t even have a surgery or I went</i></p>

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<p>Shots of Merianos family together</p>	<p><i>through all that I went through.” :07</i></p>
<p><b>Dr. Ardehali (CG’d earlier)</b></p>	<p>MIRIAM NOW HAS MORE MEMORIES TO MAKE WITH HER FAMILY THANKS TO THOSE WHO GAVE HER THE CHANCE TO LIVE. :04</p> <p>“Never give up. Always seek to see what you can do to advocate for your loved one and for yourself. There’s always an opportunity; there’s always hope.” :10</p>
<p>Shots of Merianos family together <b>(PACKAGE END) -----</b> <b>ANCHOR TAG</b></p>	<p>AT U-C-L-A HEALTH, THIS IS ANIETRA HAMPER REPORTING. :03</p> <hr/> <p>EXPERTS AT U-C-L-A SAY PERFORMING COMPLICATED SURGERIES LIKE MIRIAM’S SHOWS IT IS POSSIBLE FOR HIGH-RISK PATIENTS TO HAVE SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES.</p> <p>THIS ALLOWS THEM TO SHARE WHAT THEY’VE LEARNED WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS SO MORE PROGRAMS ARE ABLE TO ACCEPT THESE PATIENTS IN THE FUTURE.</p> <p>OF COURSE, NONE OF THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE LIFESAVING GIFT OF ORGAN DONATION. TO BECOME A DONOR, VISIT DONATE-LIFE-DOT-NET.</p>

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

<p> <b>Share it! Suggested tweet:</b></p>	<p>After a common virus attacked her lungs, Miriam Merianos was put on life support and deemed too high risk for transplant surgery – until the team at <a href="https://twitter.com/UCLAHealth">@UCLAHealth</a> took on her complicated case and saved her life. <a href="http://bit.ly/2lazzkcd">http://bit.ly/2lazzkcd</a></p>
<p> <b>Suggested post:</b></p>	<p>After a common virus attacked her lungs, Miriam Merianos’ family was told the same thing from dozens of hospitals: She was not a candidate for a transplant. Then they turned to doctors at <a href="https://www.uclahealth.org">UCLA Health</a> who put a team of specialists together to take on her complicated case and save her life. <a href="http://bit.ly/2lazzkcd">http://bit.ly/2lazzkcd</a></p>

## EXTRA BITES

**CG: Abbas Ardehali, MD**  
**Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical**  
**Center**

Ardehali says Miriam's case was rejected a lot of places due to the risk:

*"She was rejected at the local centers, and the physicians there were actually willing to refer her case to several other centers throughout the country on the east coast as well as the midwest, and she was deemed to be too high risk at all of the other centers." :17*

Ardehali says complicated cases require a multidisciplinary approach:

*"It requires a multidisciplinary approach involving multiple team members, from the lung specialist to infectious disease to people who are specialized in what we call immunogenetics or management of the antibodies or proteins in the circulating blood." :18*

Ardehali says Miriam is a survivor and he credits her family's perseverance:

*"She is, in my opinion, is a survivor and someone who has beaten the odds, and a lot of credit has to go to her and her family for their courage, their commitment and their determination to persevere." :19*

Ardehali says performing high-risk transplants allows them to advance the field:

*"We are routinely offering lung transplantation to this cohort of patients, and more importantly, we are doing it in a thoughtful way so that we can publish the information to ensure that the rest of the country and the rest of the world is aware so that they can continue to offer this lifesaving treatment to those patients in need." :18*

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Miriam explains how a cold quickly became serious:

*"They said, 'Oh, it's just a cold. You know, we'll give you some antibiotics and you should be good to go.' I said, 'Okay.' The second day came, still didn't feel good. By the third day I told my husband, 'My chest is getting tighter and tighter and I'm having difficulty breathing now.'" :17*

**CG: Miriam Merianos**  
**Lung transplant patient**

Miriam says she lived a healthy lifestyle before getting sick:

*"I've never smoked in my life or drank in my life. As a matter of fact, for the past 10 years I've been living a healthier lifestyle, exercising every day, eating properly, water, no soft drinks, sugar, just being very precautionous of my health, so how did I end up in this stage? How did this happen?" :20*

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<p><b>CG: Louie Merianos</b> Husband of lung transplant recipient</p>	<p>Louie encourages families to keep fighting for their loved ones: <i>“To the families that are going through this, we want to let them know that, keep fighting.” :05</i></p> <p>Louie recalls a call he received when his wife was in the hospital: <i>“He said, ‘You better get here right away because if we don’t do this right now she’s not going to be alive within the next four hours.’ :09</i></p>
<p><b>CG: Elaine Kramer</b> Daughter of lung transplant recipient</p>	<p>Elaine describes her relief when UCLA took her mom’s case: <i>“Having Dr. Ardehali step in and say, ‘I will take this complicated case,’ is life changing. We closed up the books and we closed up the emails and said, ‘UCLA, we’re going back home.’” :10</i></p> <p>Elaine describes her mom’s incredible transformation after surgery: <i>“My mom went from being bedridden to now bossing us around, back to her normal self. She’s planning baby showers, she’s washing laundry. She’s waking us up and telling us breakfast time. I mean, it’s Mom.” :18</i></p> <p>Elaine says her mom’s will to live made them fight harder for her: <i>“We knew my mom wanted to live. My mom wanted to see milestones and she wanted to be around. Knowing that and having asked her what she would want, our voice became stronger for her.” :14</i></p>
<p><b>CG: Eliza Merianos</b> Daughter of lung transplant recipient</p>	<p>Eliza describes the time her mom was on ECMO: <i>“They said about a week, it should max about a week you should turn a corner. That week passed, a couple months passed and there was no corner that we were turning. It was this machine was just keeping her alive and there was no other option but to find...but to transplant her. :18</i></p> <p>Eliza says she wasn’t sure she’d ever see her mom back to normal: <i>“To see her zipping around the house and doing normal things that she wouldn’t do when...before she got sick. It’s almost as if you don’t...I didn’t think that we were going to reach this moment.” :15</i></p>

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