Anita Ihasz
Blank Assistant III
UC San Diego Health System: Nephrology Programs

Anita has been working in the Apheresis department since May 2007. Prior to that she worked in the UCSD BMT program as a research coordinator from 2001-07. Her role in Apheresis is Program Coordinator but truly she is much more than that. Anita is the glue that keeps all tied together and running well. She has taken on many projects outside the planned scope of her work, always finding new ways to enhance the patient-care quality as well as the fiscal and functional performance of the Apheresis Program. Apheresis is a multi-modality program servicing three sites, three hospitals and numerous referring agencies and services both internally and from the community. It is Anita’s role to keep all coordinated which is a huge task. Everything starts with her acquiring authorizations for the procedure and the consultations with the Attending MD to making the patients and their family welcomed in their first day to see us. Her proactive, tireless and effective contributions make her exceptional, the kind of outstanding employee who makes UCSDMC truly excellent.

Anita supports UCSD standards and policies and procedures in her everyday role activities but she consistently exceeds these expectations. She will often go above and beyond to assist her patients and their medical or insurance needs. This is her passion!!! An example was when two Apheresis patients were recently sent to collections, because UCSD had the wrong insurance and wrong address information in the system. She swiftly resolved the issues by stopping the collection process and correcting the error by communicating the problem to the billing department. Both patients were extremely appreciative of Anita’s commitment and her ability to correct and resolve their problem.

Anita has found opportunities on her own initiative. Dr. Ward and Anita initiated with the help of pharmacy an analysis project started October 2008 to September 2009 comparing Plasmapheresis with IVIG for inpatients with Guillain Barre or Myasthenia Gravis. Dr. Ward presented the project to the neurology group. Because of this awareness, the apheresis unit has seen an increase in referrals from neurology and other departments. Our program has since grown 100%.

Another project of Anita is to correct MediCal reimbursement for apheresis services. This is close to completion. With the help of Keith Berman, Anita was able to help push for better reimbursement for apheresis services.

Anita proudly calls herself a patient advocate and a dedicated champion for the UCSD Apheresis Program. She has discovered within my 6 years at the apheresis unit that it is important to understand the clinical treatments and the specific diagnosis. This understanding has enabled her to intensely and confidently advocate for treatment authorizations and approvals. She has become an expert at navigating all the insurance companies’ avenues for securing apheresis treatment authorizations. She’s also become knowledgeable on the how to get treatment for patients whom have diagnosis that are standardly denied, due to lack of clinical evidence.

She contributes in a major way to many UCSD Hospital-wide initiatives, taking part in many charitable events. One in particular is the UCSD Longboard Luau surf contest of which she has been a part of for the past 12 years. The profits from this endeavor support the UCSD Moore’s Cancer Center activities. Monies raised amount to $500,000 on average per year. She’s attended and supported the Lymphoma and Leukemia Society Walk since 2011. She’s attended the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Walks, the Kidney Walk, and the Multiple Sclerosis Walk every year. Additionally, Anita supports our internal UCSD community through her work as the secretary of the Diversity Committee. She did a Panel Discussion along with our CEO Paul Viviano about diversity last February 15, 2013 which is a great honor. She is the Safety Officer of the Apheresis Unit where she does the monthly safety topic during our staff meetings.