Michelle Barford
Home IV/Parenteral Nutrition Consumer, Oley Ambassador, Retired Nurse
After thirty-two years as a registered nurse (RN), in 2009 Michelle Barford retired medically due to surgery that resulted in short bowel syndrome (SBS). Before the surgery, Michelle had been in hospice for seven months. She says, “The surgery saved my life, but changed it dramatically. Developing SBS was at first a curse, but now it’s just a way of life, one I have to manage every day.” Her husband, Mark, she says, “is my rock! Mark cared for me during my early illness years, even doing my parenteral nutrition (PN) every night and driving me around in our convertible with the top down when that was the only thing that would make me comfortable.”

Michelle has traveled extensively, both in this country and around the world. She notes that the team at her infusion company supports her in finding ways that allow her to enjoy different activities. Michelle says, “I try every day to not let this health issue define me. I continue to experience negative pouch issues and extreme odor issues [due to an ostomy]. However, I decided to go back to work—in retail, at a local clothing boutique. All those years of wearing white and comfy nurse shoes have left for good. Now I wear lovely outfits and heels. My feet can hurt at the end of a long shift, but it’s worth it to me! No one suspects I have a colostomy and a central line. The surgeon who replaced my line when I required a change even asked me where I wanted my line placed. I had it placed low enough on my chest that it’s not noticeable when I wear a strapless dress or a bathing suit. I have a fellow PN consumer to thank for that, as she was the one who told me the line can be placed anywhere that’s safe, but it doesn’t necessarily need to be high on the chest wall! So life is good—very good!”
Audrea Medina
Former IV/Parenteral Nutrition Consumer

Audrea Medina lost 95 percent of her small intestine during a botched D&C procedure following a miscarriage in 2010. In addition to the very difficult task of learning to live without her small bowel, she also learned to persevere, not lose hope, and manage her health care with the sacrificial assistance of her husband, Jeff, and the exceptional care of her intestinal rehabilitation team. Eventually moving several hundred miles to a new state to come under the direct care of her team, Audrea focused on raising her three children (now teenagers), whom she has homeschooled off and on over the past thirteen years as her health has allowed. Medical advances, including being part of a clinical trial for the past three years, have aided in improving her health to such a degree that she and her family have been able to fulfill a life-long dream: to move to, serve, and work with people in the Dominican Republic, both Dominican citizens and Haitian refugees. The Medina family has only lived in the Dominican Republic since February of this year, but they have fully embraced island life, are diligently studying Spanish, and are actively engaging their church and community in planning future mission outreach programs, including teaching English, ministering to felt needs in their underprivileged community, and encouraging their new friends through their own difficult life journeys.
Robert Venick, MD
Director, Intestinal Rehabilitation and Transplantation Services
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**Robert Venick, MD**, serves as Director of Intestinal Rehabilitation and Transplantation Services and Pediatric Liver Transplantation at UCLA, where he has been on faculty for over fifteen years. Dr. Venick graduated with honors with a major in Public Policy from Duke University prior to attending medical school at University of Southern California. He completed his pediatric residency as well as his fellowship in Pediatric GI/Nutrition and Hepatology at UCLA. He is board certified in pediatric gastroenterology and transplant hepatology. Dr. Venick has received funding from the National Institute of Health (NIH) and the American Society of Transplantation for his research in intestinal failure associated liver disease, auto-immune hepatitis, pharmacogenomics, and medication adherence. He has served as a site investigator in several clinical trials for patients with intestinal failure and short bowel syndrome. He has held leadership roles in the Intestinal Rehabilitation and Transplant Association, and has authored over 85 peer reviewed publications, and several book chapters. Dr. Venick is also a Professor of Pediatrics and Surgery at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA.