U.S. Congressman Schiff joins USC discussion on health care reform

By Katie Neith and Sara Reeve

The Keck School of Medicine brought a hot topic to the table Tuesday evening when it presented a health care reform discussion with Representative Adam Schiff (D-29th Congressional District).

Part of the Dean's Council on Health Reform, the August 18 forum attracted a large crowd, filling the Mayer Auditorium and two overflow areas.

"Medical schools are an important part of the health care reform process," said Carmen A. Puliafito, dean of the Keck School. "The essence of health care is people—nurses, technicians, administrators and, of course, physicians. The future of physicians all starts here in medical school."

Rep. Schiff, who sits on the House Appropriations Committee, House Judiciary Committee, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and a number of key Congressional subcommittees, outlined the key details of the health care debate.

While Rep. Schiff offered his personal opinions on the various bills being considered, his overall goal was clear.

"We have got to move forward in reforming the system. I don't want the perfect to be the enemy of the good," he said. "But I do think this is a test of the country. Do we still have the ability to get reasonable minds together and reach a reasonable decision? I think if we are successful, we will look back on this period … and say we did a good thing as a country."

In his presentation, Rep. Schiff discussed common agreements among the five bills that are currently under consideration, including health plans that would not discriminate against pre-existing conditions or drop coverage due to illness. He pointed out that the bills also agree that health insurance should be portable when changing employers and take into consideration public and national health care costs with an aim of sustainability.

Where the bills differ most are on the public option issue.

"We have got to move forward in reforming the system. I don't want the perfect to be the enemy of the good."

— Adam Schiff, (D-29th U.S. Congressional District)
USC opens new Evaluation and Treatment Clinic

Baxter Foundation awards $200,000 to Keck School researchers

University of Southern California's Health Sciences Campus community. It is written and produced by the Health Sciences Public Relations and Marketing staff. Comments, suggestions and story ideas are welcome. Permission to reprint articles with attribution is freely given.

Next Issue: August 28

The Evaluation and Treatment Clinic (ETC) celebrated its grand opening with a ribbon cutting ceremony and open house on Aug. 14. Close to 100 invited guests gathered to hear remarks given by key members of the ETC committee, who all expressed gratitude to everyone involved in making the ETC possible. After the ceremony, the event was opened up to all faculty and staff to tour the facility and enjoy refreshments.

Several of the nurses are internal transfers from both USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital,” said Annette Sy, associate administrator for ambulatory care services at USC Norris. “So they all know the background, the hospitals, the systems and our patients. They are a great group of nurses, with a great leader in Emma Wright.”

A prototype for the ETC was created in 2004 under The Doctors of USC. Don Larsen, chief medical officer for USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital, was a member of both the original and the current ETC committees.

“The transition from the Doctors of USC perspective to the hospital perspective was extremely smooth,” said Larsen. “It was a great opportunity to see the collaborative effort between The Doctors of USC and hospital administration.”

Caryn Wright

The Evaluation and Treatment Clinic (ETC) celebrated its grand opening with a ribbon cutting ceremony and open house on Aug. 14.

Celebrating the opening of the clinic, (from left) Donald Larsen, Fred Weaver, Scott Evans, Annette Sy, Emma Wright, and Minnie Anderson cut the ceremonial ribbon at the Aug. 14 open house.

By Ina Fried

Research on stem cells and cancer will be supported by junior faculty awards from the Donald E. and Delia B. Baxter Foundation to the Keck School of Medicine for 2009.

Krzysztof Kobielak, assistant professor, Pathology, and Chengyu Liang, assistant professor of research, Molecular Microbiology and Immunology, will each receive $75,000 for one year to support their research.

In addition, the foundation has awarded $50,000 in continued support for the Medical Student Summer Research Fellowship Program under the direction of Sandra Mosteller with the Keck School Office of Curriculum.

The Baxter Foundation provides seed funding to help prepare and support junior faculty embarking on their careers and starting up their independent laboratories.

Over the years, the foundation has provided gifts in excess of $10 million. In April, the lower ground floor of the Hayley J. Norris Cancer Research Tower was named the Donald E. and Delia B. Baxter Foundation Floor in celebration of the foundation’s 50th anniversary.

After postdoctoral training at The Rockefeller University, Kobielak embarked on his own career of Pathology and the Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC in 2007.

His research focuses on the role of BMP (Bone Morphogenic Protein) signaling in the regulation of skin and hair follicle stem cells.

The work may shed light on hair regeneration, wound healing and tumor formation in the skin.

Liang, who joined USC from Harvard Medical School in 2008, has research interests in cancer and infectious diseases, focusing especially on autophagy, a cellular cleanup and recycling system. She will examine the role of the autophagic tumor suppressor UVRAG (UV irradiation resistance associated gene) in the progression of colon cancer.

By Jon Nalick

“The sky is the limit for what we can do, and I think great things are going to happen.”

The ETC is staffed by a team of nurses who all come from critical care or urgent care backgrounds.

Several of the nurses are internal transfers from both USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital,” said Annette Sy, associate administrator for ambulatory care services at USC Norris. “So they all know the background, the hospitals, the systems and our patients. They are a great group of nurses, with a great leader in Emma Wright.”

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By Jon Nalick

“No One Breaks This Code.”

For weeks, employees of USC’s hospitals have puzzled over the meaning of cryptic, cardinal-colored posters on the walls asking that question—and equally mysterious gold-colored flyers that warn, “No One Breaks This Code.”

But on Aug. 10, a month-long public awareness campaign sponsored by the USC Office of Compliance and the Health Sciences Public Relations and Marketing Office, revealed “The Code” that all university employees should know as the university’s code of ethics.

“The code is a guiding set of principles by which every member of the university community must abide. It states that ethical behavior at the university is predicated on two key pillars: ‘a commitment to discharging our obligations to others in a fair and honest manner and a commitment to respecting the rights and dignity of all persons.’

The campaign culminated with all hospital employees receiving cardinal-and-gold pamphlets that highlighted the 10 key components that make up the code, highlighting the importance of maintaining respectful relationships with others, avoiding conflicts of interest, and displaying tolerance and speaking against bigotry.

The pamphlet also includes the phone number for a Help & Hotline number to answer questions and address callers’ concerns about laws, regulations and university policies. The hotline, at (213) 740-2500, is confidential and staffed 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Hospital employees who submit signed questions or comments about the code through Aug. 28 are eligible for a drawing for a pair of Dodgers tickets. They can enter the drawing using forms available on the last page of the “Know The Code” pamphlets, which can be obtained from department directors.

By Jon Nalick

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The floor was then opened for questions and opinions from the crowd, consisting primarily of first-year medical students and Health Sciences Campus faculty. Rep. Schiff responded to concerns about physician reimbursements, parity in mental health coverage and lack of health care providers, among others. "The town hall format is valuable because I can hear what my colleagues are concerned about," said Madeleine Buning, pediatric nurse practitioner and clinical instructor of pediatrics at the Keck School. "I'm curious as a consumer of health care and as a provider." The forum was presented by the Dean's Council on Health Reform, a new initiative that features monthly forums and a Web site serving as a clearinghouse for information about health care reform. "[The forum] was very informative. I learned a few new things, and I consider myself well-informed," said Michael Cousineau, associate professor of research in the Department of Family Medicine and Preventive Medicine at the Keck School. "I was inspired by Congressman Schiff's leadership on this issue, and I am excited that USC and our dean have taken such a strong leadership role, as well." For more information on health reform, or to watch a webcast of the forum, visit healthreform.usc.edu.

RESEARCH: Even as competition for grants rises, Keck School stays competitive

Continued from page 1

The number of fund requests climbed from a $5.3 billion peak in 2003, partly due to a massive five-year burst of NIH funding ending in 2003. That explosion of funding enticed many new researchers and institutions that otherwise would not have. But after NIH research funding peaked at about $23 billion in 2003, it shrank in each year thereafter, even more due to the great recession. To adapt, Keck School researchers aggressively diversified their grant-seeking strategies, intensifying the competition for research money — the largest source of grant dollars for the school. But funding recovered the following year. Keck School Dean Carmen A. Polatnick praised the faculty’s hard work, saying, “We applaud them for their efforts in achieving an outstanding number of grants in fiscal year 2009.”

FINI said that the Keck School’s research grant growth “is one of the major things that defines us. It’s money, but it’s also a symbol of who we are — our stature. It helps attract high quality faculty and students and it’s a testament to our outstanding research.”

Editor’s Note: For space reasons we are highlighting only the 10 largest new and competitive research grants received in FY09 below.

Top 10 Keck School of Medicine new and competitive research grant awards for 2008-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department Name</th>
<th>PI and Co-investigators</th>
<th>Sponsor Award</th>
<th>Sponsor Title</th>
<th>Current Period Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>ZNI</td>
<td>Henderson, Brian E.; Haiman, Christopher Alan; Stram, Daniel O.; Ingles, Sue</td>
<td>1 U01 CA136792-01</td>
<td>National Cancer Institute</td>
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<td>Pato, Carlos N; Pato, Michele T.</td>
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<td>MMI</td>
<td>Jung, Jae U; Du, Jung-Haing James</td>
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<td>National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases</td>
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<td>Pathology</td>
<td>Tsukamoto, Hidekazu; Kaplinski, Neil; Valente, Thomas; Asahina, Kimi; Kalra, Vijay K.; Machida, Keisuke; Ji, Cheng; Lu, Shelly C.</td>
<td>2 P20 AG011069-11</td>
<td>National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism</td>
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<td>University of California, San Francisco</td>
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USC seeks volunteers for Great California ShakeOut

By Leslie Ridgeway

Employees have an opportunity to enhance their disaster response skills by participating in the Great California ShakeOut on Oct. 15 at the Health Sciences Campus.

USC’s Office of Fire Safety and Emergency Planning is organizing a rescue exercise, which will coincide with the 10:15 a.m. simulation of a 7.8 earthquake. Everyone on campus will be asked to "Drop, Cover, and Hold On" at that time as part of the statewide earthquake drill.

About 100 volunteers are needed to serve on a special disaster response medical team. Volunteers will provide basic first aid to about 40 volunteer "victims" who will participate in the rescue exercise conducted by campus emergency teams during the ShakeOut.

A free three-hour disaster first aid/disaster triage workshop will be offered in August and September to help disaster medical response team volunteers prepare for the drill. Workshop participants will learn first aid for bleeding, shock, fractures, burns and basic victim assessment skills. They will also learn basic "triage" skills to ensure that the most critically injured victims are treated first. No medical experience is required.

Employees who wish to participate in the workshop and during the ShakeOut are asked to inform their supervisors before participating. Workshops will take place from 2–5:30 p.m. at the Norris Cafe in University Hospital. Participants may choose one workshop from the following dates: Thursday, Aug. 27; Tuesday, Sept. 8; Monday, Sept. 14; Thursday, Sept. 17; or Friday, Sept. 18. Volunteers may register for a workshop via e-mail to Steve Goldfarb at sgoldfarb@caps.usc.edu, or call 213-740-3962.

For more information on the statewide drill, go to the state’s Great California ShakeOut Web page at www.shakeout.org.
Continued from page 1

sphere helped students ease into their new career as medical students. “One of the reasons I chose Keck is because of the great environment,” said Cindy Luu, a first-year student. “When I visited, I felt like I was welcomed with open arms.” Activities culminated in the annual rite of passage for new students—the white coat ceremony—held on Aug. 14 in the Harry and Celesta Pappas Quad. Dean Puliafito noted that the students are embarking on a medical career at a remarkable time in the nation’s history. “It’s an exciting time for us because all of the nation’s attention now is on the future of health care in America,” he said. “However you feel about the direction of health care reform, one thing is sure—we have the nation’s attention focused on the important issues and challenges that face our community of health care providers, physicians and patients.” The 168 new students heard addresses from Henri Ford, vice dean for medical education, and Jonathan Lo Presti, associate professor of clinical medicine. Lo Presti, 2009 Humanism in Medicine Award Recipient, reminded the incoming students to always smell the flowers. “Over the next four years, have fun, and don’t let the self-imposed stress of medical school weigh on you,” Lo Presti said. “Enjoy all your vacation time. Travel if you can. Go to the football games... Actively pursue a hobby while in school to remain a well-rounded individual. There’s really much more to life than medicine.”

STUDENTS: New Keck School students welcomed—and returning students welcomed back—with parties

Calendar of Events

This Calendar of events is also online at www.usc.edu/hsccalendar for the Health Sciences Campus community

Monday, Aug. 24
Noon. “Novel Biomarkers for Lupus Nephritis,” Mehrnaz Hojjati, University of Minnesota. GNH 6440 Info: (323) 442-1946

Wednesday, Aug. 26
8:30 a.m. “Introduction to Clinical Research,” Jonathan Samet, USC. GHN 11-321. Info: (323) 226-7923

Friday, Aug. 28
8:30 a.m. “Cystic Fibrosis,” Adupa Rao, USC. GHN 11-321. Info: (323) 226-7923

Thursday, Sept. 17
Noon. “To Stress or Not—New Insights into JNK Signaling,” Ze’ev Ronai, La Jolla, CA. HMR 100. Info: (323) 226-7923

Saturday, Sept. 19
10 a.m. – 5 p.m. The 4th Annual Medical Student Leadership Conference, “Your Future in Medicine Awaits. Shouldn’t You Seat?” Various speakers. KAM Mayer Auditorium. Info: www.cmanet.org/studentleadership

Thursday, Sept. 24
Noon. “Metabolism of vitamin D and bone density,” Vicente Gilhaus, USG/CHLA. HMR 100. Info: (323) 442-3858

In case of an emergency...

Call the Emergency Information Phone: 213-740-9233 The emergency telephone system can handle 1,400 simultaneous calls. It also has a backup system on the East Coast.

Visit the USC Web: http://emergency.usc.edu This page will be activated in case of an emergency. Backup Web servers on the East Coast will function if the USC servers are incapacitated.

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Notice: Deadline for calendar submission is 4 p.m. Monday to be considered for that week’s issue—although three weeks’ advance notice of events is recommended. Please note that timely submission does not guarantee an item will be printed. Send calendar items to HSC Weekly, KAM 400 or fax to (323) 442-2832, or e-mail to eblaauw@usc.edu. Entries must include day, date, time, title of talk, first and last name of speaker, affiliation of speaker, location, and a phone number for information.