PLAYING IT SAFE—USC nurses and residents tended to participants at the Lakers 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament on Aug. 15 and 16 at the USC University Hospital sponsored medical station. Many tournament players stopped by the booth to have ankles and wrists taped, and to be treated for minor scrapes and dehydration.

Renowned physician-scientist named chief of hematology

By Katie Neith

Preet Chaudhary has been named chief of the Jane Anne Nohl Division of Hematology and Center for the Study of Blood Diseases at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and Hospital, effective Jan. 1, 2010. A nationally recognized physician-scientist, Chaudhary will serve as professor of medicine at the Keck School of Medicine, Department of Medicine, and as co-leader of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Program and associate director for translational research at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center.

“Dr. Chaudhary has a very diverse background in translational research and clinical care, which has prepared him well to lead at this pivotal time of growth in the division of hematology and at our academic medical center,” said Carmen A. Polisario, dean of the Keck School of Medicine. “Dr. Chaudhary is an outstanding physician scientist who will play a major role in the cancer center,” said Peter A. Jones, director of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center. “He has an active basic science laboratory, as well as profound clinical skills, making him an exceptional addition to our institution.”

Chaudhary comes to USC from the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute, where he is professor of medicine, director for translational research, leader of the hematologic malignancies program and co-leader of the cancer stem cell program. He was recruited to USC after an extensive search led by Stuart Siegel, chief of the division of hematology-oncology at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. “USC has a combination of factors which make it a very exciting place to be right now. The dynamic and experienced leadership team is doing everything right to make it a powerhouse in patient care, education and research.”

—Preet Chaudhary, chief of the Jane Anne Nohl Division of Hematology & Center for the Study of Blood Diseases

New USC hospitals human resources chief to lead aggressive hiring initiative

By Meghan Lewit

Matthew F. McElrath has joined USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital as chief human resources officer effective Aug. 31.

McElrath, formerly chief human resources officer at Arizona State University, will direct human resources operations at both USC hospitals. One of his immediate priorities will be heading recruitment efforts to fill some 300 current job openings. Both hospitals are working to increase staffing levels of nurses, physicians and other personnel such as administrators, therapists and environmental workers.

His other duties will include workforce planning, recruitment, performance management, organizational development and other employment services.

McElrath said he was drawn to the position at USC because of the opportunity to be part of a new era for the hospitals, which were acquired by the university on April 1, 2009, in an historic purchase agreement with Tenet Healthcare Corp. The hospitals’ current workforce numbers 1,700 personnel, exclusive of more than 500 USC faculty physicians associated with the Keck School of Medicine of USC.

“This is a unique opportunity to join the university leadership in really building the USC culture at University Hospital and at Norris,” he said. “The transition from Tenet is remarkable. It’s a great opportunity not only to help grow the hospitals, but also to integrate them with the wider USC community.”

McElrath comes to USC from Arizona State University, where he served as associate vice president and chief human resources officer for a university system that encompasses more than 4,500
School of Pharmacy dean appointed to second 5-year term

By Gabrielle Olya

As the end of Randall L. “Pete” Vanderveen’s fourth year as dean of the USC School of Pharmacy neared, President Steven Sample and Provost C. L. Max Nikias announced Vanderveen’s appointment to an additional five-year term beginning in 2010.

Toward making the reappointment decision, the university administration, faculty, staff and students at the school, querying them about the dean’s leadership and support of student activities, beneficial reorganization of the departments from four to two, public relations efforts to improve the school profile and participation and leadership in national pharmaceutical associations.

Earlier this year, under Dean Vanderveen, the School’s Pharm.D. program received full re-accreditation through 2013, an action that speaks to its overall quality. The Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education cited the school’s curricular design as a model of best practices in pharmacy education and uses it as an example for schools nationwide.

Vanderveen has worked to expand the role of clinical pharmacy services in various practice settings, including partnerships with the JWCH Clinic at the Weingart Center and Queen’s Care clinics, where faculty, students and residents provide medication therapy management to patients.

This commitment to community outreach has led the school to win some of the most prestigious national awards in pharmacy practice over the last few years. These include the American Pharmacists Association Foundation Pinnacle Award, the American Society of Health System Pharmacists Best Practices Award and the AACP Inaugural Award for Transformative Community Service.

Vanderveen has supported the school’s research units by providing bridge funding when scientists await grant dollars and enhancing core facilities throughout the school.

He has also successfully promoted interdisciplinary hires and collaborations with other USC schools.

In addition, the dean launched the school’s Diversity Initiative to increase the diversity in the school’s student body.

This program proactively recruits high-school students to join the school’s Pharmacy Explorers Program—a track of the USC Med-COR program designed to introduce LAUSD students interested in the health sciences to the University of Southern California’s Health Sciences Campus community. It is written and produced for the faculty, staff, students, volunteers and visitors in the University.

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SEPTEMBER 18 • 2009

Berle Adams, longtime benefactor of USC cancer research, 92

By Sara Reeve

Berle Adams, longtime supporter of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, died Aug. 25 after a long illness. He was 92.

A past president of Cancer Research Associates, an early support organization for the Cancer Center, Adams was an advocate of cancer research at USC for more than 25 years.

“Berle Adams was a wonderful man whose support was critical to the early development of the Norris Cancer Center,” said Brian Hendersen, distinguished professor of preventive medicine and former dean of the Keck School of Medicine. “Through his work with Cancer Research Associates, he helped raise money to build new programs and buildings and advance research.”

Adams, along with the Lucy and Berle Adams Foundation, funded the Lucy and Berle Adams Endowed Chair in Cancer Research at the Keck School in 2002. His wife, Lucy Adams, a patient at USC Norris Cancer Hospital, died of melanoma in 1990.

“Berle Adams was an extraordinary man who was involved in supporting the Cancer Center from its early days,” said Peter Jones, director of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center. “He established the Lucy and Berle Adams Endowed Family Chair to support melanoma research and took a keen interest in our progress. We shall miss such a staunch supporter very much.”

During a career that spanned more than 60 years, Adams was a force in the music and television industries. In the 1940s, he co-founded Mercury Records, helping to launch the careers of singers Frankie Laine and Vic Damone. He moved on to MCA, where he represented artists including Jack Benny, Rosemary Clooney and Alfred Hitchcock. In later years, Adams specialized in the distribution of television programming, and was the sole international distributor of the Emmy Awards for more than 20 years.

When the Lucy and Berle Adams Endowed Chair was announced in 2002, Adams aid that he hoped his gift would help change people’s lives. “I’m glad to make the gift in memory of my wife and I hope it is able to help people,” he said at the time. “We want to stop cancer.”

Lisa Victor, USC pain management specialist, 62

By Meleeneh Kazarian

Lisa A. Victor, assistant professor in the Departments of Anesthesiology and Psychiatry at the Keck School of Medicine, died unexpectedly of natural causes on Aug. 13. She was 62.

Known by colleagues as dedicated and enthusiastic, Victor joined USC in 2001, where she trained many post-doctoral fellows in the area of pain psychology.

Long-time colleague Steven Richeimer, director of pain management in the Department of Anesthesiology and Psychiatry, described Victor’s interaction with patients and colleagues as unique and enduring.

He added, “She felt her patients’ pains, and she provided relief. Lisa Victor was the therapist for all of us.”

He added that Victor practiced the idea that individuals may not be able to control their circumstances, but they can control their reactions— and she encouraged her patients to do the same.

Victor, who was also director of pain management psychology, received her bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees in clinical psychology from UCLA.

She was a frequent lecturer in her area of expertise and authored numerous articles and chapters for books published in her field.

She is survived by her sister, Dana, the Kassov family, her friends and the USC community.

The Weekly

Next Issue: Sept. 25

The Weekly is published for the faculty, staff, students, volunteers and visitors in the 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 or story ideas are welcome. Permission to reprint articles with attribution is freely given.

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The front page photo (at left) that illustrated a story on campus white horse ceremonies in the Sept. Issue of The Weekly appeared with the wrong caption. The Weekly regrets the error and the correct caption is as follows:

Kevin Kaneko, assistant professor and manager of ambulatory care pharmacy services at the USC Norris Cancer Hospital, proudly “teats” his daughter, Mari. Kaneko is an old hand at this, having also coaxed his son, who entered the School of Pharmacy in 2006.
CHAUDHARY: Research focus is on cancer, cancer drug resistance and stem cells

Continued from page 1

The Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) at the Health Sciences Campus recently hosted its annual Student Leaders Meet and Greet at the Edmonson Faculty Center to introduce its new HSC Governing Council members and familiarize student leaders with the organization and its services. The meeting, on Sept. 1, was also designed to encourage advocacy, joint programming and interaction among the different schools and organizations on campus. Above, from left are GPSS HSC Governing Council members: John Mahajan, community service chair; Erika Chien, publicity chair; Rosanne Yetemian, HSC chair; Jennifer-Ann Bayan, programming chair; and Donna Duquer, operations chair.

Volunteers sought for Oct. 3 Heart Walk

Faculty, staff, students and residents from the Keck School of Medicine and USC hospitals are invited to join the USC Heart Walk Team on Saturday morning, Oct. 3, for the American Heart Association’s annual walk to raise money for research to fight heart disease and stroke.

The walk starts at 9 a.m. at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena. All registered team members will receive a USC team t-shirt and an invitation to a USC team gathering before the walk. USC University Hospital is the official sponsor of the finish line.

More than 8,000 people are expected to participate in this year’s Los Angeles Start! Heart Walk. In addition to the non-competitive 5k walk, the event includes a Wellness Festival featuring health screenings, food, a Kids Zone, music, giveaways and more.

The American Heart Association is the largest voluntary health organization working to prevent, treat and defeat heart disease and stroke, the nation’s No. 1 and No. 5 killers, which claim more than 910,000 American lives a year.

For more information or to join the USC team, visit http://tiny.cc/sGTT4.

Cure in the Canyons breast cancer event slated for Oct. 4

By Joe Peters

Celebrities including Shannon Tweed, Lorraine Toussaint of “Saving Grace,” and Marcellus Wiley of ESPN will host a tea party for breast cancer patients and survivors Oct. 4 at the Westlake Four Seasons as part of “Cure in The Canyons,” a fundraising event for breast cancer research.

The fundraiser is billed as a “luxury-fest,” and includes a variety of activities for guests, including wine-tasting, spa and beauty treatments, and the opportunity to sample new products from high-end food, health, and entertainment vendors. Desserts for the tea party will be provided by Chef Sooter Peters of Chef s Chef.

Cooking demonstrations and mini-seminars will also be in evidence, and guests in the Men’s Ultra Lounge will have the chance to test drive new 2010 Lexus Luxury Hybrids.

A silent auction will be held during the event. Cure in the Canyons is located at 2 Dole Drive, Westlake Village, and will begin at 11 a.m. Tickets are $75. Funds raised will support breast cancer research at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and other local institutions.

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.cureinthecanyons.com, or call (818) 575-3000.

The American Heart Association is the largest voluntary health organization working to prevent, treat and defeat heart disease and stroke, the nation’s No. 1 and No. 5 killers, which claim more than 910,000 American lives a year.

For more information or to join the USC team, visit http://tiny.cc/sGTT4.

A Sept. 13 Reuters article quoted public health expert Michael Cousineau about the cost of health care for illegal immigrants.

A Sept. 12 Los Angeles Times article quoted University Park Health Center Executive Director Lawrence Neinstein about how universities are preparing for swine flu.

A Sept. 11 MedCenter Today online featured a USC News story on Matthew McElrath joining USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital as chief human resources officer. The L.A. Weekly also reported the announcement.

A Sept. 10 New York Times Magazine article quoted public health expert Thomas Valente on new research showing that behaviors spread through people’s social circles.

A Sept. 8 Philadelphia Inquirer article quoted ophthalmologist Mark Humayun about the retinal implant project.

A Sept. 7 Boston Globe article quoted liver expert Neil Kaplowitz on screening out drugs that could have adverse effects on liver cells.

A Sept. 6 Los Angeles Times article quoted cardiologist Leslie Saxton about a combination implant that appears to help more heart failure patients.

The September issue of Smart Business Magazine featured USC hospitals CEO Mitch Creem in a cover story.

A Sept. 5 KNBC-TV quoted pharmacologist Roger Clemens of the USC School of Pharmacy about new drinks that claim health benefits but haven’t been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration.

A Sept. 2 Los Angeles Times article quoted cardiologist Leslie Saxton about a combination implant that appears to help more heart failure patients.

CHAUDHARY: Research focus is on cancer, cancer drug resistance and stem cells

Continued from page 1

principal investigator of two R01 grants, two R21 grants and one grant each from the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation, the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and the American Society for Clinical Investigation, an honor society of the top physician-scientists in the country.

After graduating from Maulana Azad Medical College in India, Chaudhary obtained his Ph.D. under the guidance of Igor Roninson at the University of Illinois at Chicago, performing pioneering research in the isolation and characterization of bone marrow stem cells and mechanisms of multi-drug resistance to cancer chemotherapy.

He did his residency training in internal medicine at Northwestern University in Chicago and fellowship training in hematology and oncology at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and the University of Washington in Seattle.

The department of Medicine, Hastings Professor and Norris Chair of Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine.

Chaudhary has published in some of the top scientific journals, including Cell, Immunity, JNCI, PNAS, Blood. He has been the recipient of numerous honors, fellowships and awards from national and international research organizations and has been elected to the prestigious American Society for Clinical Investigation, an honor society of the top physician-scientists in the country.

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USC surgeons perform novel kidney surgery

By Leslie Ridgeway

For the first time in Southern California, orthopaedic surgeons at the Keck School of Medicine Institute of Urology and USC-affiliated Childrens Hospital Los Angeles recently performed “belly-button” single port laparoscopic kidney removal surgery in a child with non-functioning kidneys. To date, four children have undergone the procedure since Aug. 30.

The technique is called laparo-endoscopic single-site surgery (LESS). The entire procedure is performed using specialized instrumentation through a small incision completely concealed within the umbilicus, leaving virtually no visible scar.

The procedures were performed by surgeons from the USC Institute of Urology: Chester Koh, assistant professor of Urology (pediatric) and director of the Pediatric Robotic Surgery program at Childrens Hospital; Roger De Filippo, assistant professor of Urology (pediatric) at Childrens Hospital; and Mihir Desai, professor of Clinical Urology at the Keck School of Medicine and director of Robotics at USC University Hospital.

“We are delighted that we can offer an option to children and families, who may have many advantages,” said Koh. “The LESS technique really lives up to its name – less scarring, and the potential for even less pain and less recovery time.” Desai, a noted pioneer and leader in the field of LESS surgery, indicated that the USC team has developed many applications of LESS surgery in urology. Patients typically go home after an overnight hospital stay after these cutting-edge procedures,” he said.

Among the children who received the surgery was a six-year-old girl whose kidney was obstructed and enlarged. Another child, a two-year-old boy, suffers from multiple medical, cardiac and intestinal problems; one of his kidneys was removed because of urinary tract infections.

CHLA names new chief of orthopaedic surgery

David L. Skaggs, professor of orthopaedic surgery at the Keck School of Medicine and a nationally recognized expert in pediatric spinal deformity and orthopaedic trauma, has been named chief of the division of orthopaedic surgery at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles. Skaggs appointment was effective on Aug. 1.

He replaces Vernon T. Tolo, who served as head of the division since 1987, and who is now chief emeritus at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles. Tolo will continue his full-time clinical practice at Childrens Hospital.

“I am grateful and enthusiastic for the opportunity to serve our patients and to develop a strong, vibrant orthopaedic service through a collaborative effort with community partners,” Skaggs said.

MCELRATH: Brings expertise in health care, ‘energy and enthusiasm’

Continued from page 1

MCELRATH: Brings expertise in health care, ‘energy and enthusiasm’

Robert McElrath, who earned a master’s degree in organizational behavior management (OBM) at DePaul University in Chicago, brought a great deal of experience, leadership and enthusiasm to our USC hospitals, along with considerable health care HR experience,” said Mitch Creem, CEO of the hospitals.

“McElrath brings a terrific mix of university and health care HR experience to our USC hospitals, along with considerable energy and enthusiasm,” said Mitch Creem, CEO of the hospitals.

“McElrath noted that it is a great time for individuals to consider a career at USC hospitals.”

We’re Tweeting...

HSC Public Relations and Marketing is now live on Twitter. Please follow us at http://twitter.com/USCHealthNewz for the latest USC Health Sciences news and updates.

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