By Tania Chatila

The USC Norris Cancer Hospital staff and the USC University Hospital staff joined forces this week in a collaborative effort to begin caring for all inpatients at USC University Hospital. The plan has been years in the making, and is part of a larger modernization and expansion initiative to provide enhanced services and facilities for all patients at the USC hospitals. That initiative began with the March 1 opening of the new, state-of-the-art Norris Inpatient Tower at USC University Hospital to treat USC Norris Cancer Hospital inpatients.

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—Mitch Creem, CEO of USC hospitals

USC hospitals’ staff, physicians unite for inpatient transition

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Looking ahead to 2035, USC maps out plan for campus

By Ina Fried

Making the USC Health Sciences Campus a more inviting place to study, work and live was high on the wish lists of students, faculty and staff during town halls conducted the week of Feb. 15 by the team that is developing the Health Sciences Campus Master Plan.

The plan, which looks ahead to the year 2035, is examining “how we make the campus a more efficient, functional and beautiful place” for patients, families and visitors, as well as for faculty, staff and students, said Laurie Stone, USC university counsel, who does land use and environmental planning for the university. “We’re looking at every aspect of the campus.”

At the town hall meetings, Stone introduced the architectural team working on the HSC Master Plan. The architects represent two companies that have worked extensively with other universities and academic medical centers.

Adam Gross, campus planning director, Ayers Saint Gross, based in Baltimore, and Scott P. Kelsey, principal in charge, CO Architects, Los Angeles, made brief presentations on the team’s work in the master planning process and then encouraged members of the audience to provide input on campus needs. The architects said the broad perspectives of the participants, who spoke up for each other as well as for their own interests, impressed them.

One need mentioned was a conveniently located gym or fitness center with free weights, a swimming pool and a sauna. More and better on-campus housing for students, postdoctoral trainees and visiting scholars—with more convenient and varied food services — also emerged as important.

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Keck, USC Hospitals lead list of donors to Good Neighbors Campaign

By Joe Peters

In spite of a dismal economic climate, 2009 was a record-breaking year for the Good Neighbors Campaign, which raised $1.2 million in donations from USC faculty and staff. Members of the Health Sciences Campus made significant contributions to this effort.

One major donor to the campaign was a relative newcomer to the Trojan family: USC Hospitals. Donations from USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital totaled $55,731, the largest amount from any administrative unit. Not to be outdone, the Keck School of Medicine topped the list of USC academic units, raising $124,344 for the campaign, up from last year’s total of $124,344 for the campaign, up from last year’s total of $95,786. The participation rate at the school increased as well, from 11 percent to 14 percent. Similarly, the School of Pharmacy boosted its participation rate this year three percentage points to 37 percent, bringing in a total of $18,599.

The Health Science Libraries raised $4,343 while achieving a 100 percent participation rate; it was one of only seven university units in the hospital’s 6-North and 7-North patient care units that were more than a month away was like walking into a brand new hospital. “It looks so different, it’s really beautiful,” said Kosterina. She was just one of dozens of nurses and patients who were temporarily moved out of 6-North and 7-North in the hospital’s 1991 Tower while contractors completed a long-anticipated cosmetic upgrade. The units received state-of-the-art rooms and patient facilities to bring patients and caregivers into this century. Kosterina said, “It’s so much more spacious and open and bright.”

The renovations of 6-North and 7-North took about six weeks to complete and include new furnishings in patient rooms and that the floors are no longer slippery,” said Emilia Dewi, an Occupational Thera- py resident. “It’s that whole experience that really counts. Everything is really beautiful.”

Many employees also commented on the flooring, “I noticed it right when I walked in that the floors are new,” said Kosterina. “It’s so calm and gives you peace of mind,” she said. “Everything is really beautiful.”

Administrators thanked everyone involved in the renovation project, including the nursing and Environmental Services staff, for the extra time and effort they put in completing the patient moves, cleaning up the units and retooling the process for the future.

“It really takes the dedication and teamwork of an entire staff to successfully complete a project like this. Everyone is excited,” said Karen Ribback, executive director of Transition and Planning for the hospitals. The 6-North, 7-North upgrades were just the first in a series of modernization proj- ects under way at the hospital. This week, patients were transferred out of 5-North to other units in preparation for a similar remodel there. That project is expected to be completed March 28, and patients moved back in on March 29. Then on April 1, patients will be moved out of 6-South. Renovations there are expected to be completed April 27, and patients moved back in on April 28.

First in series of USC University Hospital unit upgrades completed

By Tania Chatila

For USC nurse Svetlana Kosterina, walking into USC University Hospital’s 7-North patient care unit after more than a month away was like walking into a brand new hospital. “It looks so different, it’s really beautiful,” said Kosterina. She was just one of dozens of nurses and patients who were temporarily moved out of 6-North and 7-North in the hospital’s 1991 Tower while contractors completed a long-anticipated cosmetic upgrade. The units received state-of-the-art rooms and patient facilities to bring patients and caregivers into this century. Kosterina said, “It’s so much more spacious and open and bright.”

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Genetic variations may hint at better cancer treatments

By Meghan Lewit

USC researchers, for the first time, have identified specific genetic variations that predict clinical outcomes in patients with gastric (stomach) cancer. Genetic variations within the CD44 gene may be responsible for early tumor recurrence and metastasis, said Thomas Winder, a postdoctoral research fellow at the Keck School of Medicine and the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, and the lead author on the study. The researchers, led by prin- cipal investigator Heinz-Josef Lenz, professor of medicine and preventive medicine in the division of medical oncology at the Keck School, found that patients with the genetic variations experience cancer recurrence more than three times sooner than patients without the variations.

Winder presented the findings during a news briefing at the American Society of Clinical Oncology 2010 Gastrointestinal Cancers Symposium. The symposium was held Jan. 22-24 at the Orlando World Center Marriott.

“If our findings are confirmed in larger, prospective clinical trials, testing for the CD44 genetic variations could help us to identify patients at high risk who might benefit from more aggressive treatment,” Winder said. “CD44 might also be a potential target for drug development to individualize thera- peutic strategies.”

A major function of the CD44 gene is its role in cellular adhesion—the loss of which is associated with cancer development—and cell migration. Genetic variations may impact cell survival and proliferation, as well as making cancer cells more resistant to chemotherapy or radiation therapy.

Winder and colleagues isolated and analyzed DNA samples from 137 patients with localized gastric cancer treated at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. The investigators found that patients who had the CD44 genetic mutation had a significa- ntly shorter time to recurrence (2.1 years) compared to those without this mutation (7 years).

“Additional studies are needed to confirm these preliminary results,” Winder said. “However, this is a very promising develop- ment in understanding and predicting outcomes for patients with gastric cancer.”
Readers offer The Weekly good marks, call for broader coverage

In an online survey conducted in December, readers of The Weekly gave the publication generally good marks for news content and presentation, but also offered suggestions on how it could be improved, diversified and disseminated.

More than 100 readers completed the survey: one-third were students, one-third were staff members and 18 percent were faculty members. The remaining 16 percent were composed of alumni, donors and other USC affiliates.

The survey showed that most respondents (74 percent) view the publication as easy to obtain and that the overwhelming majority of readers pick up physical copies of the newspaper from campus racks or receive them in the mail.

Survey analysis also showed that despite the longstanding availability of The Weekly in HTML, PDF and RSS versions online, comparatively few readers (10 percent, 6 percent and 3 percent, respectively) accessed the publication in those formats—in some cases because readers were unaware that the electronic versions existed.

The addresses for electronic versions of The Weekly are published in every printed issue and are located in the masthead and staff box at the bottom of Page 2. The addresses are:

- HTML—theweekly.usc.edu
- PDF—www.usc.edu/hsc/info/pr/1volpdf
- RSS—www.usc.edu/hscnew

Overall, survey responses were positive. For example, a majority of readers surveyed (55 percent) said they consider The Weekly “a valuable resource.” They also overwhelmingly applaud the look and writing of The Weekly, with almost 74 percent of readers agreeing that the publication “is well written” and an equal number agreeing that it “is well designed/illustrated.”

In terms of content, half of readers surveyed said that The Weekly delivered news “I want to know,” while a smaller proportion (39 percent), agreed that it delivered “news I need to know.”

News subjects that garnered the most positive interest included (in descending order): community news, upcoming events, newsmakers, research and researcher profiles, featured lectures and symposia, awards and honors, and construction projects and progress.

Survey responses underscored the value of broad coverage, with members of numerous schools, departments and programs suggesting expanded coverage of their constituencies.

A March 1 Los Angeles Times article quoted professor of pediatrics and pediatric cardiologist at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles Alan Lewis about cholesterol screening for children.

A Feb. 26 Los Angeles Times article quoted assistant professor of clinical neurology Nerses Sanossian about a new study on the effectiveness of balloon angioplasty and stenting.

A Feb. 25 WebMD article featured research by assistant professor of neurology Amytis Towfighi that found that women ages 45 to 54 are now three times more likely than their male counterparts to report having had a stroke, with the culprit appearing to be abdominal fat. La Opinion, Science News and The Suncoast News also covered the research.

On Feb. 24, KPCC-FM quoted professor of preventive medicine and director of the USC Childhood Obesity Research Center Michael Goran about designated “fitness zones” in South Los Angeles.

A March 1 Los Angeles Times column featured a health care reform proposal by clinical professor of medicine Paul Toffel.

Two Feb. 23 Los Angeles Times articles quoted professor of medicine in the cardiovascular division Robert Kloner about former Vice President Dick Cheney’s fifth heart attack.

A Feb. 22 Los Angeles Times article quoted professor of orthopaedic surgery Thomas Vangness in an article about whether supplements help prevent joint pain.

A Feb. 19 Long Beach Press-Telegram article quoted Chief Human Resources Officer at the USC hospitals Matthew McElrath and reported that medical centers run by USC created 500 new jobs in 2008 and are looking to hire an additional 400 new employees this year. Hiring soared after USC acquired the USC University Hospital and the USC Norris Cancer Hospital from Tenet Healthcare Corp., the story stated.

Denver affiliate KMGG-TV highlighted work by professor of ophthalmology Mark Humayun and colleagues at the USC Doheny Eye Institute in a story on technological advances toward curing blindness.

**PLAN: USC solicits input on improving Health Sciences Campus**

Continued from page 1

Issues to participants, who represented faculty, staff and graduate and professional students from the School of Pharmacy, Physical Therapy and Keck School of Medicine.

“Lack of adequate housing is one of the worst impediments to recruiting students,” said one faculty member. “It’s a serious problem for faculty, students and visitors. If you stay in Seaver (the only residence hall on campus), there’s no place to eat in the evening or on the weekend and no place to shop. You need a car.”

Short-term housing—such as an on-campus hotel and a conference center—would be “great for families of patients, as well as for medical students and interviewers,” a student suggested. Faculty and staff added that the facilities also would be beneficial for continuing medical education programs.

Participants said the campus has few places for people to congregate—to study, to hold meetings, to eat or to relax. Among the proposed solutions were more seating in outdoor areas, more lecture halls and classrooms of various sizes, and a university center building featuring varied food and beverage options.

Other concerns included better marking of the campus borders, more wayfinding signage, better lighting and improved transportation.

“What’s common in our work with academic medical centers is that we’re trying to facilitate better connections between bench and bed, between clinical enterprises, research enterprises and teaching enterprises and to support those connections—which is a movement nationally—with other amenities, with opportunities for more housing and more retail,” said Jon Nalick, provost and executive vice president of the USC campus. “We want to make these places more attractive places to go and you’ve got to get to your lab and then you get in your car and go home.”

He said that having a long-term plan not only sets goals for the distant future, but also helps guide short-term planning to prevent future roadblocks.

In parallel with the site analysis, the Campus Master Plan team also began high-level program analysis, projecting out over 25 years. They met with numerous small groups and recently made a presentation to USC Executive Vice President and Provost C.L. Max Nikias.

The planning team expects to return to the Health Sciences Campus in April to share options, get additional feedback and draft the plan. The goal is to complete the plan in the fall.

For more information or comments about the HSC Master Plan, e-mail fsm@usc.edu.
Calendar of Events

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

Monday, Mar. 8
11:30 a.m. NOR Auxiliary Speaker Series. “Advances in Surgical Treatment of Breast Cancer at Norris Cancer Center,” Stephen Seer, USC. NOR 7409. Info: (323) 865-0669

Noon. ISM0 Research Seminar. “Implantable Drug Delivery Pumps Embodied by Polymeric Biomaterials,” Ellis Meng, USC. NRT Anshie Aud. Info: (323) 442-1144


Tuesday, Mar. 9
9 a.m. Neurology Grand Rounds. “Gray Matter Involvement in Multiple Sclerosis,” Nancy Scortecci, UGLA. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 420-7066

12:15 p.m. USC Center for Excellence in Teaching. “Extending Makeover Classroom Edition,” CET Teaching Assistant Fellows. KAM B21/23. Info: (213) 442-7959

Wednesday, Mar. 10
8:30 a.m. “Management of Vasospasm,” Anum Amar, USC. HDR 732. Info: (323) 226-7923

Noon. ZNI Seminar Series. “Screted Semaphosomes Contain Sema Domain and Morphogenesis in the Postnatal CNS,” Tracey Tran, Johns Hopkins. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-2144

Friday, Mar. 12

Noon. “Case Presentations,” Anup Sadeghi, USC. OPT A5C129. Info: (323) 409-7995

Monday, Mar. 15
2 p.m. Center for Applied Molecular Medicine Physical Sciences in Oncology Seminar. “Single Cell Signaling & Pathologies in Primary Cell Cancers and Autoimmunity: The Essential Link Between Mechanism and Accurate Diagnoses,” Garry Nolan, Stanford. CS6 201. Info: (310) 272-1640

Monday, Mar. 22

Wednesday, Mar. 24
8:30 a.m. “Lung Transplant,” Michael McFadden, USC. HDR 732. Info: (323) 226-7923


Noon. “Financing a Cancer in Primary Care,” Hector Flores and Chris Hirosumi, White Memorial Medical Ctr., and Alicia Rugley, USC. HDR 100. Info: (323) 442-1678

Thursday, Mar. 25

Tuesday, Mar. 16
Noon. ISM0 Research Seminar. “Mechanism and Targeting of Disulfide Binding by the RAG Proteins During VDJ Recombination,” David Schurz, Yale. NRT Anshie Aud. Info: (323) 442-1144

Friday, Mar. 19
8:30 a.m. “Metalloproteinas- ses: Effectors of Inflammation,” William Parks, Univ. of Washington. HDR 732. Info: (323) 226-7923


Noon. “Case Presentations,” Kuan Reckyshian, USC. OPT A5C129. Info: (323) 409-7995

Monday, Mar. 22
8:30 a.m. “Extreme Makeover: Destination – Cancer,” Stephen Hope. IPT C2J103. Info: (323) 442-1144

Tuesday, Mar. 23

Tuesday, Mar. 30
11 a.m. “Management of Involvement in Multiple Sclerosis,” Nancy Scortecci, UGLA. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 420-7066


Wednesday, Mar. 31
8:30 a.m. “The Parasympathetic Nervous System.” Zoe Rosencwaig, USC. NRT Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 409-7995

Tuesday, Apr. 6
11 a.m. “Case Presentations,” Anup Sadeghi, USC. OPT A5C129. Info: (323) 409-7995

Tuesday, Apr. 13
11 a.m. “Case Presentations,” Anup Sadeghi, USC. OPT A5C129. Info: (323) 409-7995

Wednesday, Apr. 14
11 a.m. “Case Presentations,” Anup Sadeghi, USC. OPT A5C129. Info: (323) 409-7995

Thursday, Apr. 15

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 the Weekly, KAM 400 or fax to (213) 442-2823, or e-mail to ebday@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.

Keck School professor honored for lifetime achievement

Robertson Parkman, professor of pediatrics and microbiology at the Keck School of Medicine and Childrens Hospital Los Angeles, has received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Pediatric Blood and Marrow Transplant Consortium (PBMTC). Parkman received the honor at the PBMTC’s Spring Business Meeting on Feb. 25 in Florida.

Parkman said, “The goal of bone marrow transplant- plantation since the first successful transplant in 1968 has always been the same—the power to provide the benefits of transplantation to all children who might benefit. The effort has taken the dedication of doctors, nurses and scientists to achieve the progress we have made.”

Parkman served as head of the division of re- search immunology/bone marrow transplantation at CHLA from 1983-2002.

MOVE: Focus now turns to renovation of Norris facilities

Continued from page 1

Tower on Monday. “I actually worked (at USC University Hospital) before, so to me there are a lot of familiar faces. And the floor is really nice.”

With all inpatient admis- sions being channeled to USC University Hospital, nurses and patients at the hospitals received a weekly blanket with the USC University Hospi- tal and USC Norris Cancer Hospital logos.

“I thought it was a re- ally nice gesture,” said patient Daniel Medrano, who received his blanket while be- ing treated for the 7th floor intensive care unit at USC University Hospital. “This hospital is really fantastic. I’m going to take this blanket home with me and I’m going to really show it off.”

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. Back up Web servers on the East Coast will function if the USC servers are incapacitated.