

USC hospitals open new outpatient endoscopy center

By Tania Chatila

A new outpatient endoscopy center with state-of-the-art equipment and dedicated staff is up and running at the USC hospitals.

The USC Center for Endoscopy opened on March 29 on the second floor of USC Norris Cancer Hospital. Staffed with a team of 12 nurses and patient care technicians, the center caters to outpatient endoscopic needs, such as colonoscopies, liver biopsies and ultrasounds.

Integral to the opening of the clinic were Emma Wright, who oversees all endoscopy services at the USC hospitals, and Annette Sy, associate administrator of ambulatory

services including endoscopy.

"We are very excited about being able to serve our community with this new center," said Cynthia Leones, manager of the USC Center for Endoscopy. "We're providing expanded services for all of our patients, and we plan to continue that expansion well into the future."

Efforts to open the center have been under way since last summer, and with the recent transition of USC Norris Cancer Hospital inpatients to USC University Hospital, a team of administrators and clinicians were able to convert three of the five former operating rooms at Norris into state-of-the-art endoscopy suites, said

Ashley Wagman, USC hospitals manager of administrative operations.

An existing gastrointestinal lab was also outfitted to meet the specific needs of the center and its patients.

"We have a more spacious and comfortable area now to accommodate the growing volume of outpatient procedures," said Wagman. "That is really beneficial for the safety and experience of our patients and the quality of care provided by our physicians."

About \$1 million in equipment has been purchased for the new center, said Wagman. That includes 39 high definition scopes, a new endoscopic ultrasound machine and four fully equipped

Olympus endoscopy units with high-definition monitors that support streaming live video, image capture and reporting capabilities.

Since opening, the center has served an average of 17 to 21 patients a day. By the end of the year, Leones hopes to bump those figures to between 40 and 50 patients daily.

The center also will eventually accommodate all outpatient endoscopic cases from USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital. Inpatient endoscopic procedures will continue to be performed at USC University Hospital.

Having more spacious and comfortable outpatient space 'is really beneficial for the safety and experience of our patients and the quality of care provided by our physicians.'

—Ashley Wagman, USC hospitals manager of administrative operations



From left: endoscopy tech Shannon Esguerra; gastroenterologist Yoshi Makino; nurse manager Cynthia Leones; nurse Inez Ybarra; and nurse Edgar Alvarez.

I-SPY 2 breast cancer trial aims for rapid results

By Meghan Lewit

The USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center is among 20 leading cancer centers in the U.S. and Canada that will recruit and treat patients as part of a large-scale clinical trial aimed at quickly developing new breast cancer drugs.

The Biomarkers Consortium, a unique public-private partnership that includes the Food and Drug Administration, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and major pharmaceutical companies, led by the Foundation for the National Institutes of Health, announced in March the start of the highly anticipated I-SPY 2 TRIAL for breast cancer at a news conference at NIH headquarters in Bethesda, Md. I-SPY 2 is a groundbreaking new clinical trial model that will help scientists quickly and efficiently test the most promising drugs in development for women with high-risk, fast-growing breast cancers.

"The I-SPY trial is among the most innovative and potentially informative trials testing new therapies and

analyzing biological pathways that will lead to more accurate patient selection and could point the way to designing more effective drugs for breast cancer," said Debasish (Debu) Tripathy, professor of clinical medicine at the Keck School of Medicine and co-leader of the Women's Cancer Program at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Tripathy is the principal investigator of the study at USC and was part of the original team that formulated the concept for the I-SPY trial along with Laura Esserman, professor and director of the Carol Franc Buck Breast Care Center at the University of California, San Francisco.

The I-SPY 2 trial will employ a groundbreaking clinical trial model that uses genetic or biological markers ("biomarkers") from individual patients' tumors to screen promising new treatments, identifying which treatments are most effective in specific types of patients. In addition, an innovative adaptive trial design will enable researchers to use early data from one set of patients to guide decisions

about which treatments might be more useful for patients later in the trial, and eliminate ineffective treatments more quickly.

"USC's involvement in this trial will expand the array of experimental options available to patients and contribute to this international effort," Tripathy said. "We are particularly proud that we can offer this to patients at the Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center, where many individuals who are eligible for this trial are seen and can be offered state-of-the-art imaging along with new investigational agents."

I-SPY 2 has the potential to significantly reduce the cost of drug development and speed the process of bringing safe and efficient new drugs to market. Currently, it takes over \$1 billion, 12 to 15 years, and thousands of patient volunteers to get a single drug to market. I-SPY 2 will allow the effectiveness of drugs to be assessed much earlier in the research process. This will result in the ability to identify and develop the most promising and effective drugs in a

See I-SPY, page 3

USC hospitals administrator named associate dean of School of Pharmacy

USC hospitals executive administrator for medicine and hospital operations Scott Evans has been appointed associate dean for Academic Health Center Programs at the USC School of Pharmacy. He will continue to serve as an executive administrator for the hospitals while also assisting the school in developing new and innovative opportunities for pharmacy students and residents at USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital.

Evans is a 1998 graduate of the USC School of Pharmacy. He served as both APHA-ASP and Phi Lamb Sigma president during his student days. In 2004, Evans took the helm as director at the USC University Hospital Pharmacy, and two years later he was

overseeing the pharmacies at USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital. More recently, he assumed the role of executive administrator for medicine and operations.

"While Scott's career has focused on hospital administration, he has always maintained an active role with the School of Pharmacy and our various training programs within the hospitals," said R. Pete Vanderveen, dean of the School of Pharmacy.

Last year, Scott was honored as Preceptor of the Year for his work with pharmacy school students, and he frequently lectures in pharmacy courses and speaks at various pharmacy events. In 2008, he was named Pharmacist of the Year by the Southern California Society of Health-Systems Pharmacists.



Scott Evans

California Air Resources Board honors Peters for leadership in environmental health research

Peters' research on children's health is 'looked to as one of the world's most important studies on how air pollution affects the lungs of children.'

—Jonathan Samet, the Flora L. Thornton Chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine

By Ina Fried

John M. Peters, the Hastings Professor of Preventive Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine, has been honored for his leadership in environmental health research that has influenced California public policy. At a March 1 luncheon in the Edmondson Faculty Center, Peters received the 2009 Haagen-Smit Clean Air Award from the California Air Resources Board.

"Dr. Peters has been recognized for many years as one of the leading authorities on the effects of air pollution on health," said Mary Nichols, chair of the California Air Resources Board, in presenting the award. In particular she cited the Children's Health Study, for which Peters was founding principal investigator. Started more than 16 years ago, this study of more than 11,000 children investigates the effects of air pollution on children's respiratory health.

Nichols also credited Peters with leading development of a center of excellence at USC as founding director of the divi-

sion of environmental health in the Department of Preventive Medicine. "How pleased it makes me to present this award to a person who really exemplifies all of the qualities, the creativity and integrity in science, but also a person who has built and nurtured a program here that will stand in good stead for many years to come," she said.

Peters thanked the Air Resources Board for "this very high honor" and for support of his research over the years.

The research "has had a dramatic effect on public policy," said Carmen A. Puliafito, dean of the Keck School of Medicine. "I have tremendous respect for the great public policy leadership that the state of California has shown in the area of air quality. The academic partners in this leadership have been at USC, and the man we're honoring today has played an incredibly important role in environmental health."

In addition to the division of environmental health, Peters also founded the Southern California Environmental



At a luncheon honoring John M. Peters are, from left: Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito; Peters; Mary Nichols, chair of the California Air Resources Board; and Jonathan Samet, the Flora L. Thornton Chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine.

Health Sciences Center and directed it for 10 years. Researchers at the center study how a wide variety of environmental factors and personal factors interact to produce human disease.

Peters' research "has had broad impact within the state, nationally and internationally," said Jonathan Samet, the Flora L. Thornton Chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine. Peters' research on children's health is "looked to as one of the world's most important studies on how air pollution affects the lungs of children." In addition, Samet noted, Peters has recruited "a spectacular group of faculty to USC, and he continues to mentor them."

Named for the first chair-

man of the California Air Resources Board, the Haagen-Smit Clean Air Award recognizes individuals who have made important contributions to air quality. Nichols read a proclamation from the California State Senate recognizing Peters' "expansive and groundbreaking research." The proclamation said, "The state of California commends you on your contribution to the health of our nation's children and communities."

The John Peters Fund for Research and Education was established a year ago to sustain research and education in environmental health at USC. Persons interested in making a donation to the fund may contact Susan Roberts at (323) 865-0805 or susanr@usc.edu.

AMA Foundation honors Keck School student for leadership

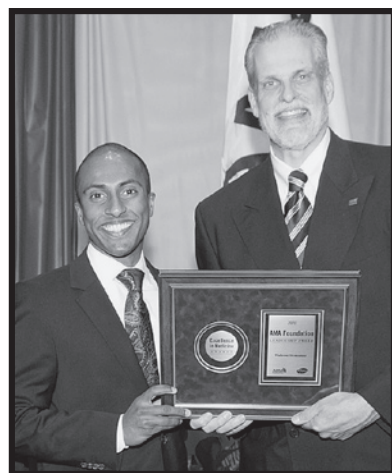
Walavan Sivakumar, a fourth-year student at the Keck School of Medicine, has been named a recipient of the American Medical Association (AMA) Foundation's 2010 Leadership Award.

Sivakumar was one of 20 medical students nationally to receive the award, which honors outstanding non-clinical leadership skills in advocacy, community service and education.

The award also provides medical students, residents/fellows and early career physicians from around the country with special training to develop their skills as future leaders in organized medicine and community affairs.

Sivakumar received the award at the AMA Foundation's annual Excellence in Medicine Awards ceremony on March 1 in Washington, D.C.

A former student body president for the medical school, Sivakumar has been a leader at USC.



Keck School student Walavan Sivakumar accepts his award from AMA President J. James Rohack.

He sits on the USC Student Health Committee and serves as the student member on the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) National Committee, the accreditation body for all U.S. medical schools.

He has also been a leader in the community and has been involved with the recovery efforts of his native country of Sri Lanka following the conclusion of a nearly 30-year civil war. Recently, he organized a benefit concert at Pasadena's historic Ambassador Auditorium that raised \$25,000 for internally

displaced persons in his war-torn country. Additionally, he is a Sri Lankan Young Professional Association board member.

Sivakumar will start his residency in neurological surgery at the University of Utah this summer.

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The Weekly

Next Issue: April 23

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 and story ideas are welcome. Permission to reprint articles with attribution is freely given.

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USC School of Pharmacy students honored for osteoporosis research

By Gabrielle Olya
Three School of Pharmacy students were recognized at the Clinical Osteoporosis 2010 Symposium held March 10-13 in San Antonio, Texas.

The symposium was presented by the International Society for Clinical Densitometry and the National Osteoporosis Foundation, the two leading bone health organizations.

Pharmacy students Tasneem Sheikh, Thu Huynh and Bryan Coleman received a Young Investigator Award for their research that demonstrates the effectiveness of pharmacy students as a resource for identifying women at risk for osteoporosis through bone mineral density screenings and for providing osteoporosis prevention

education. The students have been working with associate professors Cynthia Lieu and Kathleen Besinque on this project.

“The pharmacist can educate individuals regarding nutritional and lifestyle factors to reduce their risk of fractures, and work with individuals to assure that they take their medications regularly and correctly,” Lieu said.

The students’ poster illustrated the role that pharmacy students play in the screening process, allowing patients to get care for osteoporosis before it becomes severe, or preventing onset altogether. Their poster recommends that bone density screenings be conducted by pharmacy students at health fairs as a way to target high-risk populations

in underserved areas. Their conclusions were based on a study that involved the screening of women from different ethnic backgrounds at 13 no-cost community health fairs. After administering questionnaires and performing bone mineral density tests during the health fairs, pharmacy students gave participants personal counseling.

The students’ poster provided an opportunity for physicians and other health professionals at the meeting to learn about the role pharmacists play in screening and educating people about osteoporosis.

The School of Pharmacy conducts several health fairs each year where ethnically diverse population groups are

screened, educated about the disease and, when appropriate, referred for further evaluation and treatment.

“After hip fractures and spine fractures, most patients are not diagnosed or treated for osteoporosis, nor are they educated on the importance of adequate intake of calcium and vitamin D for bone health,” Lieu said.

Osteoporosis, a disease that causes bones to become fragile and more likely to break, is a major public health threat for an estimated 44 million Americans, or 55 percent of the population aged 50 or older.

In the U.S. today, 10 million individuals are afflicted with osteoporosis, and almost 34 million more are considered at risk.

The students’ poster illustrated the role that pharmacy students play in the screening process, allowing patients to get care for osteoporosis before it becomes severe, or preventing onset altogether.

Join the USC Norris Team and support the fight against women’s cancers

Faculty, staff, students, residents and friends are invited to join Team USC Norris at the 17th Annual Entertainment Industry Foundation (EIF) Revlon Run/Walk For Women on Saturday, May 8, to help fight women’s cancers.

All registered USC Norris team members will receive team T-shirts for the walk.

The USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center has been selected as one of this

year’s beneficiaries. The celebrity opening ceremony begins at 8 a.m. at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum at Exposition Park.

The 5K course takes participants through the streets surrounding the USC University Park campus and finishes inside the Coliseum.

The USC Norris Cancer Hospital will host a booth at the event’s Health Expo to promote the USC Norris

Harold E. and Henrietta C. Lee Breast Center. The expo will feature health screenings, giveaways and more.

One in three women is predicted to develop cancer in her lifetime. Cancer survivors are invited to pick up a special cap from the Survivor Booth at the Health Expo.

Tribute signs, to be worn in memory or support of loved ones, can be picked up on the day of the event, and survivors may wear tribute signs proclaiming their number of years as a survivor.

Created in 1993, the EIF Revlon Run/Walk For Women has grown to become one of the nation’s largest 5K fundraising events. To date, the Run/Walks in Los Angeles and New York have distributed



Christi Heck, associate professor of clinical neurology at the Keck School of Medicine, appears in a photo on the home page of the Revlon Run/Walk For Women at www.revlonrunwalk.org/la.

nearly \$60 million for cancer research, treatment, counseling and outreach programs.

The cost to run or walk is \$30 through April 25 (\$35 thereafter). To make a dona-

tion or join the USC team, visit <http://tinyurl.com/USC-NorrisTeam>. For information, contact Tonya Strom, USC Norris Team Captain, (323) 865-0668 or tstrom@usc.edu.

I-SPY: Five new cancer drugs to be tested

Continued from page 1
much more targeted and timely manner.

Five new drugs currently in development by three major pharmaceutical companies have already been selected for testing as part of the first phase of the trial, and will be donated by the companies with each drug representing a different drug class or type of biological mechanism for attacking cancer. More information on the trial is available at <http://ispy2.org>.

The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

An April 12 Associated Press article highlighted research led by professor of preventive medicine **Rob McConnell** linking asthma in children to traffic-related exposure at schools located near freeways and busy streets. *BusinessWeek*, *The Press-Enterprise Newspaper*, United Press International, SoCal Minds and Futurity.org also featured the research.

An April 7 *Inland Valley Daily Bulletin* article highlighted the one-year anniversary of USC acquiring USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital.

An April 5 *Dallas Morning News* article quoted professor of medicine and co-leader of the Women’s Cancer Program at USC Norris **Debu Tripathy** about celebrities talking about their experiences with cancer.

A March 31 *Los Angeles Times*

article quoted director of adult and pediatric palliative care at Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center **Pamelyn Close** about advanced directives for end-of-life care.

A March 31 City News Service article reported that Los Angeles County officials honored the team of doctors and nurses from Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center who traveled to Haiti to help in the aftermath of January’s earthquake.

On March 30, KCBS-TV reported that USC has received \$10 million from the Annenberg Foundation to establish a scholarship fund. The grant will be divided evenly between the USC Annenberg School and the Keck School of Medicine of USC. The *Desert Sun* also covered the gift.

A March 30 *San Diego Union-Tribune* article reported that professor

of preventive medicine and pathology **Thomas Mack** will conduct research on cancer cases in a Carlsbad neighborhood to determine whether a cancer cluster exists.

A March 29 *New York Times* article reported that Flora L. Thornton Chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine **Jonathan Samet** chairs the Food and Drug Administration’s new Tobacco Products Scientific Advisory Committee, which will address the issue of regulating menthol cigarettes. The Associated Press and WebMD also covered the story.

A March 29 MSN.com article noted a research project by associate professor of research in the Department of Preventive Medicine **Donna Spruijt-Metz** that uses technology to monitor obese teenagers’ eating and exercise habits.

A March 28 *Sacramento Bee* article quoted professor of medicine and director of the USC Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center **Cage Johnson** about stem cell research and sickle cell disease.

A March 26 Associated Press article quoted assistant professor of clinical dermatology **David Sawcer** about vitiligo, a skin condition that affected the late Michael Jackson. *The Daily Mail* (U.K.) also quoted Sawcer.

On March 26, KABC-TV reported that actor Dennis Hopper is being treated for prostate cancer through a special program at USC.

A March 25 *San Bernardino Sun* article quoted associate professor of research in preventive medicine **Michael Cousineau** about the recently passed health care bill.

Calendar of Events

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

Monday, Apr. 19

Noon. KSOM Research Seminar. “Towards Systems Biology of Virus Infection,” Ren Sun, UCLA. NRT LG 503/504. Info: (323) 442-1144

Noon. “Case Presentations,” Alexander Han, USC. IPT C2J101. Info: (323) 409-7995

Noon. USC Wellness Workshop for Students. “Communication/Conflict Resolution.” NML West Conference Rm. Info: (323) 442-3360

Tuesday, Apr. 20

8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. “What’s Hot in Aging Research at USC: Interdisciplinary Perspectives,” Various speakers. UPC: GER Davis Aud. Info: (213) 740-1363

10:30 a.m. USC University Hospital Guild Speaker Series. “Urology for You and Your Loved One: What is the Latest?” Inderbir Gill, USC. The Valley Hunt Club, Pasadena. Info: (626) 440-0679

Noon. Psychiatry Grand Rounds. “Are Rages Manic Episodes?” Gabrielle Carlson, Stony Brook Univ. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-4065

Wednesday, Apr. 21

8:30 a.m. “Emerging Concepts and Therapeutics of MRSA Infections,” R. Larsen, USC. IRD 732. Info: (323) 226-7923

Noon. USC Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice. “Smoking Cessation: Been Thinking About Quitting?” NML West Conference Rm. Info: (323) 442-3340

Noon. Dean’s Translational Medicine Seminar Series. “From Bedside to Bench: The Curious Course of Medical Device Development,” Dr. Stephen N. Oesterle, Medtronic Inc. NRT Aresty Aud. Light lunch and refreshments will be served. RSVP required. Info: (323) 442-1144

7 p.m. LAC+USC Violence Intervention Program. “Heart Desires,” featuring Emmy award-winning actor and activist, Ed Asner. The Colony Theatre, Burbank. Info: (323) 226-2097

Friday, Apr. 23

8:30 a.m. “Ins, Outs and Musts of Teaching Physician Rules in the Electronic

Era,” Scott Manaker, Univ. of Pennsylvania. IRD 732. Info: (323) 226-7923

11 a.m. “Diagnosis and Management of Inhibitors in Hemophilia A,” Carol Kasper, USC. IPT C2J103. Info: (323) 865-3914

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

Saturday, Apr. 24

6 p.m. Opening Reception for Art Exhibit. “Darkwave: Eight Artist-Surfers Explore Surfing and the Violence of the City,” various local painters, sculptors and photographers. IGM Art Gallery 2nd Floor. Info: (213) 705-7489

Monday, Apr. 26

Noon. USC Wellness Workshop for Students. “Self-Awareness & Embracing Diversity.” NML East Conference Rm. Info: (323) 442-3340

Noon. KSOM Research Seminar. “TGF-beta Signaling Specificity in Regulating Craniofacial Morphogenesis,” Yang Chai, USC. NRT Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 442-1144

4 p.m. “Mechanisms of Muscle Contraction,” Walter Herzog, Univ. of Calgary. CHP 147E. Info: (323) 442-2911

Tuesday, Apr. 27

Noon. Cancer Center Grand Rounds. “Captured Alive, the Active Form of DNA Polymerase V Reveals the Mutagenic Mechanism of the RecA Nucleoprotein Filament,” Myron F. Goodman, USC. NRT Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 865-0801

Wednesday, Apr. 28

8:30 a.m. “Hypertensive Urgency & Emergency,” S. Ghaffari, USC. IRD 732. Info: (323) 226-7923

Noon. ZNI Seminar. “Neural Mechanisms of Fear and Inhibition: From Mice to Men,” Kerry Ressler, Emory Univ. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-3446

Thursday, Apr. 29

Noon. “Innovation at USC: The Evolving World of the ‘How, Why, and When’ of Research Commercialization,” Richard A. Hull, USC. NTT 4444. Info: (323) 442-1283

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 (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.

Journalist calls for greater HIV-prevention efforts

By Katie Neith

For 15 years, journalist Jon Cohen has been following the course of the HIV/AIDS virus around the world, as it continues to wreak havoc on global health. He has found that despite large successes in treatment efforts, prevention is still sorely lacking.

“People are realizing there is no way to treat our way out of this—we have to slow the epidemic,” said Cohen.

He presented his work investigating HIV/AIDS and spoke about the importance of investigative journalism in addressing global epidemics as part of the second annual Global Health Awareness Week held April 5-9 and April 18. The week was organized by USC, UCLA and the Global Health Review, and recognized the World Health Organization’s 2010 global health campaign, “1,000 Cities, 1,000 Lives.”

According to Cohen’s experience in investigating the spread of HIV, one of the key things to understand about slowing the virus is that you have to look at the drivers of the epidemic, which differ from place to place.

“When you are designing prevention programs, you have to look carefully at where the virus is spreading,” he said.

Unfortunately, barriers to prevention vary widely and can include lack of education, migration patterns, homophobia, violence and both poverty and wealth, among others. In addition, many barriers overlap and are difficult to disentangle, said Cohen.

“This is really a story about people, not a story about the virus,” he emphasized. “It’s about understanding people



Jon Cohen discusses the importance of investigative journalism in addressing global epidemics as part of the second annual Global Health Awareness Week held April 5-9.

and their behavior without getting moralistic about it, because the virus has no morals.”

The April 7 lecture in Aresty Auditorium was part of the USC Institute for Global Health’s Visions for Change Lecture series and was hosted in partnership with the USC

Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism and the Center for Health and Medical Communication. Cohen also presented his talk on April 6 at the Davidson Continuing Education Center on the University Park Campus.

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Ed Asner to perform at April 21 event to stem elder abuse

Emmy award-winning actor and activist Ed Asner will headline a staged reading of the critically acclaimed play “Heart Desires” on April 21, to benefit the Los Angeles County Elder Abuse Forensic Center (LACEAFC).

The event is sponsored by the Violence Intervention Program (VIP), a nonprofit organization affiliated with LAC+USC Medical Center and headed by Astrid Heger, professor of clinical pediatrics at the Keck School of Medicine. The reading will raise funds to help aid victims of interpersonal violence and abuse in Los Angeles.

Christine Rosensteel, a local playwright with a master of professional writing degree from USC, a program planner for Los Angeles County Adult Protective Services and

a member of the LACEAFC Team, wrote “Heart Desires.” The play focuses the lives of an elderly couple on the verge of losing their independence who open their home to a young homeless couple.

The show is at 7 pm. at the Colony Theater, 555 North Third Street, Burbank, Calif.

General admission seating is \$25. To buy tickets, call VIP at (323) 226-2097, or e-mail Erica Blodgett at ebloodgett@vip-cmhc.org.

For information about the Los Angeles County Elder Abuse Forensic Center, visit www.lacelderabuse.org or call (323) 226-1470.