Patients drive success of Evaluation and Treatment Center

By Tania Chatilla

For Derek Morton, the thought of having to wait hours in an emergency room to be examined for a post-operative abscess was more than off-putting.

Luckily for Morton, a 34-year-old patient treated for colon cancer at USC Norris Cancer Hospital, he didn’t have to. Instead, he was sent to the Evaluation and Treatment Center—a 24-hour clinic exclusively for patients of the USC hospitals.

“It’s my first time here, but it’s a really nice set-up and a good idea,” said Morton, who had surgery with Rick Selby, professor of surgery at the Keck School, in February. Heinz-Josef Lenz, professor of medicine and preventive medicine at the Keck School, referred him to the center last week, after a scheduled office visit.

“Everything has been really quick, and everyone is really nice,” he said.

Morton is one of hundreds of patients seen at the center since it opened eight months ago.

Located on the first floor of the Norris Tower at USC University Hospital, the clinic serves as a 24-hour ambulatory care center, where established, private patients of USC providers can go for after-hours care.

Infrastructure for the center was developed from the ground up by a dedicated committee of hospital administrators and physicians, led by Fred Weaver, chief of vascular surgery at the Keck School.

Since then, the center has undergone significant growth in patient volume—sometimes treating between six and eight patients a day.

“This was a new model, and we essentially started with zero patients,” said Weaver. “Now we are seeing an average of 100 to 120 patients a month, and we anticipate even more growth in the future.”

The center includes two patient exam rooms, a waiting area, consultation area, nursing area and an adjacent admitting space, said Emma Wright, director of the Evaluation and Treatment Center. The center maintains a staff of about 20 full-time nurses—nearly half of whom are registered nurses and half of whom are licensed vocational nurses.

The clinic takes no walk-ins. Instead, USC physicians can refer a patient there for post-operative issues or other concerns. Then, that physician or a selected designer can visit with the patient once intakes have been completed.

“When patients come down here and spend time on the campus, they really can assess their patients’ needs after hours.”

—Fred Weaver, chief of vascular surgery at the Keck School of Medicine

Two Keck School faculty members lauded at USC Academic Honors Convocation

University leaders recognized the contributions of two Keck School of Medicine luminaries at the annual Academic Honors Convocation, an event that culminated with USC alumna, filmmaker and benefactor George Lucas ’66 receiving the USC Presidential Medallion, the university’s highest honor.

At the April 26 event, Allen W. Mathies, dean emeritus of the Keck School, received the USC Faculty Lifetime Achievement Award, and Mark Humayun, the Cornelius J. Pings Professor of Biomedical Sciences and professor of ophthalmology, and cell and neurobiology, received the USC Associates Award for Creativity in Research and Scholarship.

Mathies, known as a gifted clinician, educator and leader, played a pivotal role in the rising stature of the Keck School of Medicine of USC as its dean from 1975 to 1985.

Under his leadership, the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and Hospital was built and research expanded. The school proud of as faculty members and department chairs were recruited, a practice plan was adopted and plans to build the USC University Hospital were put into action.

Mathies retired from USC in 1985. He continued to shape the landscape of health care in Los Angeles as president and CEO of the Huntington Hospital, where many Keck School faculty hold staff privileges. He and his wife, Wera, remain active in the life of the Keck School, and he currently serves on the university’s Institutional Biosafety Committee.

Humayun, the co-inventor of a retinal prosthesis, was honored for his pioneering research on diseases of the retina, original contributions to scholarship, and his ability to combine his expertise in ophthalmology and his craftsmanship in engineering to restore partial sight to the blind.

Humayun was the lead surgeon during the implantation of the world’s first retinal device in 2002, and he led the engineering team that developed this electronic implant. His accomplishments have earned him membership in the Institute of Medicine.

His leadership positions include directing research in the Eye Concepts Laboratory at USC’s Doheny Eye Institute. He is also the director of the U.S. Department of Energy’s Artificial Retina Project and the founding director of the National Science Foundation-funded Biomimetic MicroElectronic Systems Engineering Research Center at USC.

Humayun joined USC in 2001. He earned his M.D. from Duke University and a Ph.D. in biomedical engineering from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
Keck School urology team reveals findings in trio of papers

By Leslie Ridgeway

Several studies published in top medical journals by USC surgeons have found that surgical treatment of kidney cancer is not the daunting prospect it once was. "Three papers, one published in the New England Journal of Medicine and two published in the Journal of Urology, indicate that kidney cancer patients can look forward to a speedier recovery and brighter future. The papers were authored by a team led by Inderbir S. Gill, director of the USC Institute of Urology at the Keck School of Medicine. The studies indicate that outcomes of minimally invasive treatments for patients with organ-confined kidney tumors have improved dramatically.

"We, and Center for Comprehensive Urologic Oncology, Center for Robotics and Advanced Laparoscopic Surgery, Center for Pediatric Urology, Image-Guided Surgery Center, and Center for Female Urology, among others. The USC Institute of Urology surgeons are world leaders and pioneers in robotic/laparoscopic and open surgery for prostate and bladder. USC urologists are at the forefront of developing cutting-edge treatments such as safe-free “belly-button” surgery and novel organ-sparing focal treatments for prostate cancer. For more information on the USC Institute of Urology, visit the web site at www.uscurology.com.

ETCETERA

Sumita Adhya, a third-year radiology resident has received an award for best student paper at the Radiological Society of North America’s (RSNA) annual conference.

Adhya won the RSNA Trainee Research Prize for her paper, “Triple Negative Breast Cancer: An Evaluation of the Mammographic, Ultrasound, and MR Characteristics,” on which she worked with Linda Hovanessian-Larsen, associate professor of radiology at the Keck School of Medicine. The mission of the RSNA is to promote and develop the highest standards of radiology and related sciences through education and research.

ETC: Clinic’s success has spurred plans to expand its operations

Continued from page 1 I like it here. They don’t want to go to an emergency room for non-urgent care,” said Weaver. “This center offers a quick and convenient way for patients to be seen, and for physicians, it affords them a centralized location where they can assess their patients’ needs after hours.”

All nurses work in pairs to closely screen patients before their physicians see them. The pairs consist of one RN and one LVN for each patient. “We are self-sufficient. We do everything ourselves from lab work to electrocardiograms to transportation within the hospital for other services or tests,” said Wright. All of the nurses come from critical care or urgent care backgrounds and are trained in a variety of specialties such as cardiovascular disease, vascular disease, neurosurgery, neurology and oncology.

The licensed vocational nurses are challenged to maximize their potential by doing everything from starting intravenous therapy and drawing blood to administering medication. And because of the center’s expanding ability to treat multiple patient types, the licensed vocational nurses also have the ability help treat all kinds of conditions.

“When I work here, I get to see all kinds of diseases and diagnoses,” said Dina Molina, a licensed vocational nurse at the Evaluation and Treatment Center. “I can really put my knowledge to work.”

As a growing operation, ongoing planning is already underway to continue expansion of the clinic as it nears its one-year anniversary. Administrators are developing a physician-staffing model and are also looking to expand the physical dimensions of the clinic to accommodate increased patient volumes. Scott Evans, executive administrator for medicine and hospital operations, credited the clinic to its staff. “Without the dedication and professionalism of the ETC staff, none of this would be possible,” he said. “It is because of their continued efforts to support our patients and physicians that we have been able to make this model a success.”

For Brenda Jones, a nurse at the clinic, it is the team’s efforts toward patient satisfaction. “That means safe, rapid treatment and the ability to offer patients the 24-hour expertise they have come to know and depend on.”

“The great thing about the ETC is that we can cut out that third-party care from people who don’t know our patients or can’t properly treat them,” Jones said. “Here, the patients start with USC and finish with USC.”
Stop Cancer meeting recognizes support of cancer research at USC

By Ryan Ball

Doctors of USC to participate in program to evaluate, treat retired NFL players

The Doctors of USC is participating in a nationwide program focused on evaluating and treating retired National Football League players with possible neurological conditions.

The NFL Neurological Care Program was announced March 24 at the NFL’s annual meeting. The new program is one of a series of NFL initiatives addressing the longevity of retired players.

The five participating medical centers, selected for their expertise, high-quality service and reputation are: Doctors of USC, Morehouse School of Medicine (Atlanta), Mount Sinai (New York, NY), University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine and Washington University School of Medicine/Barnes-Jewish Hospital (St. Louis).

Each center has available to retired NFL players a team of specialists, led by a neurologist who serves as a program director.

At USC, the interdisciplinary team is led by Jeffrey Victoroff, associate professor of clinical neurology; and Carol McCleary, assistant professor of clinical psychology.

The neurological program is available to retired players vested under the Bert Bell/Pete Rozelle NFL Player Retirement Plan.

Players who cannot afford treatment may apply to the NFL Player Care Foundation for a grant to cover some or all of the costs of treatment.

More than 500 physicians and specialists, who serve as full-time faculty members of the Keck School of Medicine of USC, compose The Doctors of USC.

The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

A May 3 Los Angeles Times article highlighted research by assistant professor of clinical medicine Michael Hochman and a Harvard University colleague which found that only 32 percent of medication studies published in top medical journals compared the effectiveness of existing treatments.

On May 3, KTLA-TV covered the announcement of a $10 million NIH grant to fund the Center for Population Health and Health Disparities, a partnership between USC, UCLA and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health aimed at reducing cardiovascular disease risk among Latinos.

On April 28, KPCC-FM interviewed associate director of research for the Center for Community Health Studies Gregory Stevens about volunteering at the Remote Area Medical clinic at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum Sports Arena. The Los Angeles Times also reported that the USC Mobile Dental Clinic provided free dental services at the clinic.

An April 28 USA Today article quoted Roger Clemens of the USC School of Pharmacy about reducing salt intake.

An April 28 Nature article quoted professor of pathology Cheng-Ming Chuong of the Keck School of Medicine of USC, about a fossil study of a dinosaur species at different growth stages, which showed that its feathers changed dramatically during development.

Doctors of USC to participate in program to evaluate, treat retired NFL Players

The Doctors of USC is participating in a nationwide program focused on evaluating and treating retired National Football League players with possible neurological conditions.

The NFL Neurological Care Program was announced March 24 at the NFL’s annual meeting. The new program is one of a series of NFL initiatives addressing the longevity of retired players.

The five participating medical centers, selected for their expertise, high-quality service and reputation are: Doctors of USC, Morehouse School of Medicine (Atlanta), Mount Sinai (New York, NY), University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine and Washington University School of Medicine/Barnes-Jewish Hospital (St. Louis).

Each center has available to retired NFL players a team of specialists, led by a neurologist who serves as a program director.

At USC, the interdisciplinary team is led by Jeffrey Victoroff, associate professor of clinical neurology; and Carol McCleary, assistant professor of clinical psychology.

The neurological program is available to retired players vested under the Bert Bell/Pete Rozelle NFL Player Retirement Plan.

Players who cannot afford treatment may apply to the NFL Player Care Foundation for a grant to cover some or all of the costs of treatment.

More than 500 physicians and specialists, who serve as full-time faculty members of the Keck School of Medicine of USC, compose The Doctors of USC.

The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

A May 3 Los Angeles Times article highlighted research by assistant professor of clinical medicine Michael Hochman and a Harvard University colleague which found that only 32 percent of medication studies published in top medical journals compared the effectiveness of existing treatments.

On May 3, KTLA-TV covered the announcement of a $10 million NIH grant to fund the Center for Population Health and Health Disparities, a partnership between USC, UCLA and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health aimed at reducing cardiovascular disease risk among Latinos.

On April 28, KPCC-FM interviewed associate director of research for the Center for Community Health Studies Gregory Stevens about volunteering at the Remote Area Medical clinic at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum Sports Arena. The Los Angeles Times also reported that the USC Mobile Dental Clinic provided free dental services at the clinic.

An April 28 USA Today article quoted Roger Clemens of the USC School of Pharmacy about reducing salt intake.

An April 28 Nature article quoted professor of pathology Cheng-Ming Chuong of the Keck School of Medicine of USC, about a fossil study of a dinosaur species at different growth stages, which showed that its feathers changed dramatically during development.
Calendar of Events

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

Monday, May 10
4 p.m. “Biologically Inspired Artificial Haircell Sensors,” Chung Lai, Northwestern. UPC: HNB 100. Info: (213) 821-2084

Tuesday, May 11


Friday, May 14

Monday, May 17
11:30 a.m. USC Norris Auxiliary Speaker Series. “USC’s World Class Institute of Urology,” Inderbir Gill, USC: Sun Gabriel County Club. Info: (626) 282-9516

Wednesday, May 19
8:30 a.m. “Arrhythmias in the Critically Ill,” David Cesario, USC: IRD 734. Info: (323) 226-7923

Friday, May 21

1 p.m. USC Physical Sciences in Oncology Center Seminar. “Physical Sciences for Optical Molecular Imaging in Oncology – Adventures in the Translutions Woods,” Daniel Farkas, USC: CSC 201. Info: (323) 442-2596

Friday, May 28

Friday, June 18
7 a.m. USC Physical Sciences in Oncology Center Symposium. Various speakers. UPC Davidson Conference Center. Info: (323) 442-2596

Thursday, July 8 – Sunday, July 11
8 a.m. 6th Annual International Head & Neck Symposium. Various speakers. USC Health Sciences Campus. Registration deadline: May 15. Info: (323) 442-7432

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) 442-3822, 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.

HSC COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES

Wednesday, May 12
Keck School of Medicine – M.S., M.F.H. & Ph.D.
4 p.m. at the Harry and Celesta Pappas Quad. Speaker: Mnna Basel, distinguished scientist from the Law- rence Berkeley National Laboratory. Reception immediately following on Upper Quad.

Friday, May 14
Biokinesiology & Physical Therapy
11 a.m. at Board Auditorium at the University Park Campus. Speaker: Tommy Lasonda, special advisor to the chairman and former manager of the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Dentistry
11 a.m. at Intramural Field at the University Park Campus. Speaker: Rick Valachovic, executive director of the American Dental Education Associa- tion. Reception immediately following at Robert D. Wood Plaza (adjacent to the Intramural Field, behind Heritage Hall).

Health Promotion
11 a.m. at Town and Gown, Uni- versity Park Campus. Speaker: Elerie Nelson, associate dean, Office of Undergraduate, Masters & Profes- sional Degree Programs.

Ocational Science and Oc- cupational Therapy
10:30 a.m. at the Shrine Auditorium. Speaker: Karen Bass, PA Program Alumnus. Class of 1982, Reception immediately following.

School of Pharmacy
3 p.m. at the Harry and Celesta Pappas Quad at Health Sciences Campus. Speaker: Stephen J. Trachtenberg, president emeritus of the George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Tickets required. A live webcast of the ceremony will be available online and also broadcast in School of Pharmacy lecture halls. Reception immediately following at Upper Quad.

Sunday, May 16
Keck School of Medicine – M.D.
3 p.m. at the Shrine Auditorium. Speaker: Henri Ford, vice dean for medical education, professor and vice chair for clinical affairs, Dept. of Surgery, vice president and chief of surgery at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. Reception immediately following at Founders Park, University Park Campus.

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.