USC football fans “Fight On” for breast cancer awareness

By Leslie Ridgeway

Does pink clash with cardinal and gold?
Not during October, Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The Trojan Family wore all three colors proudly to promote breast cancer awareness at the Oct. 2 USC-Washington football game.

Hundreds of football fans stopped by the Doctors of USC booth at the front of the Coliseum to talk to breast cancer experts Agustin Garcia, Linda Hovanes-suan Larsen, Dennis Holmes and Pulin Sheth, about breast cancer screening. Visitors picked up 650 pink and white tote bags, as well as hand sanitizers, educational materials and embroidered pink ribbon stickers from the physicians and several breast cancer survivors who volunteered at the booth. The ribbon stickers were seen everywhere around the Coliseum—including on the bridle of USC mascot Traveler.

At the USC Bookstore and bookstore tents outside the Coliseum, specially designed pink T-shirts featuring the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and Hospital lug and the words, “For a breast cancer cure. Fight on.” were flying off the shelves. The T-shirts are available for sale as part of a collaborative effort among USC Norris, the USC Trojan Bookstores and USC Athletics. The slogan is part of the USC hospitals marketing campaign launched in Los Angeles in January:

A portion of the proceeds from the T-shirt sales benefit cancer research at USC Norris.

The USC Song Girls and Spirit Leaders wore the USC Breast Cancer Awareness booth

Above, Agustin Garcia speaks with a visitor at the Doctors of USC Breast Cancer Awareness booth outside the Coliseum.

Left, USC breast cancer physicians (wearing cardinal polos) and survivors (wearing pink T-shirts) share the field at the Oct. 2 USC football game vs. Washington. From left are: Dennis Holmes, Georgia McCrary, Jennifer Jeks, Heather MacDonald, Mary Yamashita, Pulin Sheth, Ami Evidente, Agustin Garcia, Kaprishta Vallecillo and Jennifer Mok.

Stem cell research building dedication set for Oct. 29

By Imelda Valenzuela and Meghan Lewit

The Keck School of Medicine of USC has started the countdown for the much-anticipated opening of the Eli and Edythe Broad GIRM Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC.

Taking place Oct. 29, the dedication ceremonies will be hosted by USC President C. L. Max Nikias and Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito, with representatives from the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), donors and friends in attendance, including the building’s primary donors, Eli and Edythe Broad. The Broads gave $30 million—one of the largest gifts to the Keck School in recent years. The role of philanthropy in the creation of this center, as demonstrated by the Broads and the many supporters of the regenerative medicine center, was pivotal in its materialization.

“USC is privileged to benefit from the visionary leadership that drives the Broads and their extraordinary generosity,” said Nikias. “The Eli and Edythe Broad GIRM Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC holds great promise for important scientific discoveries that will readily translate to patient care.”

Following the midday ceremonies, the building will be open to faculty, staff and students for tours.

Above is a sunset view from the west of the Eli and Edythe Broad GIRM Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC.

USC clinical enterprise starts phasing in electronic medical records

By Tania Chatila

In the basement of Healthcare Consultation Center II, the USC Health Sciences Information Technology Department is diligently working to lay the groundwork for an Electronic Medical Record (EMR).

It is by no means an easy feat, according to the team members assigned to the project. But in about two years’ time, when the major components of the EMR have been deployed, hospital and clinic employees, physicians in the hospital and in the outpatient setting, and even referring practices will be reaping the benefits of an integrated, streamlined electronic repository for clinical information.

“Since the acquisition of the hospitals, the USC Health Sciences Information Technology Department has created a long-term, robust plan to enhance all IT-related services across the clinical enterprise,” said Mark Amey, chief information officer for USC Health Sciences. He referred to a tactical IT roadmap that outlines more than 70 ongoing projects over the next four to five years that would improve customer service, reaping the benefits of an integrated, streamlined electronic repository for clinical information.

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Stem cell expert kicks off Keck School’s translational medicine seminar series

By Katie Neith

While each type of cancer is different, there is a core set of common attributes to the disease, said stem cell expert Irving Weissman during the semester’s first installment of the Dean’s Translational Medicine Seminar Series on Sept. 23.

“You’re regenerating whole body systems with purified cells … You’re doing a single therapy, for most cases, where the single therapy regenerates [the patient] for life.”

The Dean’s Translational Medicine Seminar Series is designed to educate faculty and students about issues related to translational medicine.

“It’s a real pleasure to welcome Irving Weissman here to USC. He is one of the pioneers and has been a leader of the stem cell field for many, many years,” said Martin Pera, director of the Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC and host of the event held in the Aesrey Auditorium.

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EMR: Electronic medical records aim to boost patient safety, coordination of care

Continued from page 1

standardization, agility, business continuity, data reliability and financial stewardship. “An electronic medical record is just one piece of that plan,” Aymar said. “But it is a significant piece that will have a huge impact in nearly everything we do for patients, as well as transforming every clinician’s workflow. We’re very excited and we’re looking to the organization for its leadership in making this successful.”

Work has already begun to create this EMR via the Cerner system, which is already in use by the USC hospitals. It has set a goal of Feb. 28, 2011, to transition Cerner from a Tenet-managed system to a system run by USC Health Sciences IT.

“This transition phase—phase zero—should essentially have minimal impact to our employees,” said Frank Negro, interim chief applications officer. “But it builds the base we need to transform our current Cerner system into a state-of-the-art EMR that meets the needs of an academic medical center.”

Following phase zero, IT, Nursing and USC physician leadership will commence phase one—an 18- to 24-month long period that will include major enhancements to the Cerner system.

Negro said the most challenging work will occur here, and this is when employees on the front lines will begin to see significant impact from these changes. These phases will be led jointly by IT and those departments primarily impacted. Employees from cross departments will be involved in the system design, work-flow changes and in testing the system.

When this phase is completed, the EMR will serve as an accurate, real-time patient-centered record for both inpatient and outpatient use. The system will be a single, unified view of all of a patient’s electronic health record. When this tool is in hand, we will certainly expect our quality of care and patient and clinician satisfaction to increase, as we will be able to provide care with seamless information flow.

Inaugural USC Stem Cell Symposium charts path to patient care

By Ryan Ball

The progress of moving stem cell therapies toward clinical application and the hurdles that must be overcome along the way were the subjects of a daylong discussion that took place on Sept. 22 on The Health Sciences Campus.

The inaugural USC Stem Cell Translational and Clinical Sciences Research Symposium featured lectures by USC researchers Martin Pera, Michael Kahn and Ashish Atha, as well UC Davis professor Jan Nolta and VaYcete Inc. principal scientist Kevin A. D’Amour.

Kahn, professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, provost’s professor of medicine and pharmacy, kicked off the proceedings, speaking on regenerative vs. pharmacologic orchestration of stem cells. The lecture focused on how scientists can pharmaco logically control a fundamental decision point in stem cell biology; deciding whether the stem cell makes an exact copy of itself or a more differentiated copy.

“This decision is critical to both normal physiology (general tissue maintenance) and also to pathophysiological conditions (cancer, fibrosis, neurodegeneration),” said Kahn, who discussed a number of clinical and preclinical stem cell transplantation trials in cancerous tumors. “We’re looking to the organization for advice here … enhancing our ability to provide coordinated care for our patients.”

Other perks of the EMR will include:

• A side-by-side and balances system to ensure patient safety (i.e. inability to order conflicting medications);

• direct connection with bedside medical devices to manage clinical care;

• personalized views of intake and vital assessment information catered to physicians, nurses and other employees;

• and remote access.

“When all is said and done, clinicians across the Health Sciences Campus will have a tool which presents a single, unified view of all of a patient’s clinical record,” said Don Larsen, chief medical officer, said. “With that tool in hand, we would certainly expect our quality of care and patient and clinician satisfaction to increase, as we will be able to provide care with seamless information flow.”
Integrated Call Center starts transition to one-stop service shopping

By Tania Chutia

Plans for an integrated call center for USC University Hospital, USC Norris Cancer Hospital and the Doctors of USC have kicked off with the recent move of Department of Medicine call center staff to the Health Sciences Campus Alhambra site.

The group of seven employees began receiving telephone calls in their new location on Oct. 1. The staff handles between 700 and 1,000 calls per day, scheduling anywhere from 300 to 500 appointments for about 80 physicians.

While they are currently only supporting scheduling and calls for the Department of Medicine, the group will eventually be part of a larger, streamlined call center that will support the USC hospitals, clinics and physician practices, said Medical Call Center Director Michael Patrella.

“A main priority of our clinical enterprise is to one day have a single platform of call center services to provide to everyone, including scheduling, registration and escorting of calls,” said Patrella. “By moving the Department of Medicine call center staff to Alhambra, we are providing a foundation that we can build from and expand on.”

Located on the fifth floor of the A9 West Building, the Alhambra Medical Call Center is being housed in a 4,000-square-foot space that has available room for up to 40 people. The location features new, state-of-the-art equipment, accessibility to shared clinical applications and technology, and the ability to fax documents from desktop computers, among other key services.

Internal Medicine Call Center Manager Grace Valdiviezo said her staff is enjoying the new space and is excited about future growth. “The facility here is really beautiful, and our employees have a larger place to work in,” Valdiviezo said. “We realize we’re the start of something really big.”

According to David Goldstein, vice chair of Clinical Affairs and chief of the division of geriatrics, hospital and general internal medicine, “The transition to the new USC Medical Call Center has been seamless and quite productive. We are excited to see it evolve beyond [the Department of Medicine] to become a true campus wide call center—a front door to our academic medical center.”

Before the end of the year, Patrella expects to provide call center services from the Alhambra site for several other clinics.

Concurrently, over the next several months, the call center will begin transition to support five major goals: 24/7 live answer, escorting of calls, physician paging, triage of calls to determine level of services and after-hours support. The call center will eventually also incorporate operators from USC Eye Institute and the Norris Cancer Hospital.

“We want to get to the point where instead of multiple phone numbers, our patients, physicians and staff will call one center, and we will facilitate the services they need,” Patrella said.

NIH awards USC researcher $1.7 million for obesity study

Sebastian G. Bourret, of The Saban Research Laboratory at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles, has been awarded $1.68 million to support investigations into the role of leptin, a hormone derived from fat cells, in the development of neurological structures that regulate metabolism and body weight throughout life. The grant for the study was presented by the National Institutes of Health and the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases.

“We are finding that brain circuitry responsible for controlling appetite developed during the perinatal period—that time just prior to and soon after birth—could predispose a person to become overweight or obese,” said Bourret, assistant professor of pediatrics at the Keck School of Medicine. “Obesity risk is greatly influenced by two factors: the nutritional and hormonal conditions of the mother during pregnancy and the nutritional and hormonal conditions of the infant—with both malnutrition and over-nutrition increasing a child’s risk.”

By Sebastian G. Bourret

“These studies are providing new ways for us to impact the obesity epidemic,” said Richard B. Simerly, director of the neuroscience program at The Saban Research Institute and professor of pediatrics at the Keck School of Medicine. “By understanding the effects of too little or too much nutrition during pregnancy and early infancy, we have an opportunity to intercede and prevent a lifetime of serious health problems resulting from childhood obesity.”

This work will be funded for four years.

SHIRTS: Sale raises money for cancer research

All women who come to USC Norris Cancer Hospital for a mammogram during the month of October will receive a free Trojan breast cancer awareness T-shirt, said Jane Brust, associate senior vice president for Health Sciences PR and Marketing, whose office spearheaded the campaign. “We appreciate the great collaboration with the USC Bookstores, USC Athletics and our USC alumni. This is an exciting way to promote breast cancer awareness, raise money for research, and extend the USC Norris breast cancer care beyond the Trojan Family. One of our survivors who appeared on the field told us it was fun to be at the football game, wonderful to feel the support from the stands, and great to be alive. She is the reason we are doing this campaign.”

The 100 percent cotton T-shirts are available in two shades of pink (light pink and hot pink) for the price of $17.99 in all USC bookstores throughout the month of October, including satellite locations around the University Park Campus Park on home football game dates. The shirts also are available for purchase at the USC Alumni office in Orange County and the two hospital gift shops located on the USC Health Sciences Campus.

Available sizes range from 8 to XL. “The breast cancer awareness T-shirts also may be purchased online at www.uscbookstores.com. Bookstore patrons also may make a donation to breast cancer research at USC at the checkout stand, or donations can be made online at www.uscnorris.com/breastcancer.”

Also during October, everyone who comes to USC Norris Cancer Hospital for a mammogram will receive a free pink T-shirt. To schedule a mammogram at USC Norris, call (323) 865-3105.

Sebastian G. Bourret

On Sept. 30, CNBC featured research on a letter of research on pediatric obesity, by Fatih Uckun that has discovered a new way to overcome radiation resistance in a type of leukemia that affects children and adolescents. Reuters, eScience News and Science Daily also covered the research.

A Sept. 20 ABCNews.com article quoted associate professor of clinical neurology and psychiatry Jeffrey B. Saxon about the psychological factors behind violent acts committed by soldiers.

On Sept. 26, BBC World Service interviewed chief of the division of cardiovascular medicine Leslie Saxon about the new Center for Body Computing at the Keck School of Medicine. Fast Company, AOL Tech, MobileHealth News quoted Saxon about body computing, and The Huffington Post ran an op-ed by Saxon on the importance of technological innovation in medicine.

A Sept. 26 Los Angeles Times article cited research by professor of preventive medicine and pathology Taven Mack showing that asthma rates are higher for children living near freeways and that lung development in children is endangered by the burning of fossil fuels.

On Sept. 23, KTTV Fox 11 interviewed associate professor of research in preventive medicine Michael Cousineau about provisions of the health care reform law that went into effect.

‘A main priority of our clinical enterprise is to one day have a single platform of call center services to provide to everyone, including scheduling, registration and escorting of calls.’

—Michael Patrella, medical call center director
Calendar of Events
This Calendar of events is also online at www.usc.edu/hsccalendar for the Health Sciences Campus community.

Tuesday, Oct. 12


Wednesday, Oct. 13

Thursday, Oct. 14


Friday, Oct. 15

11:30 a.m. Physical Sci- ences in Oncology Seminar. “Game Theory and the Evol- utionary Ecology of Cancer,” Joel Brown, Univ. of Illinois. NRT Artery Aud. Info: (323) 442-3849

Monday, Oct. 18
3:15 p.m. Primary Care Workshop Opening Reception. “The Heart of Community Medicine,” Robert Ross, California Endowment. NRT Artery Auditorium. Info: (323) 442-1678

Tuesday, Oct. 19
10:30 a.m. USC Hospital Guild Speaker Series. “Answering the Call to Action,” Henri Ford, USC. DEJ 3rd

Notice: Deadline for calendar submission is 4 p.m. Mon- day 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) 442-3812, or e-mail to tbaauw@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.

DEDICATION: New center designed as integral hub for stem cell research
Continued from page 1.

Tours between 3:30 and 5 p.m. The $80 million, five-story, 87,500 square foot, green-cer- tified building located at 1425 N. San Pablo Ave. is designed to house 18 principal investiga- tors and their research teams.

Conceived in 2005, the project is the product of a public-private-partnership between California voter-created CIRM, the Keck School of Medicine and the Eli and Edythe Broad Foun- dation, a Los Angeles-based national philanthropy focused on advancing entrepreneurship for the public good in educa- tion, science and the arts.

The building’s development was funded through the $30 million gift from the Broad Foundation in 2006, a $27 mil- lion grant awarded by the CAORH in 2008, and private donations.

“Our goal in investing in this world-class center at USC is to create an integral hub for stem cell research in Southern California,” said Eli Broad. This innovative building represents the infinite poten- tials for medical discovery by researchers drawn from around the world.”

“The stem cell center is the first building on the Health Sciences Campus to receive a silver Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) designation based on the structure’s unique eco- friendly features. It incorpo- rates an ultra-clear glass and Zimbabwe black granite fa- gade. A double-glazed “cabinet wall” on the east side of the building allows ventilation in the cavity, reducing heat gain in warmer temperatures and creating an insulating barrier when it is cool.

“The center will provide researchers with outstanding space and facilities for state of the-art research aimed at the treatment of a vast spectrum of diseases,” said Martin Pera, professor and founding director of the Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenera- tive Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC. “The potential applications for stem cell research and regenerative medicine are breathtaking. This new building will enable USC researchers and their colleagues to uncover exciting fundamental discoveries into new therapies.”

The building will be a cornerstone in the biomedical research corridor on USC’s Health Sciences Campus that includes the Zilkha Neuro- genetic Institute, the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and Hospital, and USC University Hospital."

ONLINE EXTRAS
Read more HSC news online:
• No Rest for the Narcissist
  http://tinyurl.com/2znmb2
• Postmenopausal Therapy
  http://tinyurl.com/3xia7hp

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.