CHLA dedicates 317-bed inpatient building

By Sara Reeve

More than 200 community leaders and supporters celebrated the dedication of a new patient care building at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles on June 23. Hospital staff members are scheduled to move more than 200 inpatients into the new 317-bed, seven-story building on July 17. The $636 million, 460,000-square-foot structure is designed as a family-centered care environment, with every aspect of the new building planned with families in mind and nearly all patient rooms being private.

Children’s Hospital has been affiliated with the Keck School of Medicine of USC since 1932. “The strong academic focus of Children’s Hospital Los Angeles makes it a perfect match for USC—this is indeed the third campus of our university,” said Carmen A. Puliafito, dean of the Keck School of Medicine.

“Institutional Review Board chair

Darcy Spicer receives ethics award

By Amy E. Hamaker

The USC Office of Compliance recently presented its second annual USC Ethical Leadership Award to Darcy V. Spicer, chairman of the USC Health Sciences Institutional Review Board (IRB).

The award, given on June 16, was in recognition of Spicer’s leadership in his work with the Health Sciences Campus Institutional Review Board and the Human Subjects Research Protection Program. The IRB protects the rights and welfare of human research subjects in research studies conducted at USC and elsewhere by USC faculty, staff, graduate and undergraduate students.

Renovated operating suite provides key upgrades

By Tania Chatila

An upgraded operating room at USC University Hospital is taking minimally invasive surgery to a whole new level.

Operating Room 22 was recently converted into a fully integrated minimally invasive operating suite, outfitted with all the latest in audio visual control and medical device control.

“This is the most advanced operating room that we have right now,” said Arlene De Los Santos, the urology coordinator for the operating room. “With so many technological features, this OR has already helped increase our workflow in getting surgeries completed efficiently and on schedule.”

Among its many features, the room is equipped with two mounted cameras and a 65-inch viewing monitor that can capture and showcase up to four images at a time. That includes an endoscopic view, views of the room itself, anesthesia and vitals information, radiology images and even charting. In the future, those images could be placed into an electronic medical record.

Other features of the new integrated system include:

• medical device control from a touch panel at the nurse station;
• teaching tools such as telestration, whereby physicians and staff can take an
Wide-ranging lecture explores epigenetics

By Amy E. Hamaker

Changes are coming to the Medical College Admis-

We collected data from residents, schools, and

leads students needed to succeed in medical school.

The text hasn’t really changed in over 20 years, but

The epigenome is the code, can express significant

Identical twins, who have the same genetic

examine and reason through ethics/ philosophy, cross-cultural

The Office of Compliance began giving the USC Ethical

keeps USC on the cutting edge;

The health care industry is quickly moving more

Spicer said. “This philosophy is pervasive throughout

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The Weekly

Next Issue: July 29

The Office of Compliance began giving the USC Ethical Leadership Award last year to highlight the importance of ethical leadership. The award is given to a person who has demonstrated outstanding responsibility in following the principles of the office’s code of leadership and the code of ethics program.

By Amy E. Hamaker

Jones explained, “For example, one chromosome—

Jones shared that his primary goal is to improve

Researchers from Jones’ team include:

The surgical process so that

 acompaniments—may be turned off for an amount of time,”

“Those of us in the Compliance Office have observed that Darcy

Mr. D.  Fly d or a

students who seek to think more broadly, to

It’s really to try to get stu-

OR: Upgrades will bolster patient safety

By Amy E. Hamaker

Peter A. Jones, director of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and professor of urology, biochemistry and molecular biology at the Keck School of Medicine, recently presented information on his lab’s research on epigenetics to a crowd at Aresty Auditorium.

During his June 13 lecture, “The Human Epigenome in Health and Disease,” Jones explained that epigenetics rep-

epigenetic

mutations in cancer that have been discov-

and, most notably, cancer. “Almost all of the new
genetically based diseases such as Rett syndrome

Some discoveries from Jones’ team include:

processes,” said Jones. Jones’ research centers on

methylation, or the addition of      

Jones noted that a relatively small number of DNA cytosines—

They tend to hold open “back doors” to the DNA

Epigenetics is an important factor in learning about the mechanisms of and discovering treat-

the surgical side effects of ground-breaking diseases such as Rett syndrome, genetically fragile X syndrome, imprinting disorders, and, most notably, cancer. “Almost all of the new

migrations in cancer [that have been] discovered recently are related to these [epigenetic]

“Being good in your science classes isn’t all of what makes you a good physician.”

—Erin A. Quinn, associate dean of admissions emeritus for the Keck School of Medicine

Wide-ranging lecture explores epigenetics

Peter A. Jones

Jean Brun

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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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SPICER: Do the correct thing, even if it’s hard

Continued from page 1

Continued from page 1

“Probably some of the strongest recommended additions to the test included:

• Areas of knowledge of behavioral/social sciences, research methods, causation and logic; and teleconferencing allowing

Over the next several months, hospital administrato-

This will also allow for broadcasting educational sessions on the World Wide Web.

The health care industry is quickly moving more

These recommendations are intended to increase

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SPICER: Do the correct thing, even if it’s hard

Continued from page 1

Regardless of funding or type.

We all are faced with difficult decisions every day where these principles can be compromised,” said Laura LaCorte, associate senior vice president of compliance, during the presentation.

“Those of us in the Compliance Office have observed that Darcy can be a wonderful advocate for faculty, but at the same time, he isn’t shy about making decisions that he knows may be unpopular if he thinks it’s the right thing to do.”

“I’ve grown up here at USC in an environment where the emphasis has been to ‘do the correct thing’—even if that’s hard,” says Spicer. “This philosophy is pervasive throughout the university, the hospitals and clinics where our research is conducted. Essentialy every investigator with whom I’ve had contact wants to do things correctly; without the personal commitment of each investigator I don’t think we could achieve such a high level of compliance.”

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OR: Upgrades will bolster patient safety

Continued from page 1

image and write on sketch or draw on that image with the tip of a finger;

the capability to interface with robots during ro-

Most of the equipment is

The room is also designed

It is quickly moving more and

Scott Evans. “That system has allowed us to do that and so much more. The educational advantages alone— the projected images, the telestration, the broadcasting capabilities—are significant benefits furthering our academic mission. But the university’s mission to teach the doctors and clinicians of tomorrow.”

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This system

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Department of Defense awards USC $600,000 to develop breast cancer drugs

Nouri Neamati, associate professor of pharmacology, has been granted a two-year, $607,500 Idea Award from the Department of Defense Congressionally Directed Breast Cancer Research Program for his grant titled, “Design of GRP78 inhibitors as novel therapeutics for breast cancer.”

Neamati is collaborating on this project with co-investigator Amy Lee, associate director for basic research at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center. Lee originally cloned the GRP78 gene several years ago. Graduate student Kayva Ramkumar and postdoctoral fellows Bikash Debath and Hisnyoki Orake are spearheading the work in the Neamati lab.

“This study aims to predict a novel approach to treatment for recurrent and resistant cancers,” said Lee, who holds the Freeman Cosmetics Chair in Basic Science.

The project, which focuses on breast cancer but can be applied to other cancers as well, explores the overexpression of the GRP78 gene in cancers. GRP78 promotes the growth of tumor cells, which increases cell resistance to chemotherapy.

“Drug resistance is what often causes cancer treatment therapy to fail, so decreasing this resistance would have significant impact and could help eradicate the cancer,” explains Neamati.

The goal of the project is to better understand the drug resistance mechanisms of the GRP78 gene and to design novel therapeutic agents to overcome them. Neamati and his team aim to counteract GRP78 by discovering ways to decrease its expression and to selectively inhibit its enzymatic activity in cancerous cells.

“It is expected that by blocking the survival effects of GRP78, cancer cells will become more susceptible to chemotherapy,” said Neamati.

Neamati’s lab has already identified two novel compounds that reduce GRP78 expression and inhibit its enzymatic activity with the help of a $120,000 seed grant from the L. K. Whittier Foundation, on which Lee was the primary investigator. The DOD funding will be built on the Whittier grant’s findings to investigate the molecular mechanisms and anticancer effects of these compounds.

“We will validate the therapeutic utility of these inhibitors as a novel approach to treat breast cancer,” said Neamati.

“Successful completion of these studies will expedite the development of these drugs for use in cancer patients.”

This is the fourth DOD grant awarded to Neamati.

AGCME awards five-year accreditation to Internal Medicine Residency Training Program

By Ryan Ball

The Keck School of Medicine’s Internal Medicine Residency Training Program recently received the maximum five-year accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) and its Residency Review Committee for Internal Medicine.

Ron Ben-Ari, vice chair for educational affairs in the Department of Medicine, which runs the program, said it has undergone a number of significant changes in recent years. These include expanding its core team of educators, restructuring its educational program and responding to new duty hour and educational requirements.

Ben-Ari attributed the five-year accreditation to outstanding residents, a competent and caring educational team (associate program directors Bharat Chaudry, Tabitha Goring, Eric Hsieh, Michael Karp, Steven Kim, Joshua Sapkin and program administrator Nancy Shepherd) and tremendous support from the chair and faculty of the Department of Medicine. He says another major contributing factor is the new Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center faculty.

“We now provide improved patient privacy, patients have all the amenities they can expect in any hospital, and the hospital is state-of-the-art in terms of our resources for diagnostic and treatment tools,” Ben-Ari explained.

The Internal Medicine Residency Training Program will move forward under a new program director. On July 1, Ben-Ari turned over the role to Eric Hsieh, assistant professor of clinical medicine at the Keck School. Ben-Ari says that Hsieh and the rest of the team will continue to place an emphasis on attracting excellent students, especially those from the Keck School. Other priorities for the program include increasing opportunities for training at the Keck Medical Center of USC, incorporating more simulation training using the Surgical Skills Center, and continuing to provide faculty with resources to enhance their teaching and supervisory skills.

One of the largest in the country, the Internal Medicine Residency Training Program currently serves 165 residents in the categorical-three-year internal medicine program. Another 24 residents are training in a combined Medicine/Pediatrics program, and additional trainees visit from Huntington Memorial Hospital and other programs. The ACGME is responsible for the accreditation of post-MD medical training programs within the United States. Accreditation is accomplished through a peer review process and is based upon established standards and guidelines.

CHLA: New facility will help meet surging demand

Continued from page 1

It is truly a work of art and certainly a precious jewel for the City of Los Angeles.”

Civic leaders and Children’s Hospital administrators identified the need for the new hospital building more than a decade ago. With the growth of Los Angeles and patients traveling from throughout the world to seek care from the expert physicians at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, demand for services exceeded the hospital capacity. The new Anderson Pavilion allows for increased access, expanded patient care services and the ability to recruit new physicians in key specialties.

“This new building will be making recruiting faculty easier, as a premier facility where they can deliver state-of-the-art care,” said D. Brent Pollack, chair of the Department of Pediatrics at the Keck School and vice president for academic affairs at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. “It also is a very visible beacon back to the community of Los Angeles reflecting the importance of child well-being and health in our community.”

More than $1 billion was raised for the new building and other critical programs and research, which is the largest-ever single fundraising campaign in the nation by a freestanding, independent children’s hospital. Known as Living Proof: The Campaign for Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, the campaign received an unprecedented 737,743 individual gifts.

The architectural firm of Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Architects designed the building, while Rudolph & Sletten Inc. constructed the facility. Key elements of the new pavilion include:

- It is licensed for 317 beds, 85 percent of which are private rooms.
- To meet growing demand, more than one-third of beds will be intensive care beds, a 63 percent increase over previous hospital capacity.
- The building’s design is based on the varied California landscape with each floor featuring a different region of the state—from the desert to the ocean to a child’s own backyard.
- Every aspect of the building has been designed with families in mind, with each patient room featuring a daybed to allow parents or caregivers to stay at the patient bedside.
- Patients, families and staff will dine in style at the HBO Café, a Hollywood-themed dining space featuring large windows, indoor skylights and outdoor seating.
- Patients and visiting children will enjoy the Jane Vrunkul Palmer Healing and Play Garden where children of all abilities can play side by side.

The project, which runs the program, said it has undergone a number of significant changes in recent years. These include expanding its core team of educators, restructuring its educational program and responding to new duty hour and educational requirements.

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Legacy bricks dedicated at USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center in honor of loved ones

By Pauline Vu

William H. Crawford Jr., former dean of the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry, 74 bricks in honor and memory Cancer Center to dedicate 154 from lung cancer. His father, of USC, died on June 18. He Ostrow School of Dentistry donated money for two legacy Center from the quad, he’ll have the memory of his parents nearby. That’s because Larsen donated money for two legacy bricks which are embedded in the ground to the right of the entrance, in honor of his par- ents and their battles against cancer. His mother, Madeline, passed away 30 years ago from breast cancer. His father, Donald Sr., died 10 years ago from lung cancer. “They’ll always be in my memory as I walk by,” Larsen said.

On June 12, approximately 75 people gathered outside USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center to dedicate 154 bricks in honor and memory of loved ones. The engraved legacy bricks, for which donors gave $500 each, raised about $77,000 and were bought mostly at the Concert to Cure Cancer held in September 2010. The money will go toward cancer research. “Bricks are solid, and these lives that we’re commemorating are solid,” said Peter A. Jones, director of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center. “You can see them, you can read them, and there’s no getting away from it—these are people who have fought the fight against cancer.”

A few years ago, USC Norris dedicated bricks in the cancer center’s Hinderstein Family Meditation Garden. The program has expanded and now there are more opportunities to acknowledge someone special. These bricks were dedicated in honor of Paul Anderson, a patient at USC Norris who passed away in March 2010. He was one of the key inspirations for the Concert to Cure Cancer, which raised more than $1 million for cancer research. Anderson’s wife, Dori, said she donated her brick “to always know that it’s here, that people can see it, and just to dedicate it to a wonderful man.”

Keck School of Medicine Dean Carmen A. Puliafitto and his wife, Dr. Janet Pine, each dedicated a brick in honor of their fathers. “It’s such a great way to commemorate the lives of family members and the efforts of scientists to fight cancer,” Puliafitto said.

USC alumnus Michael Adler dedicated a brick in honor of Ginny Peters, director of development at USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center. The reason: Peters was instrumental in helping Adler’s mother, Marilyn, get an appointment with a specialist at USC Norris in 2000 when she was diagnosed with mesothelioma.

Before coming to USC Norris, Marilyn Adler sought opinions from three hospitals, including UCLA and City of Hope. Their prognosis was bleak, giving her six to 12 months to live. But at USC Norris, the Adlers found a different at-titude. “Instead of doom and gloom, they spoke of clinical trials and research,” Michael Adler said. “They recom-mended my mom participate in a study that was approved just weeks earlier. There were no guarantees, but there was hope.”

Adler acknowledged it might seem strange that his brick doesn’t memorialize his mother. “That’s because my mom, Marilyn Adler, who was told she only had six to nine months to live in November 2000, is here with us today because of the advice and support of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center,” he said. As his mother waved, the audience clapped and cheered. For more information on purchasing a Legacy Brick, please contact Tonya Strom, assistant director of develop-ment, at 323.865.0668 or tstrom@usc.edu.

Calendar of Events

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

Tuesday, July 19


Friday, July 22


11 a.m. Hematology Grand Rounds. “immunizing the Role of Rumzz in Clonid Myeloid Disorders,” James Mangun, Univ. of Pennsylvania. IPT G22103. Info: (323) 865-3950

noon, Medicine Grand Rounds. “Atrial Fibrillation,” Thirti On, USC IPT Conference Room B. Info: (323) 226-7566

Friday, July 29

8:30 a.m. Surgical Grand Rounds. “Incredible Advances in Breast Cancer Surgery,” Melvin Silverstein, Hoag Hospital. DOH 100. Info: (323) 442-2586

11 a.m. Hematology Grand Rounds, Casey O’Connell, USC: IPT G22103. Info: (323) 865-3950

August 1 – 5

5 a.m. – 5 a.m. “IDDT 500: Reasonable Conduct of Research (RCB),” Various speakers. RAM Mayer Auditorium. Info: (323) 865-0806

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 email to eblaauw@usc.edu. Entries must include day, date, time, title of talk, first and last name of speaker, affiliation of speaker, organization, and phone number. 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://emergencyusc.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.

William H. Crawford Jr., former dean of the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry, 74