

## Everest Foundation gives \$1 million for research education

By Amy E. Hamaker

Supporting graduate medical education is a family tradition for A. Michael Everest, head of HN Biotech, Residents Medical Group consulting and chair of the Edwin Everest Foundation.

“The foundation is named after my father,” Everest explained. “He was a big believer in medical education and in empowering international medical graduates. In fact, how that support would continue was one of the last conversations we had before he passed away.”

Everest’s father, who passed away in October 2008, was a lifelong advocate for the power of education as a tool to help future generations become innovators and leaders. As a doctor, he believed passionately that graduate medical education should be at the forefront of the country’s focus.

“Graduate medical education deals with both physical and mental health, so strides made there through research and training can be an immeasurable help to society as a whole,” explained Everest. “His goal was to touch people’s lives.”

Everest is continuing in his father’s

footsteps with a recent gift of \$1 million to establish the Edwin Everest Foundation Fund at the Keck School of Medicine of USC.

The fund supports medical research for volunteer postdoctoral trainees in the Department of Medicine. The gift will help train and support new international

medical graduates entering research and diagnostic careers.

“I believe doctors of the future will need a mix of academic and clinical skills, and those who diagnose disease will be on the forefront of medicine,” Everest said.

“We want to help them while they’re young, because that’s where paradigm changes in

the way we treat disease will begin.”

The Edwin Everest Foundation is a Los Angeles-based nonprofit charity organization dedicated to the advancement of graduate medical education. It works exclusively with medical universities, residency programs, and other research programs and foundations.

“We are committed to help provide outstanding research experiences for the doctors supported by the foundation under this unique program, which

benefits not only the trainees, but also the USC faculty with whom they work,” said Edward Crandall, holder of the Kenneth T. Norris Jr. Chair in Medicine, Hastings Professor of Medicine, and chair of the Department of Medicine.

Everest himself is passionate when it comes to helping students at USC. “I was first introduced to USC through the work of Dr. Uttam Sinha [associate professor of otolaryngology and residency program director, Department of Otolaryngology at the Keck School]—I was drawn to his passion and dedication to medicine,” he recalled. “I supported a Ph.D. student in his laboratory. Seeing the amazing work she produced led to my special relationship with USC.”

It also led to Everest’s recent support of the Department of Medicine.

“We have a responsibility to fuel the fire that supports thousands of research projects,” Everest added.

“The 14th Dalai Lama said that we’re on this earth for around 90 years and that material things will come and go, but the one thing that will remain is when you’ve touched another’s life. The success of these new doctors benefits humanity as a whole—and it’s through supporting them that we can change the world,” he said.

**‘I believe doctors of the future will need a mix of academic and clinical skills, and those who diagnose disease will be on the forefront of medicine.’**

**—A. Michael Everest, chair of the Edwin Everest Foundation**



A. Michael Everest

## New hospital centers provide respite for patients, families

By Sara Reeve

For families waiting for a loved one to come out of surgery, or a patient waiting to receive test results, a busy hospital lobby can be a noisy and overwhelming space. To help patients and families who are seeking peace and quiet, Keck Medical Center of USC has opened two Patient and Family Resource Centers at Keck Hospital of USC.

“These are rooms set aside for patients and families desiring some quiet space,” said Char Ryan, associate administrator for patient experience. “They can also be used for patient and family meetings.”

The recently opened centers are located in Keck Hospital’s main lobby (next to the chapel) and Norris Inpatient Tower lobby. Each room features a computer terminal complete with Internet access and a printer.

According to Ryan, the centers offer families, patients and loved ones a respite from the active hospital environment and are an example of the medical center’s focus on patient- and family-centered care.

“Spaces like this have been requested by patients and families,” said Ryan. “We are actively listening to the voice of the patient and family as we center our care around them.”

Other patient- and family-centered resources offered at the medical center include an entertainment library, pet therapy services and a new partnership with the USC Thornton School of Music to provide classical music in waiting rooms throughout the year.

## Baby shower brings unexpected gifts to Keck School

By Amy E. Hamaker

It’s been 11 years since Edward Zapanta, a founding member of the Mexican-American Alumni Association and the first Latino member of the USC Board of Trustees, passed away, but his widow, Norene, has remained committed to her husband’s support of the Keck School of Medicine of USC medical education. For her, supporting medical education has become a family affair.

Norene Zapanta recently celebrated the birth of her second granddaughter, Grace. However, Grace is daughter Jennifer’s second baby girl, and there wasn’t much that the new mom needed. Rather than forgo a shower altogether, Norene and Jennifer asked guests if, in lieu of baby gifts, they would consider making a donation to the Edward Zapanta Scholarship at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. To date, more than \$1,000 has been given. In addition, in June 2012 Norene made a \$50,000 pledge over the next five years to honor Edward’s memory.

Edward Zapanta graduated from the Keck School in 1963 and completed his internship and residency in neurological surgery at Los Angeles County+USC Medical Cen-



Norene Zapanta poses with her newest granddaughter, Grace, and Grace’s big sister, Madeline Rose, who recently turned 5. At Grace’s recent baby shower, in lieu of baby gifts, Norene and her daughter Jennifer asked guests to consider donating to the Edward Zapanta Scholarship at the Keck School of Medicine of USC.

ter. He passed away in 2002 from complications from a malignant brain tumor related to a stroke.

The scholarship, which provides funds for Latino medical students, was first endowed by

a \$300,000 gift from the James Irvine Foundation. The first scholarship was awarded in 2002. Over the last five years, there has been a recipient each year, and

# USC launches Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research Initiative

By Suzanne Wu

USC has launched a new initiative to support collaborative research in regenerative medicine and stem cell biology across the university, facilitating the critical move from basic research into clinical applications.

The USC Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research Initiative—spearheaded by Keck Provost Professor Andrew McMahon—will draw on existing research strengths and develop these strengths through strategic collaborations that reflect the imperative of working across academic units and campuses in order to successfully harness the promise of regenerative medicine.

The initiative includes the launching of a new website covering stem cell and regenerative medicine research across the university, and the launch of a new research team award program to support regenerative medicine research at USC.

“I am delighted to have a website that connects across our campuses and departments to forge new collaborations and opportunities,” McMahon said, “and to make our collective efforts in regenerative medicine more visible to the general public, scientists, doctors and students.”

To jumpstart the USC Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research Initiative, Carmen A.

Puliafito, dean of the Keck School of Medicine of USC, has put forward \$1.2 million for a new set of seed programs, available to interdisciplinary research efforts involving groups of faculty from across multiple schools at USC. The awards are open to USC faculty of any rank or type.

“There is no doubt that stem cell research will play a critical role in developing tomorrow’s medical breakthroughs,” Puliafito said. “The Keck School of Medicine is committed to supporting multi-disciplinary science across the university that shows promise for one day helping patients at the bedside.”

The USC Regenerative Medicine Initiative 2013 Keck School of Medicine Research Team Awards will support regenerative medicine research in disease areas for which USC already has core strength, including cancer research, neural and sensory research, musculo-skeletal research, research on the respiratory and circulatory systems, and research on the digestive and metabolic systems. Research areas may include, but are not limited to, preclinical trial studies, stem cell biology, tissue engineering, organ regeneration and developmental mechanisms.

Letters of intent are due March 17, 2013. Successful proposals will be awarded up to \$200,000

for the first year, with the possibility to renew for the second year upon review and approval by the executive committee. Applications must provide a realistic plan for sustained funding or support beyond the end of the award, and must also demonstrate that the award will make a difference in attracting further research support.

To support the university-spanning mission of the USC Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research Initiative, USC has launched a new website gathering together information about faculty, research and facilities in stem cell biology and regenerative medicine, drawing on rich content from across the university and its affiliated institutions, including the Keck School of Medicine, the Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC, USC Viterbi School of Engineering, USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, the House Research Institute and Children’s Hospital Los Angeles.

The website <http://stemcell.usc.edu> features the latest stem cell news from USC and the wider research community, a calendar of events, and video interviews with stem cell researchers.

For more information about the 2013 Keck School of Medicine of USC Research Team Awards, go to [https://stemcell.usc.edu/files/2013/02/RFP-for-Collaborative-Seed-Funding\\_Final-02082013.pdf](https://stemcell.usc.edu/files/2013/02/RFP-for-Collaborative-Seed-Funding_Final-02082013.pdf).

## Vons Foundation presents USC Norris with nearly \$193,000 for personalized breast cancer treatment

By Amy E. Hamaker

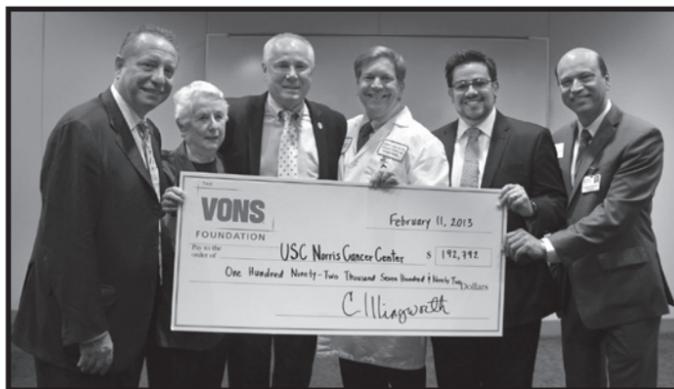
Representatives from the Vons Foundation and Los Angeles City Councilman Tom LaBonge visited the Health Sciences campus on Feb. 11 to present a check for \$192,792 to the Women’s Cancer Research Program at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center.

The gift is in support of the Personalized Medicine Breast Cancer Program, which is under the direction of Debu Tripathy, professor of medicine and holder of the Priscilla and Art Ulene Chair in Women’s Cancer at the Keck School of Medicine of USC and co-leader of the Women’s Cancer Research Program.

Thanks to the grant, the Personalized Medicine Breast Cancer Program

will initiate a tracking process with newly diagnosed, consenting patients at Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center to help increase access to information about their specific form of the disease, previous screening and treatment outcomes, and treatment plans going forward.

Stephen B. Gruber, director of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, hosted the presentation. “It’s a privilege to interface with community leaders to really make a difference in the lives of our patients and advance the future of cancer care through research done by Dr. Tripathy,” he said. “We are incredibly grateful for the work that’s done by our community partners to help



The Vons Foundation presented a check for \$192,792 to help support Debu Tripathy’s work in personalized care for breast cancer. From left, are Carmen A. Puliafito, dean, Keck School of Medicine of USC; Nora Ullmann, USC Norris volunteer; Los Angeles City Councilman Tom LaBonge; Stephen B. Gruber, director, USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center; Carlos Illingworth, Vons director of public affairs and chair of The Vons Foundation; and Tripathy.

further our mission, to make cancer a disease of the past.”

Carmen A. Puliafito, dean of the Keck School, added, “This gift is so meaningful because it represents grassroots philanthropy. Dr. Tripathy is really an innovative thinker in

treating breast cancer, and we greatly appreciate Vons’ support.”

Patients will be offered counseling and decision support tailored to their language and culture, and will be helped with screening for opportunities for clinical trials and investigational diagnostic and treatment options. The program plans to develop a mobile phone app and corresponding web portal to educate patients about their specific form of breast cancer and help them better communicate with doctors. It will also make iPads available to and host live meetings for patients without computer access.

“Our employees and customers raised more than \$2.1 million for breast cancer prevention and treatment, and when we learned about this innovative project, we were immediately interested in supporting it,” said Carlos Illingworth, Vons director of public affairs and chair of The Vons Foundation. “We believe that it will not only elevate the level of care for breast cancer patients, but

ultimately also help save lives.”

LaBonge was on hand to offer his congratulations to Tripathy and to honor the Vons Foundation for its commitment. “For over 100 years, Vons has been active in our Los Angeles community, not only with its markets but with its philanthropy,” he said. “There’s no better place for fighting cancer than USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, where my wife, Brigid, was treated. This donation was a team effort with folks from Vons and Norris. They are all angels in the City of Angels.”

Tripathy said, “Personalized medicine is the medicine of the future; for cancer, it’s the medicine of the present. We’re entering a new era where we perform personalized medicine on many different levels, ranging from high tech genomic analysis to personalizing therapy based on patients’ preferences. We can help them make decisions about the many complexities of their care, and we are really thrilled to have an enabling gift to get this effort off the ground.”

The Vons Foundation operates as a subdivision within the Safeway Foundation. Vons, a Safeway Company, gives locally in the areas of health and human services, hunger relief, education, and helping people living with disabilities. The Vons Foundation has awarded \$286,000 to USC Norris for the I-Spy 2 Project, under the direction of Tripathy, since 2010.

The Weekly

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## \$480,000 in BCRF grants to target genetic markers for breast cancer therapies

By Sara Reeve and Amy E. Hamaker

For many researchers, the lackluster economy has had an adverse effect on funding opportunities. Fortunately for USC cancer researchers Michael Press and Christina Curtis, funding is available through an ongoing relationship with the Breast Cancer Research Foundation (BCRF), a not-for-profit organization that provides critical funding for innovative clinical and translational research.

The foundation recently presented each researcher with a \$240,000 grant to continue their individual research into the genetics of breast cancer.

This is the 14th year of BCRF support for Press' work and the second year for Curtis' work, for a cumulative total of more than \$3.1 million.

Press, the Harold E. Lee Chair in Cancer Research

and professor of pathology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, works on research that involves identifying genetic alterations that may be predictive markers of responsiveness to certain types of therapy.

"Our ultimate goal is to see if women whose breast cancers are estrogen receptor positive and have alterations in those cooperating genes are less likely to respond to anti-estrogen therapies," said Press.

According to Press, this research could eventually identify women with estrogen receptor positive cancers who would likely not respond to traditional anti-estrogen therapies.

Doctors could then provide additional treatment early.

Funding from BCRF has allowed Press to pursue novel areas of research—areas without much preliminary data. "It allows me to pursue things

I'm interested in, develop preliminary data in that area, and then I can use that data to become more competitive in pursuing a different grant," he said. "For most agencies, especially when funding is so tight, you need to have a pretty well-developed project that doesn't have a lot of risk built into it. And I don't have to do that with this award."

A current focus for Curtis, an assistant professor of preventive medicine at the Keck School and the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, is genetic diversity in breast cancer tumors.

"It has become increasingly apparent that genetic heterogeneity contributes to disease progression—no two tumors are the same, tumors often exhibit spatial heterogeneity, and tumors evolve over time," Curtis explained.

"This presents all sorts of considerations for how we treat patients. There may be multiple mutations present in different cell populations, and it's challenging to detect rare cells that may fuel disease progression."

Curtis recently published findings for the largest study of its kind in the journal *Nature*.

"This study identified novel subgroups of breast cancer and subgroups-specific driver genes. We are now profiling a subset of this cohort and others at extremely high resolution to further characterize their unique features," she said. "Breast cancer genomes are incredibly diverse, and we need to explore their evolution as they progress and respond to treatment. Ultimately, we're hoping that by using our novel experimental and computational framework, we'll be able to develop personalized treatment strategies."

The funding from BCRF has allowed Curtis to assemble a critical team to perform analyses and gather data. "We're trying to understand the system biology of tumors by taking as many snapshots of these cancers as possible," she explained. "We should be able to determine the generality of our findings by applying them to a larger number of representative samples, and this is currently underway."

"The research that Dr. Press and Dr. Curtis are doing has the potential to save lives," said Peg Mastrianni, deputy director of BCRF. "We're happy to be able to help them continue their groundbreaking work and to help further our mission to achieve a cure and prevention for breast cancer in our lifetime."

**'For most agencies, especially when funding is so tight, you need to have a pretty well-developed project that doesn't have a lot of risk built into it. And I don't have to do that with this award.'**

**—Michael Press, the Harold E. Lee Chair in Cancer Research and professor of pathology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC**



Photo courtesy of Michael Lieber

### USC researchers decipher mechanism by which most human lymphoma chromosomal changes occur

In a cover article in the March issue of *Molecular and Cellular Biology*, authors from Michael Lieber's laboratory at the Keck School of Medicine and the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center deciphered key steps in the primary pathway by which most human lymphomas arise. The finding will allow researchers to focus on ways to minimize such events. The lead author on the paper is USC postdoctoral fellow Xiaoping Cui (second from left). Others, from left, are: Zhengfei Lu, Ph.D. student; Chih-Lin Hsieh, professor of urology; and Lieber, the Rita and Edward Polusky Professor in Basic Cancer Research. Other USC authors include Markus Muschen and Lars Klemm at Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

## The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

A Feb. 22 report by CBS News featured an interview with **Christi Heck**, associate professor of clinical neurology at the Keck School of Medicine and medical director of the USC Comprehensive Epilepsy Program at the Keck Medical Center of USC, about an experimental device studied at USC that could help people with epilepsy prevent seizures.

The device is being considered for approval by the Food and Drug Administration.

The story also appeared on CBS News Los Angeles affiliates KCBS-TV and KCAL-TV.

A Feb. 21 broadcast on KPCC-FM featured an interview with **Natalie Strand**, assistant professor of clinical anesthesiology at the Keck School of Medicine, about a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that shows a steady

rise in drug overdose deaths in the United States.

A Feb. 19 report in *The Oregonian* featured research by **Jo Kay Ghosh**, a postdoctoral fellow in the Keck School of Medicine's Department of Preventive Medicine, and colleagues that found increased home ventilation could protect pregnant women against low birth weight and preterm birth resulting from secondhand smoke.

A Feb. 14 report in *The New York Times* noted that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved the first treatment to give limited vision to blind patients, a prosthetic eye developed by **Mark Humayun**, Cornelius Pings Professor of Biomedical Sciences and professor of ophthalmology, biomedical engineering, cell and neurobiology at the Keck School

of Medicine and USC Viterbi School.

The Argus II device uses electrodes implanted in the eye to transmit images to the brain, bypassing retinas damaged by retinitis pigmentosa. Humayun said the technology might eventually be used to treat other conditions like bladder control problems or spinal paralysis.

The *Wall Street Journal* noted that while the bionic eye currently provides black-and-white images, researchers hope that it will eventually enable color vision.

"The fact that many patients can use the Argus implant in their activities of daily living such as recognizing large letters, locating the position of objects, and more, has been beyond our wildest dreams, yet the promise to the patients is real and we expect it only to improve over time," Humayun said.

# Calendar of Events

## Wednesday, Mar. 6

**7:30 a.m. – 9 a.m.** USC Institute for Integrative Health Seminar. “The Yoga Empowers Seniors Study (YESS),” George Salem, USC. CSC 250. Info: (323) 442-2638

**Noon.** ZNI Seminar. “Dynamic Properties of Neural Circuits for Vision,” W. Martin Usrey, UC Davis. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-2144

## Thursday, Mar. 7

**Noon.** Cellular Homeostasis Lecture. “The LKB1 – AMPK Pathway Controls Tumor Suppression and Metabolism,” Reuben Shaw, Salk Institute. MCH 156. Info: (323) 442-3121

## Friday, Mar. 8

**8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.** USC Research for Liver Diseases: 18th Annual Symposium. Various speakers. HMR 100. Info: (323) 442-7732

**Noon.** Medicine Grand Rounds. “Wilson Disease,” Joyce Limurti, USC. IPT Conference Room B. Info: (323) 226-7556

## Tuesday, Mar. 12

**2 p.m.** Breast Cancer Educational Forum. “Fact or Fiction: Exercise and Lymphedema,” Marisa Perdomo, USC. Forum moderated by Debu Tripathy, USC. NRT G-501. Info: (323) 865-3520

## Thursday, Mar. 14

**Noon.** Cellular Homeostasis Lecture. “Detecting and Responding to Mitochondrial Dysfunction: The Mitochondrial UPR,” Cole Haynes, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. MCH 156. Info: (323) 442-7732

**3:30 p.m.** KSOM Special Seminar. “A Unifying Role for Prion in Neurodegeneration,” Nobel Laureate Stanley B. Prusiner, UC San Francisco. KAM Mayer Auditorium. Info: (323) 442-2722

## Friday, Mar. 15

**8:30 a.m.** Surgical Grand Rounds. “Mitral Valve Surgery: Then and Now,” Randolph Chitwood, East Carolina Heart Institute. DOH 100. Info: (323) 442-9064

## Friday, Mar. 22

**8:30 a.m.** Surgical Grand Rounds. “History of Parathyroid Surgery for Sporadic Primary Hyperparathyroidism: Re-Examination of the 85%/15% Rule,” Melanie Goldfarb, USC. DOH 100. Info: (323) 442-9064

**Noon.** Physical Sciences in Oncology Center Seminar. “Manipulating and Measuring Cell Mechanics for Medicine,” Dino Di Carlo, UCLA. CSC 250. Info: (323) 442-3849

## Tuesday, Mar. 26

**Noon.** Global Health Lecture. “From Policy to Implementation—Challenges in the Field,” Joel Lamstein, John Snow, Inc. UPC: TCC 450. Info: (323) 865-0419

## Thursday, Mar. 28

**8:30 a.m.** Research Seminar. “Mechanisms Regulating Lung Injury Repair and Lung Tumor-Propagating Cells,” Carla Kim, Children’s Hospital Boston. IRD 732-734. Info: (323) 226-7923

**Noon.** Cellular Homeostasis Lecture. “Nitric Oxide (Synthesis) Regulation of Mitochondrial Functions,” Cecilia Giulivi, UC Davis. MCH 156. Info: (323) 442-3121

**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, location and a phone number for information.



Jon Natlick

## USC health workers have a heart on Valentine’s Day

USC Medical Center workers helped staff the Los Angeles-based APAIT Health Center’s “Everybody Has a Heart” event on Valentine’s Day, Feb. 14. Staff offered blood pressure, cholesterol and other screenings. More than 100 area residents attended the event, held at the center at 1730 W. Olympic Blvd. Jina Sohn (left), assistant professor of clinical medicine, and administrative assistant Carolina Mantano, provide information about the services offered at Keck Medical Center to event attendees.

## USC to provide medical care services for LA Marathon

Building on a successful partnership in 2012, the Keck Medical Center of USC will again serve as the official medical team for the 2013 ASICS LA Marathon, which takes place on Sunday, March 17. As part of a multi-year agreement, Keck Medical Center of USC doctors and staff will oversee care and treatment to runners along the course from start to finish.

Keck Medical Center physicians will supervise medical staff and supplies

## GIFT: Baby shower leads to scholarship aid

**Continued from Page 1** awards have ranged from \$30,000 to \$38,000.

“The cost of medical education can really be prohibitive to a lot of minority students, and helping them meet a great need in the surrounding Los Angeles community,” said Norene Zapanta. “Edward was very proud of USC, and the scholarship emphasizes both the medical student and community involvement. This seemed like a nice way to involve my husband in the baby shower, and support scholarship as well.

“I’m wholeheartedly behind making donations in support of medical education,” Zapanta continued. “With the constantly changing landscape of medicine, I think we need to be positioned for the future. We need doctors from all different cultures and walks of life. I would tell anyone who has the ability to support scholarships in whatever way they can.”

at mobile medical tents at strategic locations along the course, at the finish line, post-finish area and the family reunion area. The USC team will also provide training to the nurses, paramedics, EMTs and athletic training volunteers who will be staffing the marathon on race day.

Glenn T. Ault, associate dean of the Keck School of Medicine of USC, will serve as the medical commissioner of the 2013 ASICS LA Marathon.

In that role, Ault will manage the hundreds of medical personnel along the route and serve as the marathon’s medical spokesperson to news media. Last year, Ault was a frequent media spokesman in the days leading up to the race, when the potential for wet weather led race officials to give comprehensive tips to runners for keeping themselves safe and dry

regardless of conditions.

“Last year, Dr. Ault and his team at the Keck Medical Center of USC were a tremendous resource for our runners, our staff and our volunteers,” said Nick Curl, chief operating officer of LA Marathon LLC. “We are thrilled to have Keck back as one of our world-class partners, and we look forward to another successful race with outstanding medical care.”

Tom Jackiewicz, CEO for USC Health, said, “The University of Southern California is honored to once again partner with the ASICS LA Marathon, a landmark event of the city. We are committed to the health and well-being of the Los Angeles community, and Keck Medical Center of USC physicians and staff will provide the best first-responder care to marathon participants, as well as any medical supplies that may be needed.”

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**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.