

## Verdugo Hills Hospital joins the USC family



Steve Cohn

Len LaBella (left), CEO of Verdugo Hills Hospital and Tom Jackiewicz, CEO of USC Health, celebrate USC Verdugo Hills Hospital's debut as the newest member of the Keck Medicine of USC family. They joined hospital employees at a July 24 celebration, featuring the USC Trojan Marching Band, a barbecue luncheon and decorations in cardinal and gold.

Cardinal and gold colors swept through the Foothill communities of Los Angeles in mid-July as the University of Southern California debuted its newest member of the Keck Medicine of USC family, USC Verdugo Hills Hospital.

A kick-off celebration luncheon was held for employees under a tent on the grounds of the hospital, where employees were greeted by Tom Jackiewicz, CEO of USC Health, and Len LaBella, CEO of Verdugo Hills Hospital.

Amid red and yellow balloons and festooned tables, the newest members of the Trojan family took time out to enjoy a barbecue feast and a visit by the Trojan Marching Band.

"This is a wonderful change," said nurse Maral Atashian of USC Verdugo Hills Hospital's Med-Surg Unit. "The future looks great for us!"

The acquisition of this Foothill communities' hospital, which boasts a 40-year legacy of delivering health care to residents in the area, was part of a

larger strategy to address the challenges of a changing health care environment. Keck Medicine of USC offers the size and resources, as well as the innovation to improve care and reduce costs, needed by community hospitals to remain viable and competitive.

The addition of USC Verdugo Hills Hospital expands and improves Keck Medicine of USC's ability to deliver community-based services.

"USC and Verdugo Hills Hospital both have long and enduring histories of providing vital medical care to our local communities," said USC President C. L. Max Nikias. "By joining forces, we will significantly strengthen both of our organizations, and we will find innovative new ways to deliver the very best patient care to the people of the Foothills and throughout Southern California."

The USC-Verdugo partnership leverages the strengths of each organization and provides valuable benefits to

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**'By joining forces, we will significantly strengthen both of our organizations.'**

**—USC President**

**C. L. Max Nikias**

## Hinton named associate dean for vision science

David R. Hinton, M.D., professor of pathology, neurological surgery and ophthalmology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, has been named the school's inaugural associate dean for vision science. Hinton is a distinguished scientist and educator, and one of the world's foremost experts on the biology of macular degeneration.

Hinton will spearhead the development of new vision science programs in education, training and research. He will also be responsible for coordinating vision research efforts that are located throughout Keck School departments, and between the Keck School and other departments and schools at USC.

"Dr. Hinton's breadth of knowledge, area of research, commitment to patient care, and leadership roles make him an ideal choice," said Carmen A. Puliafito, dean of the Keck School of Medicine. "His knowledge and prominence as a researcher converge remarkably with

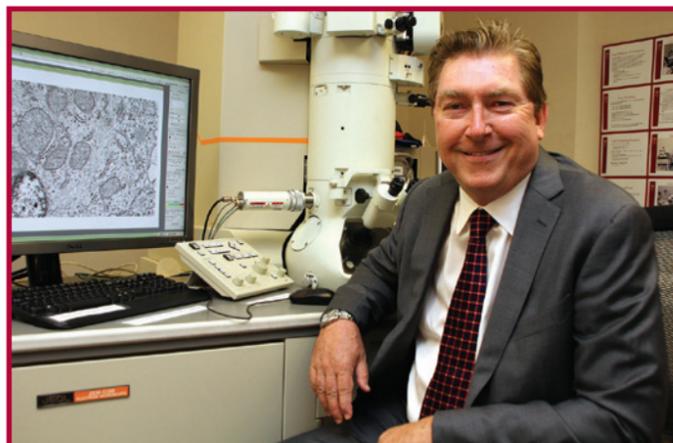
our efforts to provide the finest eye health care in the world."

"The Keck School of Medicine and the USC Eye Institute are committed to recruiting transformational vision scientists to our university," Puliafito added.

Hinton has been involved in vision research since his residency at the University of Toronto, where he also received his medical degree in 1978. His longstanding interest in the response of the outer retina to injury and

its role in blinding disorders such as proliferative vitreoretinopathy (PVR) and choroidal neovascularization (CNV) has contributed significantly to the understanding of the basic mechanisms of disease and to the development of novel therapeutic approaches to those disorders. In recent years, he has focused on the pathogenesis of age-related macular degeneration, and the roles of cytokines growth factors and small heat shock

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Jon Nalick

As associate dean for vision science, Hinton will spearhead the development of new vision science programs in education, training and research.

## National ranking places USC hospitals among the best

**By Leslie Ridgeway**

Keck Hospital of USC and USC Norris Cancer Hospital are once again ranked among the best hospitals in the United States in *U.S. News & World Report's* annual "Best Hospitals" rankings. The hospitals have been included in the rankings since 2009, when the University of Southern California purchased the hospitals.

USC-affiliated Children's Hospital Los Angeles, staffed exclusively by faculty physicians from the Keck School of Medicine of USC, also was named last month to U.S. News' Best Children's Hospitals Honor Roll, and ranked in the top five in the nation.

Keck Hospital of USC also ranked #3 in the Los Angeles metro area and #8 in California.

Among specialty areas, Keck Hospital of USC was ranked in the top 10 nationally for ophthalmology (#9), and among the top 50 for urology (#29), neurology and neurosurgery (#33), and ear, nose and throat (#49).

USC Norris Cancer Hospital was ranked #48 in the country in cancer care.

In addition, Keck Hospital of USC was ranked as "high performing" in seven specialties, including cancer, cardiology and heart surgery, gastroenterology and GI surgery, gynecology, nephrology, orthopaedics, and pulmonology.

Hospitals ranked as high performing were within the top 25 percent of a given specialty range.

"Patients know they can count on us for highly skilled, compassionate care in these specialties," said Tom Jackiewicz, senior vice president and chief executive officer, USC Health. "Acknowledgement of our skills

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# Interdisciplinary health team shows how collaboration bolsters care

By Kukla Vera

Ninety-one-year-old Filomena Flores recently welcomed a very special group of USC students into her home.

Although her visitors came from seven different professional programs spanning the university — dentistry, medicine, occupational therapy, pharmacy, physical therapy, physician assistant practice and social work — they arrived as a team.

This meeting, led by an accompanying faculty mentor, was the first of a series aimed at teaching students to work collaboratively in examining the health issues facing Flores and identifying ways to improve her care.

The complexities of 21st century health care demand interdisciplinary teamwork to accelerate optimal patient outcomes. In typical Trojan fashion, schools across the university are working together to provide USC students with the education and experiences needed to become experts both in their own fields and in collaborating with other specialists.

The Interprofessional Geriatrics Curriculum (IPGC) — the program bringing these students to Flores' home — achieves that goal while also helping low-income senior citizens who suffer chronic illness.

"Comprehensive geriatric care is best given by an interprofessional team," said Jo Marie Reilly, MD, co-director of the Keck School of Medicine Primary Care and Community Medicine Program.

Brad Williams, professor at the School of Pharmacy, added, "It's also a great way to teach students how to function on an interprofessional team,



Phil Channing

USC students from a range of disciplines — including dentistry, medicine, occupational therapy, pharmacy, physical therapy, physician assistant practice and social work — work together to improve the health care of nonagenarian Filomena Flores, seated center.

and to understand the expertise from each discipline and how they inform each other."

Williams and Reilly are among the IPGC faculty mentors who advise students as they prepare to interact with patients and obtain the information necessary for creating a management plan that meets the multi-layered, complex health needs of the elderly.

Phuu Pwint Han, PhD, assistant professor of clinical dentistry at the Ostrow School of Dentistry went even further in describing the IPGC's importance, calling it "our future health-care model." Like the other schools at USC, the Ostrow School provides a number of off-campus opportunities for interdisciplinary care, including service at the Hollenbeck Palms Skilled Nursing Facility, the Union Rescue Mission

and the JWCH Institute's Center for Community Health Downtown.

"Medical care is now too complex to be handled by just one provider," said Freddi Segal-Gidan, PhD, gerontologist and assistant clinical professor in the Primary Care Physician Assistant Program at the Keck School of Medicine. Segal-Gidan also mentors students assigned to clinical rotations at the USC-affiliated Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center, where she serves as a staff physician associate. She said students enjoy "getting to know each other as future health professionals and developing not only an understanding of their various roles, but also personal connections that they can use beyond the IPGC."

Pharmacy student Brian Chou agrees. "This is really a great way to

understand what other professions provide," he said. "Each team member is able to elicit certain information that pertains to their respective profession, which collectively reveals pertinent medical and occupational issues."

IPGC is one of many programs at USC supplying students with firsthand understanding of the importance of cross-disciplinary teamwork and the value each specialty brings to patient care. Han observed, "All health professions are pushing toward the interdisciplinary care team model, and it is now a teaching requirement for most of us."

The program's benefits go far beyond the invaluable professional preparation it provides. "We're reaching out to some of our most vulnerable citizens here," said Cheryl Resnik, associate chair and director of community outreach for the Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy. "These students' service to the community gives them an education nearly as vital as the techniques of working together to optimize people's health."

Flores — one of those community members — would agree. As students complete their first session with her, she holds the hands of two team members. "I look forward to our next meeting," she said.

Flores is one of numerous elderly and disabled people helped by the Interprofessional Geriatrics program over the past year. The incoming cohort of students will aid many more — even as they expand their preparation to operate at the vanguard of cross-disciplinary care.

## HINTON: Seeks to create 'a community of vision researchers who will advance education, research'

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proteins on the function of retinal pigment epithelium. His most recent work examines the development of a stem cell-based treatment for age-related macular degeneration.

In 2009, Hinton and Mark Humayun, professor of ophthalmology, cell and

neurobiology, and biomedical engineering at the Keck School of Medicine and the USC Viterbi School Engineering, received a nearly \$16 million grant from the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) to fund the development of a stem cell-based treatment for age-related

macular degeneration, the leading cause of vision loss and blindness among the elderly.

Hinton said he is excited to be named founding associate dean and honored by the appointment. "Understandably, there's much optimism about eye research in the 21st century," he said.

"Stem cell therapies have the potential to allow us to restore vision that has been lost, and neuroprotection can be used to protect against retinal cell damage. The Keck School is uniquely positioned to lead these kinds of research efforts, due to its tradition of innovation and excellence in education, research and patient care."

Hinton said his primary goal will be to develop "a community of vision researchers who will work together to advance education and research at the Keck School and elsewhere within USC."

Hinton joined the Keck School faculty as assistant professor of pathology in 1988. He became director of neuropathology at USC University Hospital in 1991. He was promoted to associate professor of pathology, neurosurgery, and neurology in 1993, and to the rank of Professor in 1999.

Hinton is an author or co-author of more than 300 peer-reviewed papers and has served as a member of the editorial boards of *Investigative Ophthalmology and Visual Science* since 2007,

*Chinese Journal of Experimental Ophthalmology* since 2011, and *Biomedical Research International* since 2013.

As an educator, Hinton has received numerous awards for teaching both undergraduate and graduate students. He was named a Master Teacher of the Keck School of Medicine in 2008. In 2009, he was elected a Fellow of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology. Known for his effective mentorship, Hinton has served as advisor to more than 30 MD, PhD, or MD/PhD students.

## The Weekly

Next Issue: Aug. 9

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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40 USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center  
Part of the Keck School of Medicine of USC

**Did you know?**

More than 50 years ago, Charles Heidelberger, the first director of basic research for USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, developed and patented the anticancer drug 5-Fluorouracil, which remains widely used against cancers of the colon, pancreas and breast. Heidelberger chose to come to USC in 1976 because he "saw an opportunity for a unified faculty to work together in pre-clinical and clinical research."

# Forum kicks off USC's summer high school programs in stem cell research

By **Cristy Lytal**

More than 20 local students are enjoying a summer of hands-on experience in stem research laboratories, through the USC Early Investigator High School (EiHS) and the USC CIRM Science, Technology and Research (STAR) programs.

Darren Harris, a student at Lifeline Education Charter School, explained what the opportunity means to him at the USC Stem Cell Public Policy Education Forum, held in the Aresty Auditorium on July 12.

"I had no clue that with one cell, you can get so much out of it. So it's actually opened my mind to see what else I can get out of life," he said.

Throughout the forum, high school students shared what they've learned, working alongside USC researchers exploring potential treatments for everything from Alzheimer's disease to radiation wounds. Through the EiHS and CIRM STAR programs, students also attend weekly presentations about ethical and political issues relating to stem cell science and regenerative medicine.

"No matter what your text-

book says, cells are not color coded, so that's a little disappointing," said Lynn Wang, a student at Mira Costa High School. "The second thing I really learned is that science does ultimately impact the people outside the lab."

The students are not the only ones to benefit from the EiHS and CIRM STAR programs.

"I can't overemphasize the importance of these programs at USC to the scientific community and to our country at large," said Carmen A. Puliafito, MD, MBA, dean of the Keck School of Medicine of USC. "We need more health professionals, and we need more biomedical scientists that come from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds."

We also need those scientists to think way outside the box, according to Jonathan Thomas, chair of the Governing Board of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM). Thomas spoke of the creative researchers behind "bizarre concepts," such as the first isolation of human embryonic stem cells, the creation of induced pluripotent stem cells by



Lynn Wang and a panel of fellow students describe what they have learned in USC's summer high school programs in stem cell research at a forum held in the Aresty Auditorium on July 12

"rewinding" mature cells into their embryonic state, the transformation of skin cells directly into neurons and cloning.

"Science is a weird thing," he said. "Science is always looking for new ideas. It's those new ideas from young people that are going to drive the future of medical research."

Other distinguished speakers included State Senator Art Torres (Ret.), vice-chair

of the Governing Board of CIRM; Jeffrey Gunter, chair of the Ambassadors for Stem Cell Research at USC; and Eryn Brown, science writer for the *Los Angeles Times*.

Funding for the forum and the EiHS and CIRM STAR programs came from USC Stem Cell, the Regenerative Medicine Initiative; the Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC; the STAR Program at the

USC School of Pharmacy; the Ambassadors for Stem Cell Research at USC; CIRM; and USC Neighborhood Outreach.

"I can tell you from personal experience," said Puliafito, "that having young people, high school students work in a laboratory in a scientific environment over a summer can transform their lives, their aspirations and ultimately their achievements."

## VERDUGO: Expands Keck Medicine of USC's ability to deliver community-based services

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Southern California patients. Keck Medicine of USC offers the clinical excellence of an academic medical center and medical specialties that consistently rate highly in national rankings such as *U.S. News & World Report's* "Best Hospital" rankings. Verdugo Hills Hospital provides a 24-hour emergency department, primary stroke center, maternity/labor and delivery, cardiac rehabilitation and

imaging and diagnostic services. This type of integrated network helps patients get well and stay healthy by providing the right type of care in the right place at the right time. Additionally, their caregivers are better able to track outcomes and see the "big picture" when it comes to their health.

"This was the right move for both organizations, particularly in light of the changes that are

transforming health care and how it's delivered," said Tom Jackiewicz, MPH, senior vice president and CEO of USC Health. "Bringing together these two very strong provider organizations creates a unique opportunity for residents in the Foothill communities to receive exceptional patient care from the physicians they know and trust, and from those who bring additional medical expertise from one of the world's leading academic

medical centers."

USC has already made significant initial investments, as part of its \$30 million commitment in capital improvements and additions in services, resulting in visible changes to the familiar façade of the hospital. New exterior signage, fresh landscaping and upgrades to the hospital's lobby and other interiors have kicked off the first of many planned enhancements, and all have been met with enthusiasm from employees, physicians, volunteers and patients. A series of celebrations is planned, including a community-wide event on Sept. 28 to commemorate the alliance and showcase the new USC Verdugo Hills Hospital.

"Verdugo Hills Hospital has been an integral and valued part of the Foothill communities for decades and we intend to retain that important connection to our patients and the residents we serve," added Len LaBella, CEO of USC Verdugo Hills Hospital. "This affiliation with USC helps to take us forward in a powerful way. It enables us to provide key services and advantages that not only help us remain viable, but

to thrive in a challenging health care environment that demands constant evolution."

USC, one of the world's leading private research universities, established its present-day medical system with the purchase of two hospitals from Tenet Healthcare Corp. in 2009 — Keck Hospital of USC (formerly USC University Hospital) and USC Norris Cancer Hospital. In 2011, with a \$150 million gift from the W.M. Keck Foundation, USC launched Keck Medicine of USC, which now comprises the three hospitals, a number of campus-based specialty clinics, five community-based ambulatory care clinics, a faculty physician practice (USC Care Medical Group) of more than 600 doctors and the renowned Keck School of Medicine of USC, the first medical school in Southern California.

With these resources, residents in the Glendale and La Canada-Flintridge areas will have greater access to world-class specialized care, clinical trials and breakthrough technology, while retaining the convenience and personal touch of a community hospital.

## The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

A story in the August 2013 edition of *Los Angeles* magazine quoted **Jessica Wu**, MD, clinical instructor in medicine-dermatology at the Keck School of Medicine, about airbrushed spray tans and sun exposure.

"We don't know what amount of sun is safe to get — if you're someone with a history of melanoma, I'd say none and get your vitamin D through a supplement," Wu said.

A July 21 article in the *Los Angeles Times* mentioned USC acquiring the Laboratory for Neuro Imaging (LONI), led by **Arthur Toga**, PhD, and **Paul Thompson**, PhD, who are joining USC along with 100 faculty, staff members and students from the LONI this fall.

A July 18 article in *The Downey Patriot* quoted **Nerses Sanossian**, MD, assistant professor of clinical neurology at the Keck School of Medicine, about stroke prevention. "The total

cost of stroke-related medical cost and disability in the United States is approximately \$57 billion each year," Sanossian said. "The tragedy is that 80 percent of these strokes could have been avoided if people had just changed their lifestyle to avoid the factors that put them at a high risk for stroke."

A July 16 broadcast on KNX 1070 Newsradio featured an interview with **Tom Jackiewicz**, MPH, senior vice president and CEO of USC Health, about USC's purchase of Verdugo Hills Hospital in Glendale.

"It's an exciting partnership for both organizations where our goal is really to leverage the strengths of both organizations to really expand the world-class health care in the Foothill communities," Jackiewicz said.

The purchase was also covered by City News Service and noted by Kaiser Health News and the Physicians News Network.

## Keck student named to AAMC governing board

By Jon Nalick

Keck School of Medicine of USC student Mariya Kalashnikova has been selected as the sole medical student representative to the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) executive board.

The AAMC is governed by a 17-member board of directors, which manages the affairs of the association by providing strategic direction, fiduciary oversight and generative thinking.

Associate Dean for Student Affairs Donna Elliott said, "The Keck School of Medicine is

honored to have one of our students, Mariya Kalashnikova, selected to serve ... [she] will be the voice of all U.S. medical students and have a role in influencing medical education and health care policy on a national level."

Kalashnikova has served as the AAMC Organization of Student Representatives (OSR) class of 2014 representative and also served more recently as the Western Regional OSR chair.

She is also a Dean's Research Scholar for the 2013-2014 academic year and will join the class of 2015 next summer.



Mariya Kalashnikova

## HOSPITALS: USC's rank among best

**Continued from page 1**  
and excellence from outside organizations such as *U.S. News & World Report* underscores the dedication to our mission, which is to be a trusted leader in quality health care."

The rankings have been published at <http://health.usnews.com/best-hospitals> and appear in print in the *U.S. News & World Report*.

"According to U.S. News, the hospitals recognized by these rankings are selected because they do the best job of treating the most challenging patients," said Scott Evans, CEO of Keck Hospital of USC and USC Norris Cancer Hospital. "There's a reason we are ranked so highly, and it's because of the faculty physicians, nurses and staff here. Every day they improve the lives of our patients, and it's gratifying to see their hard work honored."

*U.S. News* publishes Best Hospitals to help guide patients who need a high level of care because they face particularly difficult surgery, a challenging condition, or added risk because of other health problems or age. Objective measures such as patient survival and safety data, the adequacy of nurse staffing levels and other data largely determined the rankings in most specialties.

## Ford honored for working with underrepresented minority students

By Josh Grossberg

He's a respected researcher, prolific author, valued mentor, and selfless humanitarian.

For Henri Ford, professor of surgery, vice dean for medical education at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, and vice president and chief of surgery at Keck School-affiliated Children's Hospital Los Angeles, life's journey has been one of learning, sharing and giving.

To honor his many

contributions to healthcare, diversity and philanthropy, Ford was given the 2013 NMF Academic Medicine and Clinical Practice Award by National Medical Fellowships. The award was presented at the NMF Champions of Health Awards ceremony on June 26 in Los Angeles.

National Medical Fellowships is a nonprofit organization that provides scholarships and service-learning programs to underrepresent-



Henri Ford (center) celebrates with Keck School National Medical Fellowship winners (from left) Ruth Montes, Miriam Lassiter, Ford, Maria Sandoval and Edwin Kulubya.

ed minorities in the health professions.

"I am deeply humbled that NMF, an organization that I hold in such high esteem, has chosen to honor me tonight," Ford said during a speech that focused on pediatric care. "I feel tremendously blessed that I am being recognized for something that is simply part of my fabric or constitutional make up, the opportunity to take care of sick children, to teach residents and medical students, do my research and serve as a role model for young men and women, especially those from the inner city and indigent communities."

Born in Haiti, Ford came to the United States at 13. A graduate of Harvard Medical School, he served as surgeon-in-chief at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and chief of the Division of Plastic Surgery at the University of Pittsburgh Medical School before joining Keck and CHLA in 2005. He has returned to his native country numerous times to provide medical care, including returning several times in the months after a devastating 2010 earthquake.

In his remarks honor-

ing Ford, Keck and NMF alumni Dr. Richard Zapanta praised not only Ford's humanitarian work, but also his passion for educating future generations of doctors.

"Needless to say, as a professor and pediatric surgeon, Dr. Ford has served as a great role model for pre-med, medical students and young doctors, especially those from underrepresented countries," Zapanta said.

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## Calendar of Events

### Tuesday, July 30

**Noon.** KSOM Faculty Development Workshop. "Designing a Single Teaching Session," Julie Nyquist and Stephanie Zia, USC. KAM 206. Info: (323) 442-2372

### Wednesday, July 31

**Noon.** KSOM Faculty Development Workshop. "Feedback for Performance Improvement," Win May and Denise Souder, USC. KAM 206. Info: (323) 442-2372

### Thursday, Aug. 1

**Noon.** KSOM Faculty Development Workshop. "Teaching with Technology," Tatum Korin and Cha-Chi Fung, USC. KAM 206. Info: (323) 442-2372

### Saturday, Aug. 3

**7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.** Joseph P. van Der Meulen Symposium in Clinical Neuroscience. "Neurosurgical and Neurological Emergencies," various speakers. NRT Aresty Auditorium. Info: (323) 865-0801

### Thursday, Aug. 8 - Friday, Aug. 9

**7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.** 4th Annual Pain Management

Symposium. Registration is currently open for the upcoming continuing medical education course. NRT Aresty Auditorium. Info and registration: (323) 442-2555

### Tuesday, Aug. 13

**10 a.m.** ZNI Seminar. "The Trials and Tribulations of the Spiny Mouse: A Non-Model Species for Perinatal Research," Hayley Dickinson, Monash University. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-2144

### Friday, Aug. 16

**5 - 6:30 p.m.** KSOM White Coat Ceremony, Pappas Quad. Info: (323) 442-2552

### Thursday, Aug. 22

**3 p.m.** School of Pharmacy White Coat Ceremony. Pappas Quad. Info: (323) 442-1369

### Tuesday, Aug. 27

**5 p.m.** Women's Cancers Program Monthly Research Seminar. "While You Study the Fingerprints, I will Identify the Serial Killer: Ovarian Cancer Pathology Overview," Paulette Mhaweche-Fauceglia, USC. NOR 7409. Info: (323) 865-0801

**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 [ebalauw@usc.edu](mailto:ebalauw@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.

## 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.

