Comprehensive health information now available online

‘MyUSCchart allows patients to access information when they want, where they want.’ — Josh Lee, chief information officer for USC Health

USC rolls out the cardinal carpet for the new president of California’s stem cell agency

By Cristy Lytal
“I will be beating the better, faster drum as long as there are patients that need to be treated,” said C. Randal Mills, PhD, the newly appointed president and chief executive officer of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), at a June 10 public appearance at USC.

Researchers, industry leaders, patient advocates and curious members of the public gathered to hear Mills share this vision at the Eli and Edythe Broad CIRM Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC.

As the leader of CIRM — established in 2004 to dispense $3 billion in voter-approved dollars to fund stem cell research in California — Mills outlined four simple principles to guide the agency’s decisions about which projects to support.

“Part two is that it has to be an unmet medical need. And then fourth is [that it has to do so] efficiently.”

USC is taking its medical enterprise — patients have to call us to hold the results, we hold the information. We are the keeper of information. We have recognized the need to take the innovations of USC Norris far beyond USC Health. “Historically, providers have been the keeper of information. We hold the results, we hold the medical record, and patients have to request access to their own personal health history. MyUSCchart gives them more control and makes them a more active partner in their care.”

Patient data is posted online within 36 hours of a patient’s inpatient discharge, or within 96 hours of an office visit. And signing up is easy — patients just need to provide their name, date of birth, email address and zip code to a Keck Medicine staff member, and they will receive a registration invitation in their email

MyUSCchart allows patients to access information when they want, where they want,” said Josh Lee, MD, chief information officer for USC Health.

Key Orange County oncology practice joins Keck Medicine of USC

USC is growing its medical enterprise by acquiring Orange Coast Oncology Hematology (OCOH) in Orange County. This acquisition brings together Keck Medicine of USC and members of the USC Care Medical Group.

“For some time, we have recognized the need to take the innovations of USC Norris far beyond the USC Health Sciences Campus,” explains Tim Jackiewicz, senior vice president and CRO for USC Health. “Our goal has been to build a system of cancer programs with satellites across Southern California. Today, we are one step

By Hope Hamabize
Doctors in the United States routinely administer tissue plasminogen activator (t-PA) to some people having a stroke brought on by a blood clot. When administered shortly after the onset of symptoms, t-PA will prevent one patient of every eight treated from having a stroke brought on by a blood clot. When administered shortly after the onset of symptoms, t-PA will prevent one patient of every eight treated from having a stroke brought on by a blood clot.

In Armenia, t-PA had been used only once until recently because it was held in a central pharmacy in the capital city, Yerevan. Hospitals did not stock it, so it was not available to patients unless they could buy it and bring it to the hospital. There was no organized system of stroke care focusing on rapid evaluation which included screening for eligibility to receive t-PA. Neres Sanossian, MD, assistant professor of neurology at the Keck School of Medicine, toured Erebouni Medical Center in Armenia as part of a project to develop a better system of stroke care there. With him are Samson G. Khachatryan (left), director of the Sleep Laboratory, and staff neurologist Marianna Ghambaryan.

School of Medicine of USC, recently helped change that, so now two hospitals stock it and have protocols for its use. Sanossian is part of a small group of neurologists of Armenian descent from the United States and Canada who launched a project to develop a better system of stroke care in Armenia. He and his colleagues held a stroke conference for young Armenian neurologists through Yerevan’s Erebouni Hospital in early June. They were on hand when the hos-
myUSCchart: New system boosts health care access

Continued from page 1
promoting them to complete creation of their account.

For patients, the application will enhance safety and quality by increasing clinical effectiveness and allowing for better coordination of care, said Laurie Johnson, executive administrator of ambulatory care services.

For staff and physicians, the benefit is also multi-pronged.

“It means fewer phone calls and easy, efficient communication with patients online,” Johnson said.

“We can message patients about follow-up items, and recommendations. We can attach test results to messages and quickly share vital information that may be critical to a patient’s care.”

To learn more, visit myUSCchart.KeckMedicine.org.

American Physical Therapy Association awards highest honor to James Gordon

James Gordon received the highest honor bestowed by the American Physical Therapy Association when he delivered the 45th Mary McMillan Lecture at the association’s annual conference in June.

Gordon, associate dean and division chair for the USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy, is the fourth Trojan to have that distinction, following in the footsteps of Margaret Hislop (1975) and Carolee Winstein Rood (1969), Helen Hislop (2009). Deriving inspiration from Hislop’s speech, “The Not-Too-Impossible Dream” — a game-changer for physical therapy with its push toward research and knowledge creation — Gordon used a part of her quote, “If greatness is a goal, it will take great thinking and consummate honesty to achieve it,” for the title of his lecture.

Gordon noted that the speech coincided with the 40th anniversary of his having received a bachelor’s degree in physical therapy from the State University of New York Downstate Medical Center, and he noted the quantum leap the profession has made since.

“For our patients, this means access to leading technology, advanced clinical trials, the world’s best oncologists.”

— Stephen Gruber, director of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center

OCOH: USC expands world-class cancer care to patients in Orange County

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by John Hobbs

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closer to realizing this goal.”

Through this acquisition, Keck Medicine of USC brings the services of USC Norris — one of the National Cancer Institute’s eight original designated comprehensive cancer centers in the United States — to COOH. That includes a rich, 40-year history of global research, compassionate clinical care, groundbreaking clinical trials, tumor boards and genetic stem cell research. Leveraging COOH’s expertise in outpatient oncology services, Keck Medicine of USC will expand its complete range of world-class cancer care to patients in Orange County by bringing the best university-based medical center offerings to an outpatient clinic.

MCILS chief visits HSC

Continued from page 1

positions at RTI Biologics Inc., the University of Florida Tissue Bank, and the American Association of Tissue Banks’ Standards Committee. The U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services appointed him as a voting member of the National Institutes of Health and AIDS Research Advisory Council. He holds a bachelor’s degree in microbiology and cell science and a PhD in drug development from the University of Florida. Mills is replacing Alan Fournon, PhD, who stepped down from the CIRM presidency to spend more time with his family in Australia.

“To say we are delighted to have Randy take over as president is an understatement,” said Jonathan Thomas, JD, PhD, chairman of CIRM’s Governing Board. “He is a well-respected scientist whose experience and expertise will ensure we will continue to be a world leader in stem cell research.”

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Keck School of Medicine of USC grad celebrates 100th birthday

When Masako Kusuyanagi Miura graduated from the Keck School of Medicine of USC in 1941, the certificate she received congratulated “him” on “his” accomplishment. Since she was one of only two women graduating alongside 45 men, she brushed it off as an honest mistake. Miura, who celebrated her 100th birthday on June 29, might be the oldest living Keck School alumna and possibly its most humble. “I guess I got in because I got pretty good grades,” said Miura, who was an undergraduate at USC, refusing to acknowledge how tough it was for women to attend medical school in those days. Miura graduated from medical school just a few months before Japan bombed Pearl Harbor and, in 1942, she and her then-husband, James Goto, also a Keck School graduate, were sent to an internment camp. They ran the hospital at Manzanar, a camp in California’s Owens Valley, with five other doctors, all Japanese-American internees. “There were seven doctors for 10,000 people,” said Miura. “We were always working.” They dealt with every kind of illness and injury, even the gut-wrenching wounds of the internees who were injured in Manzanar’s riots.

Miura recalled one tricky problem she faced was a patient with tertiary syphilis demonstrating symptoms of mental breakdown. Miura induced him with typhoid to raise his temperature, hoping the fever would kill the syphils. “It worked,” she said, simply.

At the close of World War II, Miura and Goto returned to Los Angeles and ran a medical practice in Little Tokyo. “They let people pay them however they could—boxes of celery or a bag of peaches,” recalled their daughter, Denise Kodani, noting their patients were mostly Japanese-Americans just released from internment.

After many years in private practice, Miura went on to specialize in dermatology. She continued practicing medicine almost until her 80th birthday.

Although she now lives in northern California, Miura has never forgotten her roots. At least once a year she flies south to attend Half Century Trojan functions. “She loves being a Trojan and, even though she’s humble, she loves being a doctor,” said Kodani.

HSC NEWSMAKERS

A June 2 report in The Toronto Star featured a study by Scott Pruin. DENV, assistant professor and Neelakshi Hudda research associate, both in preventing medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, and colleagues finding LAV is a major source of air pollution for communities up to 160 miles east of the runways. MinPost and headlines & Global News also covered the story.

A June 3 report in The Washington Post quoted Cynthia Bir, PhD, professor of emergency medicine in the Keck School about the physical impossibility of a death portrayed in a recent episode of “Game of Thrones.” Bir was also cited by Australian Associated Press.

A June 4 report in USA Today quoted Leslie Saxon, MD, executive director of the USC Center for Body Computing chief of cardiovascular medicine at the Keck School about the use of technology in health care.

A June 6 report on Reuters quoted Anne Peters, MD, director of medicine at the USC Westside Center for Diabetes and professor of medicine at the Keck School, about the links between depression and inflammation.

A June 9 report on NPR’s “The Salt” featured research by Michael Goran, PhD, director of the Childhood Obesity Research Center and principal of preventive medicine, physiology and biophysics and pediatrics at the Keck School, and colleagues finding that juice may contribute almost as much to obesity and health diseases as soda.

A June 12 article in U.S. News and World Report quoted John Liplahm, MD, director of the USC Digestive Health Center and associate professor of surgery at the Keck School, about new research indicating that heartburn medicines are more effective when taken at the time of food. “It’s something we hear all the time since these medications came out, that they work best if you take them 30 minutes or so before a meal,” Liplahm said.

A June 12 article in The Independent quoted Michael Goran about the health risks of fructose.

A June 15 article in The Wall Street Journal quoted Anne Peters about new technology that could help regulate Type 1 diabetes.

A June 16 article in the Los Angeles Times quoted Alex Markarian, MD, assistant professor of otorhinolaryngology – head & neck surgery at the Keck School, about the association between smokeless tobacco and oral cancers. “We do know that with using oral snuff there is a tenfold increase in the risk of oral cancers,” Markarian said.

A June 18 article in the Los Angeles Times quoted USC Verdugo Hills Hospital emergency room physician Sou-Armansardong, MD, associate clinical professor of emergency medicine at the Keck School, about the risks undertaken by a teenager who snuck on board a plane via its wheel well.

A June 19 article in Neurology Today featured a comment by Regina Berberich, MD, PhD, assistant professor of clinical neurology on research studying the effect of a pregnancy hormone on female patients with multiple sclerosis.

A June 23 broadcast on KRCG-FM quoted neuroscientist Pat Levitt, PhD, Provost Professor of neurogenetics, pediatrics, neuroscience, pharmacy, psychiatry, pathology and psychology at USC, about how stress experiences can shape a baby’s brain. “Because the brain is changing so rapidly so early, the influence of these experiences can be very powerful early and it is too late to change things later on,” Levitt said.

A June 24 Los Angeles Times article quoted Jessica Wu, MD clinical instructor in medicine-dermatology at the Keck School about the healing and cosmetic properties of a bacteria known as Antartcicite.

A June 25 article in Forbes by Sherri Snelling, executive director of public and media relations at Keck School of Medicine of USC, highlighted the challenge posed by family stress experiences can shape a baby’s brain. “Because the brain is changing so rapidly so early, the influence of these experiences can be very powerful early and it is too late to change things later on,” Levitt said.

A June 26 article in the Los Angeles Sentinel mentioned that Leo Doumanian, MD, associate professor of clinical urology of the Keck School spoke at a symposium on prostate cancer among African-American men.

A June 27 report in Newsweek cited a study by Michael Goran and colleagues finding that the actual high fructose corn syrup in sodas varies significantly from the sugar content disclosed on those sodas’ labels.

A June 30 article in Healio featured a perspective from Mazen Noureddin, MD, hepatologist at Keck Medicine of USC, on new World Gastroenterology Organization guidelines for clinicians on fatty liver disease.

Henri Ford leads post-quake critical care effort in Haiti

By Lorenzo Benet/CHLA

In addition to treating and operating on hundreds of Haitian patients, Henri R. Ford, MD, MHA, professor of surgery and vice dean for medical education at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, has been an integral part of the reconstruction and development of Haiti’s medical facilities since the country was devastated by a 7.0 earthquake in 2010. His latest contribution is helping the country’s leadership develop a new world-class, nationwide critical care and trauma network, with an eye on preventing causalities in the Caribbean country.

“There is a strong need for Haiti to invest in a national trauma/critical care network,” explained Ford, who is also vice president and surgeon-in-chief at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles.

Ford visits Haiti several times a year to treat patients and work with local surgeons, medical schools and government officials to develop the country’s medical facilities.

He noted, “The health care needs in Haiti are great and this will benefit the citizenry and help the overworked physicians providing the care for patients on a daily basis.”

The project will help significantly reduce fatalities in cases involving five preventable causes of death in the Caribbean country.

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Haiti’s Prime Minister, Laurent Lamothe, with Ford and representatives of the non-profit Project Medishare by his side, announced plans for the establishment of a National Trauma Critical Care Hospital after meeting with Ford and his team, which was invited to present the trauma network plan to the Haitian ministerial cabinet. Ford will also participate in a commission to develop a long-term sustainability plan for the hospital facilities and to cultivate donors.

Ford said that, so far, $5 million has been committed to the project by the government of Haiti but he estimates that an additional $15–20 million are needed to complete construction of the NTCC. In addition, it is projected that operational costs to sustain the medical facilities will range between $5 million and $10 million annually.
By Cristy Lytal

Three teams of USC stem cell researchers have won a coveted prize — the opportunity to test 3,000 drug candidates or chemicals for the potential to help patients. Two teams will focus their efforts on cancer, and the third team will search for ways to accelerate the healing of large bone fractures.

The free screens will take place at the new Choi Family Therapeutic Screening Facility, part of the Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC. Andy McMahon, PhD, FRS, director of the stem cell research center, is sponsoring the bone repair project, and Stephen Gruber, MD, PhD, MPH, director of the stem cell research center at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, is sponsoring the cancer-related screens.

One repair project brings together Gage Crump, PhD, and Francesca Mariani, PhD, two principal investigators at the USC stem cell research center. They will test a variety of chemicals to see which ones encourage cartilage progenitors to develop into “ossifying chondrocytes,” a special type of cell that promotes bone growth. Such chemicals would hold promise for healing large fractures in patients. A second project led by Shou-Jiang Gao, PhD, professor of molecular microbiology and immunology at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, is seeking new treatments for a group of tumors and cancers caused by Kaposi’s sarcoma-associated herpesvirus, or KSHV. The goal is to use the screening facility to find potential drugs that inhibit or kill tumor or cancer cells, but that have no effect on healthy cells. Amy S. Lee, PhD, professor of biochemistry and molecular biology at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, is heading up the third project. Her team will use the screening facility in their quest for potential drugs to suppress a cancer-promoting protein called GRP78. The protein plays a major role in the growth and survival of a wide variety of cancers, including pancreatic adenocarcinoma.

Joie McNally, director of the USC Stem Cell and USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, is sponsoring two cancer-related screens. "The doctors we have met are smart and thirsty for knowledge," Sanossian said, "and I believe it’s our duty to provide them with the tools to help patients, and then reach out to local medical centers and other stroke centers. Because of that, Sanossian will host an Armenian neurologist next year for two months of training at Keck Medical Center of USC.

Sanossian’s group helped establish a stroke center at Yerevan State Medical University last year and plans to continue setting up stroke centers elsewhere in Armenia. They are also working on a system of delivery, similar to the one in use in Los Angeles, that involves training paramedics and other emergency medical personnel to transport those stroke patients whose symptoms began fewer than two hours earlier to stroke centers. "I believe there’s a great purpose to working at a university," he said. "We have knowledge and skills and I believe it’s our duty to reach out to other countries that can learn from what we know."