Norris Healthcare Center celebrates milestone with placement of final beam

By Douglas Morino

Construction continues to progress across the Health Sciences Campus, moving toward a goal that hospital officials say will transform the campus into an oasis of innovative research and exceptional health care.

“This work is being done to ensure Keck Medical Center of USC remains a leader of cutting-edge research and world-class health care for generations to come,” said Tom Jackiewicz, senior vice president and CEO of Keck Medicine of USC. “It’s an exciting and historic time to be at Keck Medicine.”

As September ended, the last steel beam was placed atop the Norris Healthcare Center, which will stand near the corner of Alcazar and San Pablo streets. The new center will be dedicated to cancer treatment, with an ambulatory surgery center and a women’s cancer program, and it will feature several new dining options. Construction is scheduled for completion in December 2016.

Work also continues on a new parking structure and improvements that will beautify the campus and improve traffic.

An extra entrance to Keck Medical Center of USC will soon be available, with Norfolk Street being extended to Soto Street. A new signalized intersection is expected to be in operation by the end of this month.

The site will include the first of several new gateways to welcome visitors to Keck Medical Center. It is expected to finish by the end of December. Secondary gateways at the intersections of Eastlake Avenue and Alcazar Street and Biddy Street and Zonal Avenue are scheduled for completion by 2016.
Lenz is first recipient of endowed chair honoring J. Terrence Lanni

By Hope Hamashige

The ceremony installing the J. Terrence Lanni Chair in Cancer Research was one of heartfelt tributes from two men, a scientist, and a patient, who formed a tight bond over the years they fought to save Terry Lanni’s life.

Terry Lanni lost his battle against colon cancer in 2011 and his family devoted to honor his memory by endowing a chair in his name at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center. They also wanted Terry Lanni’s friend and physician, Heinz-Josef Lenz, MD, associate director of adult oncology and co-leader of the gastrointestinal cancers program at USC Norris, to be the first holder of that chair.

“Terry fought cancer with dignity and with a positive attitude,” Debbie Lanni said of her husband. A member of the Board of Overseers at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, she added, “I attribute a lot of his strength to Dr. Lenz. They had a wonderful relationship.”

USC Provost Urania Dhablania pointed out that sitting in an endowed chair is the highest honor for any professor and that it allows them to take risks in their research. In this case, Lenz added that this chair holds a deeper meaning because it carries the name of a friend.

“Having his name on my business card is so meaningful,” said Lenz, who noted that it will be a constant reminder of their commitment to making cancer a disease of the past. “I will never give up.”

The gathering on a warm and windy afternoon in the gardens of USC Norris was attended by Quick, as well as James Ellis, dean of USC Marshall School of Business, and Carmen Puliafito, MD, MBA, dean of the Keck School of Medicine of USC.

Stephen B. Gruener, MD, MPH, director of USC Norris, said that Lenz was deserving of this honor because of his passion to help his patients and to give back to USC as both a physician and a researcher. Lenz and his research team have made groundbreaking advances in colorectal cancer research and treatment. They have identified variations in genes that predict patients’ response to chemotherapy, novel genes associated with DNA repair and novel mechanisms of drug action.

“Dr. Lenz is at the forefront of new therapies and for colon cancer,” said Gruener, adding that Terry was one of the first people he turns to for clinical advice.

Ellis and Puliafito also spoke about Terry Lanni’s long history of giving to his alma mater. Terry Lanni graduated from USC in 1965 and went on to have high profile business career as chairman and chief executive officer of MGM Mirage.

Puliafito added that Terry Lanni was also a great supporter of the Keck School of Medicine, having served on its Board of Overseers.

“We are truly honored to have a chair in his name,” Puliafito said.

Calendar of Events

Tuesday, Oct. 13
5:30 p.m. Ophthalmology Grand Rounds. Antonio Lujan, MD, Ophthalmology Medicine Center. HC-4 Conference Room, 3rd Floor. Info: Yvonnah Christopher@med.usc.edu, http://usceye.org

Wednesday, Oct. 14
Noon, Sahm Research Institute Seminar. Samir N. Shah, MD, PhD, professor and graduate medical students, as well as medical residents in the Keck School of Medicine. For more information, go to http://keckmed.usc.edu/msgm/Global-Medicine-Fellowship.html.

The USC medical students who participated in the recent roundtable expressed no regrets about devoting their supposed “break from the classroom” during the holidays, in the spring or during the summer to academic travel.

Onur’s memories from her studies abroad involve making connections with community members in places she was visiting.

“Despite the language and other cultural barriers, one person can have a special connection with another. Those are the times that I will never forget.”

Tuesday, Oct. 15

Thursday, Oct. 17

Friday, Oct. 18
10 a.m.-3:30 p.m. USC Pain Center, Queens the Fire and F.S. Pain Foundation Seminar. “2015 Take Control of Your Pain — Los Angeles,” Steven Rudolph, USC Pain Center, Soto Building II, Rooms 2902 and 2904, 1200 N. Genesee St., Los Angeles. Register online or at 9 a.m. on day of event. Lunch provided. Info: Lynne Popadak, (818) 286-0754, lynnepop@usc.edu, (323) 865-0419, nhundal@usc.edu, http://tinyurl.com/calendar-hsc.

Include day, date, time, title of talk, first and last name of speaker, affiliation, university, location and a phone number/jamail address.
CONSTRUCTION: Last beam placed atop site of new Norris facility

Continued from page 1

The hotel development will include 14,000 square feet of retail space, including a sit-down restaurant and 10,000 square feet of conference space. A 2017 opening is targeted.

After it was signed by Keck Medicine of USC patients and staff, the last steel beam was placed atop the building.

MASSRY: Researchers honored for their studies of bacteria

Continued from page 1

Individuals and institutions represented included the USC Institute for Neuroimaging and Informatics, biological sciences, cell and neurobiology, chemistry, molecular biology, immunology, oncology and stem cell biology and regenerative medicine.

Among the researchers presenting their work was Janos Petti-Peterdi, a professor in the Department of Physiology and Biophysics at the Zilkha Neurogenetic Institute.
2015 Good Neighbors Campaign launches
By Douglas Morino

A collaborative program between the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services and the University of Southern California’s Health Sciences Campus was launched at Century Regional Detention Facility. Officials from the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, USC’s Keck School of Medicine and USC’s School of Social Work worked together to bring the program, celebrated as the 2015 Good Neighbors Campaign, to the jail setting. "We want to support as many as possible out of the hospital setting and bring health services at LAC + USC Medical Center to those who need them," Eiting said. "I went to medical school and became of physician to treat all human beings, we deserve the same treatment as anyone else," Eiting said. "We are the first to report functions for this protein in dry eye and shed some light on its potential use for ophthalmology treatments," said Aditi Bauskar, a PhD student in USC’s medical biology program and lead author of the study. "The researchers studied the ocular surface barrier rather than upstream effects of tear production, chemistry and inflammation that constitute to dry eye conditions. "Our pre-clinical results are very promising and make a strong case to use chloride as a biological drug to prevent or treat not only dry eye but also other corneal disorders involving damage to the ocular surface barrier," Bauskar noted. "No drugs are currently on the market to address ocular surface barrier disruption. The research is the basis of several patent applications with the USC Stevens Institute for Innovation, one of which has been issued. It was conducted in the lab led by Elizabeth Fini, PhD, director of the USC Institute for Genomic Medicine and professor of cell and neuroscience and ophthalmology at the Keck School. Other USC co-authors include faculty members Wendy J. Mack of preventive medicine and SC-GTSL, Martin Heur of ophthalmology and Janet Morahan-Malik of the Keck School of Dentistry. Since recognition of Malnutrition Awareness Week (Sept. 28-Oct. 2), Stephanie Sanders, RD, an inpatient dietitian for Keck Medical Center of USC, offered these observations: Q. What is malnutrition? Sanders: Malnutrition is simply defined as any condition in which our bodies do not receive enough nutrients for proper function. Q. How serious is malnutrition among patients? Sanders: One-in-three patients are malnourished, and this can include inability to eat, repeated or extended cessation of eating, frequent interruptions in enteral or parenteral nutrition therapies and unintended weight changes. Without frequent monitoring, non-severe malnutrition could progress to a severe malnourished state, leading to increased risk of mortality and morbidity, decreased function and quality of life, as well as higher costs. Q. What is the role of nutrition experts? Sanders: The nutrition experts at Keck Medical Center work to prevent, recognize and treat malnutrition among our hospitalized patients. Q. What happens when malnutrition is found? Sanders: Collaborating with a multidisciplinary team is a crucial piece to the puzzle for malnutrition awareness. The dietitians will alert team members of their findings and make recommendations for interventions, diagnosis and documentation. Promising study focuses on treatment for dry eyes By Meg Aldrich

New research by the Fini Lab at Keck Medicine of USC demonstrates for the first time that a natural protein in tears may be key to treating dry eye syndrome, a common affliction of the eye that affects millions of people.

Published in PLOS ONE, the study suggests a new approach to treating dry eye. Using an experimental mouse model, the researchers found that the natural tear protein known as clusertin seals the ocular surface barrier, while also protecting against further damage. “It is well known that clusertin protects cells and proteins,” said Shihwu Jeong, PhD, assistant professor of research ophthalmology in the Institute for Genomic Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC and the senior author of the study. “A problem in dry eye appears to be that natural clusertin is depleted. We predicted that adding it back in might be beneficial, however, the novel mechanism of sealing was unexpected.” Dry eye symptoms include pain, burning, itching, redness, sensitivity to light and other discomfort. If left untreated, severe cases may lead to vision loss.

“We are the first to report functions for this protein in dry eye and shed some light on its potential use for ophthalmology treatments,” said Aditi Bauskar, a PhD student in USC’s medical biology program and lead author of the study. The researchers studied the ocular surface barrier rather than upstream effects of tear production, chemistry and the Keck School.

HEART WALK: Keck Medicine of USC staff, family and friends gathered at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena on Sept. 26 for the 2015 Los Angeles Heart Walk. The annual 5k walk celebrates those who have made lifestyle changes and encourages others to live healthy lifestyles while raising money needed to fund heart disease research and community initiatives. More than $1.7 million has been raised this year.

County to honor USC Correctional Health
By Douglas Morino

By Douglas Morino

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The university’s Good Neighbors Campaign, USC’s annual employee-giving initiative organized by Civic Engagement, began Oct. 1 with a $1.6 million fundraising goal to support key university-community partnership programs.

The campaign promotes better health and educational opportunities in the areas surrounding the Health Sciences and University Park campuses. Begun in 1994, the USC Good Neighbors Campaign encourages USC faculty and staff to contribute a portion of their paychecks to support community programs that help strengthen local communities through USC Neighborhood Outreach and United Way.

To date, the campaign has raised more than $17.7 million to support more than 600 community partnership programs. The 2015 campaign runs through the end of this month. For more information or to give online, visit goodneighbors.usc.edu.

The award is given each year to a county department or agency that has made successful contributions to local government in reducing health care costs and decreased wound healing. If malnutrition is untreated, it can progress to a severe state, leading to increased risk of mortality and morbidity, decreased function and quality of life, as well as higher costs.}

Q&A: Malnutrition and Keck Medicine of USC

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