New marketing effort shows how ‘Keck Effect’ benefits patients

Keck Medicine of USC is launching a new campaign that further evolves the meaning of the organization’s tagline, Beyond Exceptional Medicine. Created to express the philosophy that patients derive the benefit that patients or referring physicians experience as more resources, more treatment options and more positive outcomes. The Keck Effect can be expressed as allowing an individual patient to enjoy more celebrations, more family time and more of life’s experiences, said Felipe Osorno, as executive director of clinical marketing for Keck Medicine of USC.

In advertisements, bet-ter clinical outcomes are expressed as allowing an individual patient to enjoy more celebrations, more family time and more of life’s experiences, said Felipe Osorno, as executive director of clinical marketing for Keck Medicine of USC.

New entrance to Health Sciences Campus is open

By Douglas Morino

A new signalized intersection at Soto and Norfolk streets is now open, easing traffic and providing an additional entrance to the Health Sciences Campus.

The completed intersection signals another milestone in the HSC Beautification Project — a multiyear construction initiative that includes 12 phases across the 79 acres of campus. “Keck Medicine of USC is experiencing a time of tremendous growth, both in patient volume and in building new facilities,” said Rod Hanners, CEO of Keck Medical Center of USC. “This work is being done to build Keck Medicine of USC into a leader of cutting-edge research and world-class health care for generations to come.”

The next phase of the beautification project includes modifying traffic lanes on San Pablo Street and Zonal Avenue. These modifications will be in place through Jan. 29 to accommodate construction on the east side of San Pablo Street and south side of Zonal Avenue, said Kelly Estes, senior capital construction project manager. In order to maintain two-way traffic in the affected areas, parking meters have been taken down and “Tow Away, No Stopping Any Time” signs have been posted. Towing will be enforced.

Traffic control officers from the Los Angeles Department of Transportation continue to assist with rush hour traffic flows at San Pablo Street intersections near USC. In September, the final steel beam was placed atop the Norris Healthcare Center, which will stand near the corner of Alcazar and San Pablo streets. The Norris Healthcare Center will be dedicated to cancer treatment, with ful comments were received, said Felipe Osorno, associate administrator of performance management at Keck Medicine of USC. Those comments either highlighted great successes in the organization or offered suggestions about how to further improve.

“The survey proved to be an innovative, nimble and dynamic way to understand the current pulse of the organization,” Osorno said. “We typically do employee surveys once a year and realized that frequency was just not enough in a quickly changing environment. This tool will allow us to listen to our employees and respond more effectively and quickly.” Osorno highlighted five primary themes that emerged from the comments:

• Improve communication
• Leadership visibility and support during times of change
• Seek input from employees before change is implemented

New advanced pacemaker technology offers potential for faster recovery

By Leslie Ridgeway

Steve Chaffee loves to exercise. A former marathon runner, the resi-dent of Sierra Madre con-tinued to run every day as he grew older, entering 10K runs and maintain-ing a steady weight-loss routine. A couple of years ago, he noticed he could no longer run as long. Alarmed, he met with his doctor and soon learned he was a candidate for a new kind of pacemaker. “They put a heart monitor on me, and said, ‘Bad news,’” said Chaffee, 58, the director of finance for a specialty chemical manufacturing company in Pasadena. “I discovered I had atrial fibrillation, and that my heart was stopping for five seconds at a time.”

Pulse Survey sees big response — and prompts quick action

By Les Dunseith

In October, Keck Medi-cine of USC sent out its first Pulse Survey to give employees an opportunity to provide anonymous feed-back regarding their satisfac-tion with the organization, how well values are being upheld and to gauge aware-ness of key initiatives. The response was overwhelming.

One out of every four employees and faculty, 1,183 in all, responded with an-swers to the three questions included in this first online survey. Over 85 of these responses were from physi-cians. The turnout exceeded expectations, and the results were enlightening.

“We were also very pleased with the positive sentiment expressed through the responses to the survey,” said Tom Jackie, vice senior vice president and chief executive officer of Keck Medicine of USC.

In answer to the question, “Overall, I am satisfied with the organization,” more than three-quarters of respon-dents said they tend to agree or strongly agree. Almost as many, 75.9 percent, respond-ed positively to a question about whether we uphold one of our values: “We deliver quality health care through uncompromised service excellence.” Additionally, 274 thought-ful comments were received, said Felipe Osorno, associate administrator of performance management at Keck Medicine of USC. Those comments either highlighted great successes in the organization or offered suggestions about how to further improve.

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**Calendar of Events**

**Monday, Dec. 7**
- **7:30 a.m.** Committee on Macrobio-host Interactions in Disease (CMHID) Symposium. Symposium Series, “Host Interactions in Disease” (CMHID). University Club of Pasadena. Info: 323-442-0049, morning@usc.edu

**Tuesday, Dec. 8**
- **3:10 p.m.** Ophthalmology Grand Rounds. Arman Zaman, MD, USC. HC4 Conference Room, 3rd Floor. Info: tyisha.christopher@med.usc.edu, tyisha.christopher@med.usc.edu

**Wednesday, Dec. 9**
- **7 a.m.** USC Women in Management Conference. “Tools for Discovering Effective Communication.” Brenda Moller, USC. CBID 2533. Free for members, $10 non-members. Info: narcissy@usc.edu, npsp@usc.org, myerson@usc.edu, info@uscwm.org

**Thursday, Dec. 10**
- **10 a.m.** Keck Medicine of USC Stroke Support Group. Audrey Brown, RN, CHC Conference Room, 3rd Floor. Info: elvarubi@usc.edu

**Friday, Dec. 11**
- **7 a.m.** 7th annual Telfer B. Pete Reynolds Jr. Stroke Seminar. Max Planck Institute for Heart and Lung Research, Elly and Elyshye Broad CIRM Center Auditorium, BCC 101. Info: larry.lyons@keck.usc.edu, http://stemcell.usc.edu/stroke

**Saturday, Jan. 16**
- **7 a.m.** USC Stem Cell Seminar. Didier Malathron, Max Planck Institute for Heart and Lung Research, Elly and Elyshye Broad CIRM Center Auditorium, BCC 101. Info: larry.lyons@keck.usc.edu, http://stemcell.usc.edu/stemcell

**Chaffee: Innovative device helps distance runner keep on pace**

Continued from page 1

It was shocking, I’ve always been so healthy. I said, ‘Pacemakers are for old, sedentary people—not for me.’

He knew people who had pacemakers. Their devices were visible through clothing. At the beach, he’d never be able to hide it. Then he was referred to Keck Medicine of USC cardiologist Rahul Doshi, MD, who told Chaffee he was a candidate for the Nanostim, a leadless pacemaker that is implanted in the heart.

“The Nanostim is for patients like Steve who need pacing for atrial fibrillation, and for other patients such as those who have vascular access issues or have a history of infection,” said Doshi, director of electrophysiology and associate professor of clinical cardiology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. “It’s a dramatic, game-changing technology in the field of cardiac pacing, and will lead to further refinements to make it available to an expanded patient population.”

More than 4 million Americans, typically over the age of 60, experience irregular heartbeat. Also known as arrhythmia, it may lead to serious complications, including stroke, breathing problems or loss of consciousness. Many arrhythmias, including atrial fibrillation, are detected only when medical tests are done.

Keck Medicine of USC was the first medical center in Southern California to perform a Nanostim implant, in 2014. Since then, 15 of the pacemakers have been implanted by Keck Medicine doctors.

The Nanostim is one of two leadless pacemakers currently being studied in clinical trials nationwide. Keck Medicine of USC is part of a multicenter clinical trial that ended in September, with a continued access study beginning immediately after. A post-market approval application was submitted this year to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) by St. Jude Medical, the device manufacturer.

Traditional pacemakers, designed to steady irregular heartbeat, are about the size of a drum coaster. They are implanted in a pocket under the skin to the left of the heart and attached to the heart with leads. The battery-driven Nanostim is less than an inch long and fits inside the heart’s right ventricle. It is implanted under local anesthesia in a minimally invasive procedure that typically lasts an hour. The device is delivered to the heart via catheter through the groin. The catheter is guided with the help of X-ray.

Chaffee was initially wary of the procedure. “I dragged my feet,” she said. After speaking to a fellow congenital heart patient who said she had the procedure, Chaffee decided to go ahead. He was surprised by his results.

“When we’re talking days, not weeks or months,” she said. “I’ve had zero effect from the procedure. Unless you told me I had (the implant), I wouldn’t know it’s there.”

Two months after the implant, he entered a 5K race, then a 10K three months after that.

“Some of the kids do these races and pretend I’m an Olympian,” she said with a chuckle. “I think I’m younger than I am.”

**Expansion: Parking garage to open soon**

Continued from page 1

an ambulatory surgery center and a women’s cancer program. The building will also feature several new dining options. Construction is scheduled for completion in December 2016.

Additionally, occupancy of the new parking structure on San Pablo Street is expected to begin in January. The six-story structure will provide parking for day shift employees currently using the Keck Hospital structure.

With the opening of the new structure, the Keck Hospital structure will become a patient and visitor parking facility during daytime hours.
Alzheimer's expert talks about why he moved to USC

By Hope Hamasah

Paul Assen, MD, the founding director of the USC Alzheimer’s Therapeutic Research Institute, is the newest member of the Keck School of Medicine of USC whose focus is Alzheimer’s disease research. He recently answered a few questions.

Q: What excites you about joining the Keck School of Medicine of USC?

A: I think Keck is the perfect home for my research group. We have enjoyed terrific support at all levels, allowing us to get our studies running in record time. The academic environment is likewise terrific, as we build collaborations with outstanding leaders in Alzheimer’s disease research, including Arthur Toga, Paul Thompson and Helenara Chui.

Q: There is a significant amount of research going on at the Keck School of Medicine through the Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center, USC Stevens Institute of Neuroimaging and Genomics and the Zilkha Neurogenetic Institute. How do you think the Alzheimer’s Therapeutic Research Institute (ATRI) fits into that landscape?

A: ATRI’s mission is to accelerate the development of effective treatments for Alzheimer’s disease. We work on new methods (trial designs, outcome measures, analytical approaches), and design and implement multicenter trials. We look forward to collaboration with all of these research groups at the Keck School — all will contribute to our therapeutic studies.

Q: Take us back to when you first decided to pursue research on Alzheimer’s disease. What inspired you to do this work?

A: I think I was very fortunate to enter academic medicine just as the field of Alzheimer’s therapeutic research was beginning. I had the opportunity to participate in the earliest studies, contributing to the development of the first drugs to be approved for the disease. Over the past 25 years, I have had the opportunity to work with some of the world’s best investigators around the world on setting the stage for a new generation of therapies that we hope will bring this terrible disease under control.

Q: What changes have been most beneficial to advancing research?

A: Let me focus on one area: PET imaging. There are two primary abnormalities in the Alzheimer’s disease brain: plaques, made of aggregated protein called amyloid, and tangles, deposits within brain cells made up of a protein called tau. For the past 10 years, we have been able to study the accumulation of amyloid plaques in the brain using PET scans. This changed our entire perspective on the disease, and revealed its underlying drug development. We now know that amyloid, the root cause of the disease, accumulates 15 years before the onset of symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease. So we are now conducting our clinical trials in asymptomatic phase when removal of amyloid is likely to be effective. We have reached the important tangle phase as well, with a different type of PET scanning. With these neuroimaging tools, we can measure the accumulation of the disease as never before, allowing accurate diagnosis very, very early, and enabling the accurate tracking of disease progression.

Q: You have said there is reason for optimism for patients with Alzheimer’s disease. What give you hope?

A: Having new neuroimaging tools, and very promising therapeutic agents, I am confident that we will have treatments approved by the coming years. Ultimately, I believe we will be able to screen people in mid-life for evidence of amyloid dystagation, so that we can administer treatments to prevent the accumulation of plaques in brain, just as we treat elevated cholesterol to prevent the accumulation of plaques in major arteries. This gives us optimism for patients with Alzheimer’s disease.

Stram is named AAAS fellow

By Zen Yuong

Daniel Stram, PhD, MPH, of the Keck School of Medicine of USC, is now a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the nonprofit has announced. Stram, a preventive medicine professor in USC’s Division of Biostatistics and Genetic Epidemiology, said he was “plenty surprised” to be named a fellow: He has been a member of AAAS for 25 years. “I have followed their research and felt that I contributed to that,” Stram said. “I’ve tried to solve statistical problems in many of the areas they are currently working in to see that the sum total of the work was being honored.”

AAAS gave 347 members fellow status in 2015. They were given the honor because of their efforts to advance science in its applications. Stram was selected “for development and application of innovative statisti cal procedures for laboratory, clinical and field studies, and for signature collaborations in genomics, cancer treatment, and radiation effects.”

The AAAS fellows tradition began in 1874. AAAS, the world’s largest general scientific society, is publisher of the journal Science, which has an estimated total readership of 1 million, making it the largest paid circulation of any peer-reviewed general science journal in the world.

IDon 2012, Dr. Stram spent three years in Hiroshima in the late 1960s to work on health outcomes following the atomic bomb survivors. In that study, he developed risk estimation methods by looking at radiation doses and comparing outcomes in survivors who received radiation dose estimates. This led to his longstanding interest in the statistical treatment of uncertainty in risk analysis.

“I am interested in making statistical decisions in the presence of uncertainty in exposures for different diseases,” Stram said. “If those exposures are not perfectly measured, then we have an exposure measure ment problem. I help address those problems.”

New fellows will receive an official certificate and gold and blue rosette pin on Feb. 13 at the annual AAAS meeting in Washington, DC.
Continued from page 4

For an ambulance ad, “more accurate to marketing experts” informs potential patients that their nearby ambulance clinic connects with the broad expertise of specialists across the Keck Medicine of USC system. We applied a less promotional cases, such as press releases or items in news releases, Rertig said, the idea of The Keck Effect will be more subtle, woven into the narrative by noting, for example, how any access to Medicine of USC integrates research, teaching and clinical expertise to deliver exceptional care.

CAMPAIGN: New ads stress ‘Keck Effect’

Continued from page 4

“Overall, I am satisfied with this organization.”

— Tend to disagree 34.1%

— Strongly disagree 4.3%

“Keck Effect” is in my life.”

— Strongly agree 24.1%

— Tend to agree 54.2%

— Tend to disagree 17.3%

Survey Question:

How do you feel about the Keck Effect in your life?

Survey Response Options:

Strongly agree

Tend to agree

Tend to disagree

Strongly disagree

SURVEYS: Participation is high in first poll

SURVEYS: Participation is high in first poll

The study was published online in the journal PLOS Blood & Cancer. “Neurocognitive effects are associated with radiation therapy for brain tumors; however, the use of platinum-based chemotherapy regimens to reduce or eliminate radiation therapy were thought to spare these harmful side effects to the brain, despite their known impact on hearing,” said principal investigator Etan Orgel, MD, MS, an attending physician at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. Since 2007, she has been a member of the MS Society’s Latin/Hispanic Advisory Council, leading and participating in initiatives. She also received the NMSS Clinical Fellowship award. In addition to connecting her patients with the society, volunteering and engaging the medical community, Amezqua involves her professional network to Walk MS each year. The award presentation took place Nov. 6 during the society’s Leadership Conference in Fort Worth, TX. Since 1997, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society has recognized roughly 500 volunteers with induction to the Volunteer Hall of Fame.

Specialties unite to help patients review prostate cancer treatments

The USC Institute of Urology has launched a multidisciplinary approach to review cancer treatment known as the Comprehensive Consult, a one-stop visit for those who need prostate cancer treatment. The approach brings together world-class surgeons, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists and cancer resource specialists all on the same day. Patients have the opportunity to get their questions answered and talk about treatment options in the comfort of an individual suite. Time is of the essence when dealing with prostate cancer, and the organizers of the Comprehensive Consult are part of a race against time. It also relieves prostate cancer patients of the additional stress of having to meet with multiple specialists at different locations at various times. To find out more, go to urology.keckmedicine.org.

Hearing loss from chemotherapy impacts neurocognitive function

More children are surviving malignant brain tumors thanks to platinum-based chemotherapy (cisplatin and high-dose carboplatin). But it has a known dose carboplatin). But it has a known...