

# USC, Tenet reach tentative agreement on sale of hospitals

Tenet Healthcare Corp. and USC have announced they have signed a non-binding letter of intent for the university to acquire USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital. Financial terms were not disclosed.

A lawsuit was filed by USC in August 2006 seeking to terminate the relationship between USC and Tenet. In November 2007, Tenet filed a counterclaim against the university seeking monetary damages. The parties seek to resolve the lawsuit by reaching agreement on sale terms for these two hospitals.

“USC is committed to working on an expedited basis to reach agreement with Tenet,” said President Steven B. Sample. “The long-term vision of the university includes operating state-of-the-art health care facilities and enabling USC faculty physicians in the Keck School of Medicine to provide medical care of the highest quality, conduct research and train more than 1,000 residents and medical students at these



Under a tentative agreement between USC and Tenet, USC University Hospital (pictured above) and USC Norris Cancer Hospital would be acquired by the University.

hospitals and the Los Angeles County and USC Medical Center.

“This acquisition would enable us to reach our vision of a fully integrated health care organization on USC’s campus.”

Trevor Fetter, president and chief executive officer of Tenet, said, “We would have preferred to continue our long-standing partnership with the university; however, we explored every avenue to resolve this dispute and have

now decided to reach a settlement and move forward. We’re pleased to have reached this tentative agreement.”

A Tenet subsidiary operates USC University Hospital, a 411-bed acute care hospital, and the USC Norris Cancer Hospital, a 60-bed cancer hospital. Both hospitals are managed under an agreement with USC.

Tenet Healthcare Corp., through its subsidiaries, owns and operates acute care hospitals and related ancillary health care businesses, which include ambulatory surgery centers and diagnostic imaging centers.

The Keck School of Medicine of USC is home to the Doctors of USC – internationally recognized physicians practicing in a multitude of clinical specialties. The doctors practice in private clinics on USC’s Health Sciences Campus and in several affiliated hospitals, including the USC University Hospital, USC Norris Cancer Hospital, the Doheny Eye Institute, Childrens Hospital Los Angeles and the Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center.

# USC opens groundbreaking epigenomics center

**By Veronica Jauriqui**

One of the first of its kind in the nation, the USC Epigenome Center officially opened its doors on April 11 with an inaugural symposium featuring national leaders in the burgeoning field of epigenetic research.

Approximately 100 students and scientists from USC and other research institutions attended the half-day conference hosted by USC Epigenome

Center Director Peter Laird. The roster of speakers included leading researchers from the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, Harvard University the California Institute of Technology and UCLA, among others.

“Of all of the rewards that come from being a part of a vibrant academic community,” said Elizabeth Garrett, USC vice president for Academic Planning and Budget, “nothing is more rewarding

than to see the diverse intellectual community work as an interdisciplinary team to extend the frontiers of human knowledge in a way that touches the lives of millions of people.

“Such is the possibility of the USC Epigenome Center,” she said.

Housed in the ground floor of the Harlyne J. Norris Cancer Research Tower on USC’s Health Sciences Campus, the USC Epigenome Center is the first large-scale academic center dedicated to epigenomic research.

Epigenomics is the study of how DNA is packaged and modified in the cell without changing the sequences of the genes but in changing their availabilities to be turned on or off. In the field of cancer research, epigenomics holds tremendous promise in understanding how and why healthy cells can turn into cancerous ones. Such study could lead to new treatments for cancer as well as other diseases.

A \$10 million gift from the Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation in October 2007 provided both the infrastructure and technology to enable USC researchers to join an international effort to map the human genome.

John P. Stein, USC urologist, 45

John Peter Stein, an internationally recognized authority on the management of urologic cancers, passed away suddenly April 11 while attending the American Association of Genitourinary Surgeons annual meeting in Florida. He was 45 years old.

Stein was a professor of urology at the Keck School of Medicine and USC/Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center.

“Dr. Stein was a superb surgeon, a gifted clinician scientist, a role model for peers, residents and students,” said Keck School of Medicine Dean Carmen A. Puliafito. “He touched the lives of thousands of patients and saved the lives of many using his extraordinary clinical talents.”

John Peter Stein

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From left at the April 11 inauguration of the USC Epigenome Center are Peter Laird, Peter Jones, Keck School of Medicine Dean Carmen A. Puliafito, and Norris Foundation representatives Harlyne Norris, Bill Corey, Lisa Hansen and Walter Zanino. Foundation representative Ron Barnes could not attend.

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## USC researchers associate risk of Hodgkin's lymphoma with immune protein

By Jon Weiner

A long-term study of twins has led USC researchers to find potential links between Hodgkin's lymphoma and levels of an immune response protein (interleukin-12).

"We found that lower levels of the protein interleukin-12, involved in fighting intracellular infections, increases susceptibility to young adult Hodgkin's lymphoma," said Wendy Cozen, associate professor of preventive medicine at the Keck School of Medicine.

Cozen is lead author on the study, "Interleukin-2, interleukin-12, and interferon-gamma levels and risk of young adult Hodgkin's lymphoma," published in the April 1 issue of the journal, *Blood*.

The work is based on patient populations in the International Twin Study and California Twin Program, unique registries of twin pairs developed and maintained in the Keck School of Medicine's Department of Preventive Medicine. Hodgkin's lymphoma is the most common type of cancer among young women and the second most common type among young men. But while the five-year survival rate is high compared to that of other cancers, the

treatment may cause complications later in life.

According to Cozen, this study, along with a previous one her group published in 2007, provides the first clear evidence that individual differences in immune response (via cytokine secretion) may lead to the development of Hodgkin's lymphoma.

"We previously showed that there is a substantial genetic risk for adolescent and young adult Hodgkin's lymphoma, and another immune response protein (interleukin-6) was related to risk," she said. "We are pursuing the hypothesis that variations in genes control the secretion of these immune response proteins (cytokines) predicting Hodgkin's lymphoma risk."

The study is accompanied by an editorial, "Hodgkin's twins: double good, double trouble," by Richard F. Ambinder of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

Eventually, based on the group's current work, researchers may be able to develop novel treatments to correct the abnormal immune response, offering alternatives to current therapy.

Cozen and her group are conducting an expanded study among adolescent and young adult Hodgkin's

lymphoma patients and their parents in Los Angeles. The group is studying these genes and others that control the immune response in hopes of confirming their previous results and to further define the inherited patterns that explain the genetic part of the risk.

Cozen adds that colleagues from the National Cancer Institute and Washington University in St. Louis also will be studying early exposures to infectious agents such as bacteria and viruses, which may interact with the immune system leading to Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Funding for this research came from the National Cancer Institute.

Wendy Cozen, Parkash S. Gill, Muhammad T. Salam, Alexandra Nieters, Rizwan Masood, Myles G. Cockburn, W. James Gauderman, Otoniel Martínez-Maza, Bharat N. Nathwani, Malcolm C. Pike, David J. Van Den Berg, Ann S. Hamilton, Dennis M. Deapen, and Thomas M. Mack. "Interleukin-2, interleukin-12, and interferon-gamma levels and risk of young adult Hodgkin's lymphoma," *Blood* 2008 DOI: 10.1182/blood-2007-08-106872

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# STEIN: Widely respected USC urologist remembered as gifted surgeon, leader

Continued from page 1

Stein's work has included research that identified a molecular marker that predicts which bladder cancer patients would likely face remission and which would have relapses.

He served on the editorial boards of four major urologic journals including *Urology* and the *Journal of Urology*. Stein was co-director of the Genitourinary Program at the USC/Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and was known for his compassion with patients.

"Receiving my diagnosis was the hardest moment of my life," said Paul Scott, a former patient of Stein's. "He not only saved my life but gave me full assurance that I would live a long and healthy life. It's now been more than six years."

Stein's reputation led to his inclusion in the list of "America's Top Doctors" for every year since 2005. In 2003, he was the recipient of the Young Investigator Award given by the Society of Urology Oncology.

"Dr. Stein was a brilliant surgeon and dedicated leader in the Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center," said cancer center director Peter Jones. "He was one of the most compassionate and skilled physicians I have ever met."

Born in San Francisco in 1962, Stein grew up in Walnut Creek, Calif., and was a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and the Loyola University Stritch School of Medicine. He com-

pleted his urology residency under the direction of Donald Skinner at USC and spent his entire clinical career at the Keck School of Medicine where he rose to the rank of professor of urology.

"Dr. Stein was a brilliant surgeon and dedicated leader in the Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center. He was one of the most compassionate and skilled physicians I have ever met."

—Peter Jones, director, USC/Norris Cancer Center

"I consider John Stein one of the best surgeons I have ever trained, an extension of my own hands, someone very special, a son and member of my family," said Skinner.

A nationally known urologic oncologist, Stein was appointed to committees of the American Urological Association, the Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network and was secretary-elect of the American Urologic Association, Western Section.

A prominent researcher, he also received several grants from the National Institutes of Health and National Cancer Institute for his bladder cancer research and contributed

more than 150 publications to prominent urologic journals.

He was a passionate basketball player and despite working at USC, continued as a Notre Dame fan.

But first and foremost in his mind was always his family. "He was our rock, the foundation of our family, our devoted and loyal support for all of our endeavors and each of our own biggest fan. His presence lifted any situation, from ordinary to extraordinary or from special to extra special," said Randi Stein, his wife of 18 years. "He brought us peace and contentment knowing he was always with us, regardless of where he happened to physically

be on any given day. We knew he was always thinking of us first and foremost."

A Pasadena resident, Stein was a dedicated husband and father. He leaves behind his wife, Randi Goress Stein, and their four children, John, Joseph, Eleanor and Louisa May. He is survived by his parents, Robert and Helen Mary Stein of Walnut Creek, Calif., by his two brothers, Rob Stein of London, England, and Tom Stein and family of Riverside, Conn., as well as many members of the Goress family.

The Keck School will hold a memorial service in the near future. Donations can be made to the "John Stein Children's Trust Fund" c/o UBS Financial Services Inc., Operations Dept., 2000 Avenue of the Stars, 7th Floor North, Los Angeles, 90067, or the "John P. Stein Chair in Urology" c/o USC Department of Urology, 1441 Eastlake Ave., Los Angeles, 90033.

## In Case of An Emergency...

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# Calendar of Events

The HSC Calendar is online at [www.usc.edu/hscalendar](http://www.usc.edu/hscalendar)

## Monday, Apr. 21

**NOON.** Fellows' Core Curriculum Conference. "Long-term Follow-up of Renal Transplant Patients," Yasir Qazi, USC. GNH Drs. Dining Rm. A & B. Info: (323) 226-7307

**4 P.M.** Research in Progress. "Interventional Nephrology," Nasimeh Yazdani, USC. GNH 10-340. Info: (323) 226-7307

## Tuesday, Apr. 22

**9 A.M.** Neurology Grand Rounds. "M.R.I. and Functional M.R.I.," Michael Lee, USC. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-7686

**11:30 A.M.** Psychiatry Grand Rounds. "Functional MRI and Lie Detection: Fact or Fantasy?" Joseph Simpson, USC. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 226-5572

**NOON.** Cancer Ctr. Grand Rounds. "Hereditary Breast Cancer in an Underserved Population: Characterization of Germline BRCA Mutations in High Risk Hispanic Families," Jeffrey Weitzel, City of Hope. NOR 7409. Info: (323) 865-0801

## Wednesday, Apr. 23

**8:30 A.M.** "Diagnosis of Cardiovascular Diseases and Cardiac CT," Jerold Shinbane, USC. GNH 11-321. Info: (323) 226-7923

**NOON.** Renal Grand Rounds. "End-of-Life Care and Pain Management: Palliative Care in Renal Patients," Susan C. Stone, USC. GNH 6441. Info: (323) 226-7307

**NOON.** USC Ctr. for Excellence in Research. "The Impact of Nanotechnology on Medicine," Richard Cote, USC. UPC: CUB 329. Info: (213) 740-6709

**NOON.** IGM Distinguished Speakers Seminar. "Marfan Syndrome and Related Disorders: from Molecules to Medicines," Harry C. Dietz, Johns Hopkins Univ. CSC 250. Info: (323) 442-1144

**NOON.** "Neuronal Selectivity and Local Map Structure in Visual Cortex," Dario Ringach, UCLA. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-3219

## Monday, Apr. 28

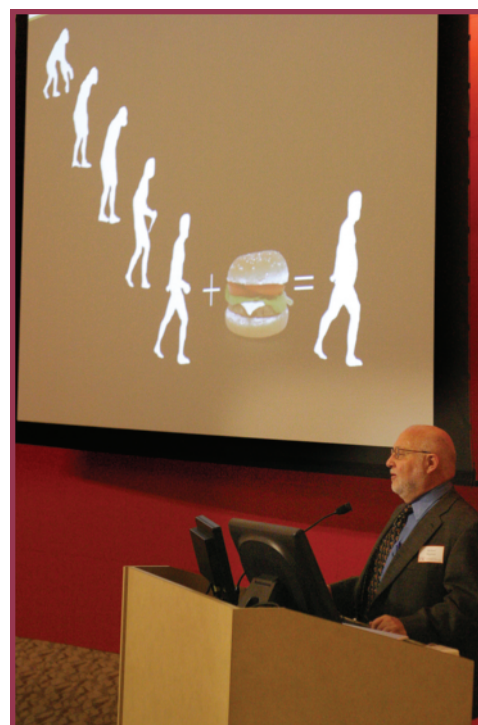
**NOON.** Fellows' Core Curriculum Conference. "Renal Physiology," Alicia McDonough, USC. GNH Drs. Dining Rm. A & B. Info: (323) 226-7307

**4 P.M.** Transplant Conference. "Post Transplant Lymphoproliferative Disorders," Miroslaw Smogorzewski, USC. UH Salerno Rm. Info: (323) 226-7307

## Tuesday, Apr. 29

**NOON.** Cancer Ctr. Grand Rounds. "From New Molecules to new Therapies for Inflammation and Cancer," Nicos Petasis, 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 HSC Weekly, KAM 400 or fax to (323) 442-2832, or e-mail 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.



**DISCUSSING DIABETES**—The USC Obesity Research Center hosted "Childhood Obesity: Genes, Brains and Behavior" on April 10, featuring 11 nationally recognized diabetes experts and authors. The daylong event at the Aresty Auditorium, focused on the biology of the disease, ethnic and genetic issues and intervention strategies.

Left, Richard Bergman, the W.M. Keck Professor of Physiology and Biophysics, and chair of the Department of Physiology and Biophysics, displays a lighthearted slide about a serious issue—the effect of a fast food culture on the human body.



Below, Michael Goran, director of the USC Obesity Research Center, welcomes attendees to the event, which was co-sponsored by Childrens Hospital Los Angeles.

## CENTER: Aims to become a national resource

Continued from page 1

"This center is important because it gets USC on the ground floor of an international research initiative," says Peter Jones, director of the USC/Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center at the Keck School of Medicine. Credited with the center's inception, Jones says that the new center will strengthen the university's reputation as an international leader in the field.

"We want to develop this center into an international resource. The support from the Norris Foundation as well as the National Institutes of Health will allow us to make a tremendous impact both locally and internationally," he says.

The symposium was followed by a ribbon-cutting and celebratory dinner attended by 80 people.

Peter Laird, associate professor of surgery, biochemistry and molecular biology, shared his high hopes for the center's long-term success.

"This is a very exciting moment in the study of epigenetics at USC," he said. "I hope at our tenth anniversary we look back and smile at our small beginnings here."

## HSC NEWSMAKERS

Complete listing at: [www.usc.edu/uscnews/usc\\_in\\_the\\_news/](http://www.usc.edu/uscnews/usc_in_the_news/)

An April 15 *Los Angeles Times* article reported that Tenet Healthcare Corp. and USC have signed a non-binding letter of intent for USC to acquire USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital. Forbes Online, CNN Money, *Los Angeles Business Journal* and the Associated Press also covered the story.

On April 14, the *Wall Street Journal* ran an op-ed by author and pediatric psychiatrist **Jonathan Kellerman** on health insurance.

An April 14 *Los Angeles Times* article quoted liver transplant expert **Andrew Stolz** in an article about state funded liver transplants for illegal immigrants. KTLA-TV Channel 5 also covered the story.

On April 10, KABC-TV Channel 7 interviewed environmental health expert **Scott Fruin** and featured a USC study about health risks posed by air pollution while driving.

An April 10 *Investor's Business Daily* article quoted pharmacoeconomics expert **Joel Hay** on how cholesterol-targeting drug makers handled their clinical trials.

An April 8 *Los Angeles Times* article quoted obesity expert **Richard Bergman** about a study looking at the association between abdominal fat and mortality.

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