

## U.S. Congressman Schiff joins USC discussion on health care reform

By Katie Neith and Sara Reeve

The Keck School of Medicine brought a hot topic to the table Tuesday evening when it presented a health care reform discussion with Representative Adam Schiff (D- 29th Congressional District).

Part of the Dean's Council on Health Reform, the August 18 forum attracted a large crowd, filling the Mayer Auditorium and two overflow areas.

"Medical schools are an important part of the [health care reform] process," said Carmen A. Puliafito, dean of the Keck School. "The essence of health care is people—nurses, technicians, administrators and, of course, physicians. The future of physicians all starts here in medical school."

Rep. Schiff, who sits on the House Appropriations Committee, House Judiciary Committee, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and a number of key Congressional subcommittees, outlined the key details of the health care debate.

While Rep. Schiff offered his personal opinions on the various bills being considered, his overall goal was clear.

"We have got to move forward in reforming the system. I don't want the perfect to be the enemy of the good," he said. "But I do think this is a test of the country. Do we still have the ability to get reasonable minds together and reach a reasonable decision? I think if we are successful, we will look back on this period ... and say we did a good thing as a country."

In his presentation, Rep. Schiff discussed common agreements among the five bills that are currently under consideration, including health plans that would not discriminate against pre-existing conditions or drop coverage due to illness. He pointed out that the bills also agree that health insurance should be portable when changing employers and take into consideration public and national health care costs with an aim of sustainability.

Where the bills differ most are on the public option issue

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U.S. Congressman Adam Schiff (right) fields a question from Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito during an Aug. 18 health care reform forum at Mayer Auditorium.

**"We have got to move forward in reforming the system. I don't want the perfect to be the enemy of the good."**

**— Adam Schiff, (D-29th U.S. Congressional District)**

## With white coats and parties, Keck School welcomes students



First-year medical student Kate Doolittle accepts her white coat from Henri Ford, vice dean for medical education, at the Keck School's Aug. 14 ceremony.

By Sara Reeve

It may feel like summer, but for students in the Keck School of Medicine, it is back-to-school season.

Beginning Aug. 10, medical students were welcomed to campus with a week of parties, receptions and ceremonies hosted by Dean Carmen A. Puliafito.

Students returning for their second, third and fourth years had a chance to socialize at a mixer held at Puliafito's home on Aug. 11. The party featured dinner, a live band and a mechanical surfboard for students to ride.

Third-year student Ashley Prosper said, "I really appreciate events like this because I don't get to see my classmates and friends who are on different tracks and different schedules. I really appreciate the dean and student affairs for doing this."

First-year students enjoyed their own reception at the Puliafito home on Aug. 12. The informal and inviting atmo-

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## Keck School posts 9% jump in research grant funding

By Jon Nalick

Despite an extremely competitive national research grant environment, the Keck School of Medicine is celebrating a 9 percent surge in research funding from all grant sources during the fiscal year that ended June 30.

Elizabeth Fini, vice dean for research at the Keck School, said good planning and the recruitment of excellent junior research faculty and research chairs accounted for most of the increase, which boosted the total of research dollars received to \$195.8 million, from \$180.2 million.

Fini praised the grant productivity of longstanding faculty researchers as key in maintaining a crucial level of funding, but added that the increase over last year's funding "is mostly due to our new faculty hires—to strategizing and picking good people and supporting them once they get here."

She cited as especially important the contributions

of junior faculty recruited in the last few years—and also the efforts of new chairs and research leaders such as Jae Jung, professor and chair of the Department of Molecular Microbiology and Immunology; Carlos Pato, chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences; and Michele Pato, the Della Martin Chair in Psychiatry.

Fini credited USC's commitment to growth at the medical school and Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito's direction and implementation of good business practices for reversing the decline of research funding that occurred in 2007.

She noted that research funding increased 3 percent in FY 2007-2008 and jumped 9 percent in FY 2008-2009 and added, "I feel confident that this is not a fluke, but a trend—and I project further increases next year."

Fini said she based the projection on the expected

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# USC opens new Evaluation and Treatment Clinic

**Cheryl Bruyninckx**

The Evaluation and Treatment Clinic (ETC) celebrated its grand opening with a ribbon cutting ceremony and

ETC committee, who all expressed gratitude to everyone involved in making the ETC possible. After the ceremony, the event was opened up to all faculty and staff to tour the facility and enjoy refreshments.

Scott Evans, chief operating officer for USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital, offered an upbeat assessment of the ETC in his opening remarks.

“This is an exciting time in the hospital’s history because it’s the first time we have a 24-hour ambulatory care center,” said Evans.

The Evaluation and Treatment Clinic officially opened its doors on Aug. 17, marking the first time USC physicians have

had a clinic site available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at USC University Hospital.

Located on the first floor of the Norris Inpatient Tower at USC University Hospital, the ETC serves established, private patients of USC providers. The clinic helps provide continuity of care for patients and offers a clinic site for physicians to evaluate their patients after hours.

The infrastructure of the ETC was developed by a committee of physicians led by Fred Weaver, Keck School professor of surgery, in collaboration with hospital administration.

“We want this to become something that is central and totally integrated into the practices,” said Weaver. “The sky is the limit for what we can do, and I think great things are going to happen.”

The ETC is staffed by a team of nurses who all come from critical care or urgent care backgrounds.

“Several of the nurses are internal transfers from both USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital,” said Annette Sy, associate administrator for ambulatory care services at USC Norris. “So they all know the background, the hospitals, the systems and our patients. They are a great group of nurses, with a great leader in Emma Wright.”

A prototype for the ETC was created in 2004 under The Doctors of USC. Don Larsen, chief medical officer for USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital, was a member of both the original and the current ETC committees.

“The transition from the Doctors of USC perspective to the hospital perspective was extremely smooth,” said Larsen. “It was a great opportunity to see the collaborative effort between The Doctors of USC and hospital administration.”



Celebrating the opening of the clinic, (from left) Donald Larsen, Fred Weaver, Scott Evans, Annette Sy, Emma Wright, and Minor Anderson cut the ceremonial ribbon at the Aug. 14 open house.

open house on Aug. 14.

Close to 100 invited guests gathered to hear remarks given by key members of the

## Baxter Foundation awards \$200,000 to Keck School researchers

**By Ina Fried**

Research on stem cells and cancer will be supported by junior faculty awards from the Donald E. and Delia B. Baxter Foundation to the Keck School of Medicine for 2009.

Krzysztof Kobiela, assistant professor, Pathology, and Chengyu Liang, assistant professor of research, Molecular Microbiology and Immunology, will each receive \$75,000 for one year to support their research.

In addition, the foundation has awarded \$50,000 in continued support for the Medical Student Summer Research Fellowship Program under the direction of Sandra Mosteller with the Keck School Office of Curriculum.

The Baxter Foundation provides seed funding to help prepare and support junior faculty embarking on their

careers and starting up their independent laboratories.

Over the years, the foundation has provided gifts in excess of \$10 million. In April, the lower ground floor of the Harlyne J. Norris Cancer Research Tower was named the Donald E. and Delia B. Baxter Foundation Floor in celebration of the foundation’s 50th anniversary.

After postdoctoral training at The Rockefeller University, Kobiela joined the Department of Pathology and the Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC in 2007.

His research focuses on the role of BMP (Bone Morphogenetic Protein) signaling in the regulation of skin and hair follicle stem cells.

The work may shed light on the role of these stem cells

in hair regeneration, wound healing and tumor formation in the skin.

Liang, who joined USC from Harvard Medical School in 2008, has research interests in cancer and infectious diseases, focusing especially on

autophagy, a cellular cleanup and recycling system. She will examine the role of the autophagic tumor suppressor UVRAG (UV irradiation resistance associated gene) in the progression of colon cancer.

## Hospital employees learn USC’s code words

**By Jon Nalick**

*“Do you know the code?”*

For weeks, employees of USC’s hospitals have puzzled over the meaning of cryptic, cardinal-colored posters on the walls asking that question—and equally mysterious gold-colored flyers that warn, “No One Breaks This Code.”

But on Aug. 10, a month-long public awareness campaign sponsored by the USC Office of Compliance and the Health Sciences Public Relations and Marketing Office, revealed “The Code” that all university employees should know as the university’s code of ethics.

The code is a guiding set of principles by which every member of the university community must abide. It states that ethical behavior at the university is predicated on two key pillars: “a commitment to discharging our obligations to others in a fair and honest manner and a commitment to respecting the rights and dignity of all persons.”

The campaign culminated with all hospital employees receiving cardinal-and-gold pamphlets that highlighted the 10 key components that make up the code, highlighting the importance of maintaining respectful relationships with others, avoiding conflicts of interest, and displaying tolerance and speaking against bigotry.

The pamphlet also includes the phone number for a Help & Hotline number to answer questions and address callers’ concerns about laws, regulations and university policies. The hotline, at (213) 740-2500, is confidential and staffed 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Hospital employees who submit signed questions or comments about the code through Aug. 28 are eligible for a drawing for a pair of Dodgers tickets. They can enter the drawing using forms available on the last page of the “Know The Code” pamphlets, which can be obtained from department directors.



The Weekly

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# USC seeks volunteers for Great California ShakeOut

**By Leslie Ridgeway**  
Employees have an opportunity to enhance their disaster response skills by providing basic first aid during the Great California ShakeOut on Oct. 15 at the Health Sciences Campus.  
USC’s Office of Fire Safety and Emergency Planning is organizing a rescue exercise, which will coincide with the 10:15 a.m. simulation of a 7.8 earthquake. Everyone on campus will be asked to “Drop, Cover, and Hold On” at that time as part of the statewide earthquake drill.  
About 100 volunteers are needed to serve on a special disaster response medical team. Volunteers will provide basic

first aid to about 40 volunteer “victims” who will participate in the rescue exercise conducted by campus emergency teams during the ShakeOut.  
A free three-hour disaster first aid/disaster triage workshop will be offered in August and September to help disaster medical response team volunteers prepare for the drill.  
Workshop participants will learn first aid for bleeding, shock, fractures, burns and basic victim assessment skills. They also will learn basic “triage” skills to ensure that the most critically injured victims are treated first. No medical experience is required.

Employees who wish to participate in the workshop and during the ShakeOut are asked to inform their supervisors before participating.  
Workshops will take place from 2-5 p.m. at the Norris Café in University Hospital. Participants may choose one workshop from the following dates: Thursday, Aug. 27; Tuesday, Sept. 8; Monday, Sept. 14; Thursday, Sept. 17; or Friday, Sept. 18.  
Volunteers may register for a workshop via e-mail to Steve Goldfarb at sgoldfarb@caps.usc.edu, or call 213-740-3962.  
For more information on the statewide drill, go to the state’s Great California ShakeOut Web page at www.shakeout.org/

# REFORM: Costs, benefits of new health plans debated

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and on the idea of requiring health care insurance of all citizens, according to Rep. Schiff.  
He also dismissed popular myths of the bills, such as the idea of “death panels” and that people would be forced out of their current plans. Rep. Schiff assured the audience that neither myth has a basis in truth.  
He ended his discussion by talking about what he was focused on in terms of what is missing from the bills.  
“I don’t think we do

enough in the bill to try to affect that escalating health care premium,” said Rep. Schiff. “There are steps we are starting to take in the bill to control costs, but we need to do more.”  
The floor was then opened for questions and opinions from the crowd, consisting primarily of first-year medical students and Health Sciences Campus faculty.  
Rep. Schiff responded to concerns about physician reimbursements, parity in mental health coverage and lack of health care providers,

among others.  
“The town hall format is valuable because I can hear what my colleagues are concerned about,” said Madeleine Bruning, pediatric nurse practitioner and clinical instructor of pediatrics at the Keck School. “I’m curious as a consumer of health care and as a provider.”  
The forum was presented by the Dean’s Council on Health Reform, a new initiative that features monthly forums and a Web site serving as a clearinghouse for information about health care reform.

“[The forum] was very informative. I learned a few new things, and I consider myself well-informed,” said Michael Cousineau, associate professor of research in the Department of Family Medicine and Preventive Medicine at the Keck School. “I was inspired by Congressman Schiff’s leadership on this issue, and I am excited that USC and our dean have taken such a strong leadership role, as well.”  
For more information on health reform, or to watch a webcast of the forum, visit healthreform.usc.edu.

# RESEARCH: Even as competition for grants rises, Keck School stays competitive

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receipt of funds released by the National Institutes of Health as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act approved earlier this year. In response, Keck School faculty scrambled to submit grant requests to the NIH that eventually totaled \$285 million.  
“We’re going to get a lot of that—and money for a few grants has already started to trickle in. We’re already ahead for fiscal year 2010, so we expect that will be a huge jump for us,” Fini said.  
Janet Stoeckert, director of research administration, noted that calculation of the year-over-year increases excludes unusually large one-time grants such

as the \$26.9 million grant from the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) in Fiscal Year 2007.  
Still a 9 percent increase is especially remarkable because competition for research grants has skyrocketed in recent years, partly due to a massive five-year burst of NIH funding ending in 2003. That explosion of funding enticed many new researchers and institutions to seek funding that otherwise would not have. But after NIH research funding peaked at about \$23 billion in 2003, it shrank in each year thereafter, even as the number of applications climbed.  
To adapt, Keck School researchers aggressively diversified their grant request sizes and funding sources,

Stoeckert said: “Faculty were working really hard and trying to be creative to get funding.”  
But institutions and researchers across the nation adopted similar strategies, intensifying the competition further. As a result, Keck School funding stumbled in 2007, dropping from about \$186 million to about \$174 million, largely due to the decline in NIH funding—the largest source of grant dollars for the school. But funding recovered the following year.  
Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliato praised the faculty’s hard work, saying, “We applaud them for their efforts in achieving an outstanding number of grants in fiscal year 2009.”

Fini said that the Keck School’s research grant growth “is one of the major things that defines us. It’s money, but it’s also a symbol of who we are—our stature. It helps attract high quality faculty and students and it’s a testament to our outstanding research.”  
She emphasized that the lion’s share of Keck School research money comes from nationally peer-reviewed NIH awards, “the gold standard in scientific review. What that means is that your colleagues all around the country say your research is outstanding.”  
*Editor’s Note: For space reasons we are highlighting only the 10 largest new and competitive renewals received in FY09 below.*

## Top 10 Keck School of Medicine new and competitive renewal research grant awards for 2008-2009

Department Name	PI and Co-Investigators	Sponsor Award	Sponsor	Title	Current Period Amount	Type
ZNI	Henderson, Brian E.; Haiman, Christopher Alan; Stram, Daniel O.; Ingles, Sue	1 U01 CA136792-01	National Cancer Institute	A Genome-Wide Association Study of Prostate Cancer in African Americans	\$3,454,975	New
ZNI	Pato, Carlos N; Pato, Michele T.	1 R01 MH085548-01	National Institute of Mental Health	Genomic Psychiatry Cohort	\$2,353,669	New
MMI	Jung, Jae U; Ou, Jing-Hsiung James	1 U19 AI083025-01	National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases	Host-Pathogen Competition in IFN Mediated Antiviral Defense	\$1,969,262	New
Ophthalmology	Huang, David	2 R01 EY013516-06	National Eye Institute	Advanced Imaging for Glaucoma	\$1,861,441	Renewal
Pathology	Tsukamoto, Hidekazu; Kaplowitz, Neil; Valente, Thomas; Asahina, Kinji; Kalra, Vijay K.; Machida, Keigo; Ji, Cheng; Lu, Shelly C.	2 P50 AA011999-11	National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism	Southern California Research Center for ALPD and Cirrhosis	\$1,620,000	Renewal
ZNI	Pato, Carlos N; Pato, Michele T.; Knowles, James A	208406	Massachusetts General Hospital	International Cohort Collection for Bipolar Disorder	\$978,001	New
OB/Gyn	Rodgers, Kathleen E.	1 RC1 AI080976-01	National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases	NorLeu3-A(1-7): Enhanced Recovery of Radiation Burns	\$942,319	New
Family Medicine	Gates, Jerry D.	2949sc	University of California, San Francisco	Pacific AIDS Education and Training Center	\$921,724	New
OB/Gyn	Rodgers, Kathleen E.; Hill, Colin K.; Louie, Stan G.; Dizerega, Gere S.	1 RC1 AI080223-01	National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases	A(17)-Mediated Mitigation of Radiation Induced Thrombocytopenia	\$907,390	New
ZNI	Henderson, Brian E.; Pike, Malcolm; Haiman, Christopher Alan	PO# Z864522	University of Hawaii at Manoa	Multiethnic/Minority Cohort Study of Diet and Cancer	\$898,653	Renewal





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Left, Omolade Maurice-Diya surfs on a mechanical board at the Keck School dean's reception for new students. Right, Dean Carmen A. Puliafito (center right) chats with returning students Andrew Grock, John Rawlings and Rebecca Van Horn.

## STUDENTS: New Keck School students welcomed—and returning students welcomed back—with parties

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sphere helped students ease into their new career as medical students.

“One of the reasons I chose Keck is because of the great environment,” said Cindy Luu, a first-year student. “When I visited, I felt like I was welcomed with open arms.”

Activities culminated in the annual rite of passage for new students—the white coat ceremony—held on Aug. 14 in the Harry and Celesta Pappas Quad.

Dean Puliafito noted that the students are embark-

ing on a medical career at a remarkable time in the nation’s history.

“It’s an exciting time for us because all of the nation’s attention now is on the future of health care in America,” he said. “However you feel about the direction of health care reform, one thing is sure—we have the nation’s attention focused on the important issues and challenges that face our community of health care providers, physicians and patients.”

The 168 new students heard addresses from Henri Ford, vice dean for medical education, and Jonathan

Lo Presti, associate professor of clinical medicine. Lo Presti, 2009 Humanism in Medicine Award Recipient, reminded the incoming students to always smell the flowers.

“Over the next four years, have fun, and don’t let the self-imposed stress of medical school weigh on you,” Lo Presti said. “Enjoy all your vacation time. Travel if you can. Go to the football games... Actively pursue a hobby while in school to remain a well-rounded individual. There’s really much more to life than medicine.”

## Calendar of Events

This Calendar of events is also online at [www.usc.edu/hscalendar](http://www.usc.edu/hscalendar) for the Health Sciences Campus community

### Monday, Aug. 24

**Noon.** “Novel Biomarkers for Lupus Nephritis,” Mehrnaz Hojati, University of Minnesota. GNH 6440 Info: (323) 442-1946

### Wednesday, Aug. 26

**8:30 a.m.** “Introduction to Clinical Research,” Jonathan Samet, USC. GNH 11-321. Info: (323) 226-7923

### Friday, Aug. 28

**8 a.m.** CHLA Grand Rounds. “Pediatric Quality and Safety: National Trends – Who’s Driving This Bus and Where’s My Seat?” Erin R. Stucky, UCSD. CHLA: Saban Research Auditorium. Info: (323) 361-2935

**8:30 a.m.** “Cystic Fibrosis,” Adupa Rao, USC. GNH 11-321. Info: (323) 226-7923

**11 a.m.** Hematology Grand Rounds. “The ITP Syndrome,” Howard Liebman, USC. IPT C2J103. Info: (323) 865-3950

**Noon.** Molecular Imaging Seminar Series. “Affibody: A New Protein Platform for Cancer Molecular Imaging,” Zhen Cheng, Stanford. HNRT LG503/4. Info: (323) 442-3858

### Thursday, Sept. 17

**Noon.** “To Stress or Not—New Insights into JNK Signaling,” Ze’ev Ronai, La Jolla, CA. HMR 100. Info: (323) 442-1283

### Saturday, Sept. 19

**10 a.m. – 5 p.m.** The 4th Annual Medical Student Leadership Conference. “Your Future in Medicine Awaits. Shouldn’t You Help Shape It?” Various speakers. KAM Mayer Auditorium. Info: [www.emanet.org/studentleadership](http://www.emanet.org/studentleadership)

### Thursday, Sept. 24

**Noon.** “Metabolism of vitamin D and bone density,” Vicente Gilsanz, USC/CHLA. HMR 100. Info: (323) 442-1283

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



Jon Nalick

### BE PREPARED

Left, USC Department of Public Safety Officer Elidia Garcia acts as a injured patient as part of an Aug. 6 final exam and drill for trainees of the Community Emergency Response Team.

About 40 members of the Health Sciences Campus community graduated from the program after the drill, which was the second performed on this campus.

The drill tested skills that trainees honed all summer in first aid, triage, fire suppression, search and rescue, and incident command.

HSC employees will have another opportunity to enhance their disaster response skills by providing basic first aid during the Great California ShakeOut on Oct. 15 at the Health Sciences Campus. See story page 3.

## 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.

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