

National Cancer Institute awards USC Epigenome Center \$10.4 million

By Leslie Ridgeway

The USC Epigenome Center has been awarded a \$10.4 million National Cancer Institute (NCI) grant that is expected to pave the way for more effective treatment for cancer patients.

The grant to the USC Epigenome Center, affiliated with the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and the Keck School of Medicine of USC, will fund a collaborative effort with Johns Hopkins University to collect epigenomic data from all major types of cancer over the next five years.

The grant is part of a \$5 billion infusion of new funds for cancer research and job creation announced Sept. 30 by President Barack Obama at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The funds for NIH will come from the \$787 billion economic stimulus package.

The epigenomic data collected will contribute to The Cancer Genome Atlas, a long-term genome characterization and sequencing project funded by the NCI and National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI). The project is designed to provide a comprehensive “map” of molecular changes in cancer.

“The grant names the collaborative effort between the USC Epigenome Center and Johns Hopkins University as one of several Genome Characterization Centers in the nation,” said Peter W. Laird, USC Epigenome Center director and co-principal investigator.

“The data we produce and analyze will lead to new targets for drug development and a better understanding of why

some patients respond better to certain drug treatments than others,” he said.

The Cancer Genome Atlas will produce and analyze data on several types of molecular changes, including mutations, chromosomal copy number alterations and gene expression. The USC Epigenome Center will be responsible for all epigenetic data production.

“The Cancer Genome Atlas will look at as many as 500 different samples of tumors and tissues from each cancer type to map the diversity of molecular changes within and between the different types of cancer,” said Peter Jones, director of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and co-investigator on the grant. “It’s a huge operation and a wonderful boost to our cancer research program.”

Epigenomics is the study of how parts of the genome are packaged and marked to indicate whether genes are available for use in a particular type of cell or tissue.

The USC Epigenome Center (<http://epigenome.usc.edu/>) was established in July 2007 as one of the nation’s first research centers focused entirely on the genome-scale study of epigenetics. Created with a \$10 million gift from the Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation, the center aims to solidify itself at the forefront of epigenetic research, a field that shows great promise for cancer and disease research.

The Cancer Genome Atlas (<http://cancergenome.nih.gov/>) is a collaborative effort between two branches of the NIH—the NCI and the NHGRI.

“The data we produce and analyze will lead to new targets for drug development and a better understanding of why some patients respond better to certain drug treatments than others.”

— Peter W. Laird, director, USC Epigenome Center



Jon Nalick

Located in the Doheny Eye Institute building, the Outpatient Surgery Center is designed to offer patients a more comfortable environment than a hospital setting while increasing efficiency in the hospital operating rooms.

Outpatient Surgery Center opens with focus on patient comfort

By Cheryl Bruyninckx

USC surgeons performed their first procedures in the newly refurbished, temporary home of the USC University Hospital Outpatient Surgery Center on Oct. 5.

Most outpatient surgery cases previously performed inside the USC University Hospital operating rooms are now being scheduled in the first floor of the Doheny Eye Institute building. This space was used as an outpatient surgery center in the past and with the added equipment and updates to the interior,

the facility is now welcoming patients again.

“Improvements in the perioperative care of outpatients have allowed surgeons to perform an increasing array of surgical procedures on an ambulatory basis,” said Gligor Gucev, medical director of outpatient surgery. “With the recent advances in anesthetic and surgical practices, it has been possible to provide patient care that has the same or better outcomes than in-hospital treatment for specific patient population.”

See **SURGERY**, page 3

USC walkers show they're all heart

By Leslie Ridgeway

A sea of cardinal red flowed through Pasadena as more than 120 employees from USC Norris Cancer Hospital and USC University Hospital participated in the American Heart Association Start! Heart Walk on Oct. 3.

The enthusiastic group, led by Matt McElrath, chief human resources officer for the hospitals, came to support research efforts and prevention of heart disease and stroke, the number one and two killers of Americans.

“This is a great opportunity for the USC hospitals to come together on a beautiful California morning and support the American Heart Association’s mission,” said McElrath. “It’s another example of the Trojan Family spirit.”

Staffers brought spouses, children (some as young as two months old) and pets with them on the 5K walk. Valerie Crowley, a registered nurse at the UH operating room, had her pet macaw Fireball on her shoulder.

“I decided to come walk for the cause, and represent USC and the OR,” said Crowley, watching as dozens of people posed with Fireball for a photo. Hired in March, just before the hospitals passed into USC hands, Crowley said she’s glad to be a Trojan: “It’s my new family.”



©Brook Photography

More than 120 USC employees gathered at the Rose Bowl on Oct. 3 to participate in the American Heart Association Start! Heart Walk. The annual event raises money to help prevent heart disease and stroke. USC University Hospital was the official sponsor of the finish line.

Harlyne Norris assumes chair of USC Norris Advisory Board

USC Trustee and benefactor Harlyne Norris is the new chair of the USC Norris Advisory Board, which met on campus Sept. 10. Norris follows in the footsteps of David Brubaker, who served as chair of the group since 1989.

Norris takes the helm as the Norris Board has adopted a new mission statement focused on strategic fundraising priorities, patient and family experience, marketing and community outreach, and education.

The Advisory Board is composed of community leaders and/or philanthropists whose experiences make them well suited to offer input and feedback that helps further the mission.

In support of research and patient care at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and Hospital, the Board plans to recruit new members who are active in the cancer community and focus primarily on fundraising this year.

“The revitalization of this Board will be a wonderful thing to watch in the year ahead,” Norris said.

Norris succeeds Brubaker, a USC alumnus who has supported the school for many years in various roles. In addition to his role at USC Norris, he is also former USC Alumni Association president and past member of the USC Board of Trustees.

Harlyne Norris has been a USC trustee since 2000 and is a trustee and past chairman of the Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation. Through the Norris Foundation, the Norris family has given nearly \$50 million to USC.

“With all the transformation around us here at Norris and on



Harlyne Norris (left) and Peter Jones share a light moment during Norris' first meeting as chair of the USC Norris Advisory Board.

the HSC campus, including several terrific new faculty recruits, it's great to know that we have a group of such supportive friends working alongside us to ensure our future success,” said Peter Jones, director of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center.

USC's Breast Cancer Awareness Day draws a crowd

By Sara Reeve

Tracy Manzaneras was 35 years old when she had a bilateral mastectomy at the USC Norris Cancer Hospital.

Manzaneras said her physicians guided her through her specially designed care plan: “From the moment I came here to USC, my doctors put me through a treatment plan that was tailored to fit me. I knew that they weren't going to let me die at 35—it wasn't an option. They gave me the will to fight.”

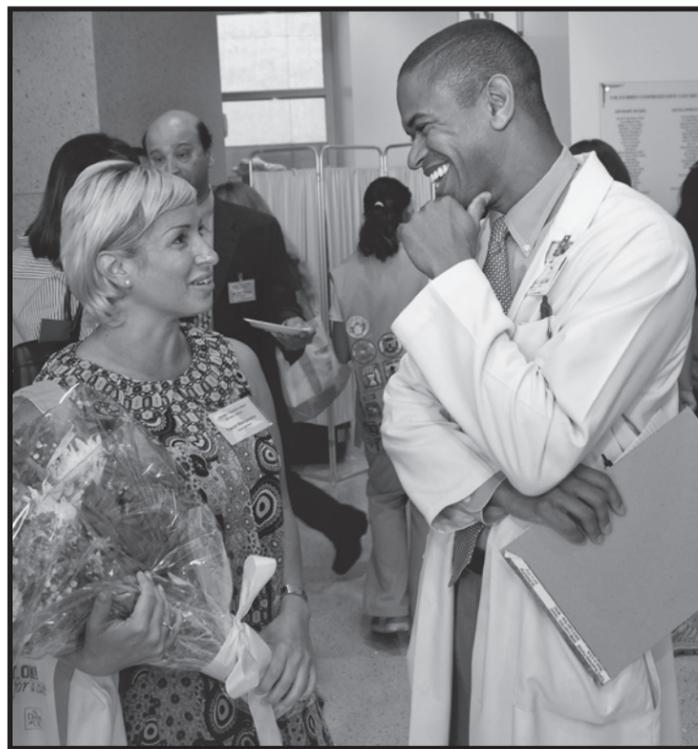
Manzaneras and another USC Norris Cancer Hospital patient, Eileen Seymour, shared their personal stories of living with breast cancer at the 2nd annual Breast Cancer Awareness Day on Oct. 3.

The event, hosted by the USC Norris Cancer Hospital and The Doctors of USC featured a community discussion, cancer screening assessments and free digital mammogram registrations.

The event attracted about 100 attendees to the Aresty

Auditorium and featured talks from Pulin Sheth, assistant professor of radiology; Debu Tripathy, professor of

medicine and co-leader of the Women's Cancer Program at USC Norris Cancer Hospital; Stephen Sener, professor of



Left, USC Norris patient and Breast Cancer Awareness Day speaker Tracy Manzaneras chats with USC surgeon Dennis Holmes during a break at the Oct. 3 event.

clinical surgery and chief of the division of surgical oncology; and Christy Russell, associate professor of medicine and co-director of the USC Norris Cancer Center and Hospital Breast Center.

The physician speakers focused on cancer prevention and early intervention, as well as on the need for personal, individualized treatment plans for each patient.

“When we see someone who is being screened for breast cancer, we look at environmental, genetic and lifestyle factors to customize a program for how they should undergo surveillance,” said Tripathy. “The treatment of breast cancer is multidisciplinary, and that's why it is so important that we come together as a team here, because there are many different areas of expertise that have to weigh in on a proper diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer.”

Sener emphasized the importance of early intervention by stressing the high survival rates for women whose cancers were found and treated while still small: “Size matters when it comes to breast cancer survival—the smaller the cancer, the more likely you are to survive. In aggressive screening programs, the average cancer found is one-half inch or smaller, and the survival rate is 85, 90 percent and above.”

General information about genetic counseling and its usefulness for women concerned about their risk of breast cancer was introduced by Russell, who explained the need for a thorough family history.

“For women who get breast cancer, 90 percent of them don't have strong risk factors,” said Russell. “But when you are talking with your doctor about your risk, there are questions to ask about your family. How many cases of breast cancer have occurred anywhere in your family—not just with your mother or sisters, but your mother's sisters, your mother's mother, and all of her sisters. And your dad—how many sisters did he have and did any of them have breast cancer?”

Patient speakers Manzaneras and Seymour helped make the physicians' statistics real for the audience.

Seymour, who held back tears as she read her story, told the audience that she thought she was doing everything right—eating healthy, exercising, etc.—when she found a lump in her breast five years ago. Her journey had its ups and downs but she ultimately found strength through volunteering at Norris to help other patients navigate their own journey with cancer.

“I know I have been blessed to have been treated here at Norris, where new medications, surgeries and clinical trials are available to patients,” said Seymour. “The nicest compliment I can give the hospital, from the valet to the day hospital, to mammogram services—they all work together to help us feel as normal as possible during our stay.”

Closing the seminar, Sheth left the audience with a crucial message that recurred throughout the day. “Early detection is your best protection,” he said.

The Weekly

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SURGERY: New center aims to boost efficiency, patient care

Continued from page 1

Services provided in the Outpatient Surgery Center include ophthalmology, orthopaedics, ENT, plastic surgery, urology, gynecology, general surgery and pain management. With these outpatient procedures returning to the Outpatient Surgery Center, more time in the operating rooms at USC University Hospital is available to accommodate the USC Norris Cancer Hospital surgery patients moving to the Norris Inpatient Tower.

“The Outpatient Surgery Center allows us to accommodate the Norris surgery patients when they are relocated, but also create a more efficient system,” said Mitch Creem, CEO of the hospitals. “Outpatient procedures are typically shorter, so there is a much quicker turnaround time.”

The six operating rooms in Doheny have been recently renovated to house outpatient surgery while a permanent home for an expanded outpatient surgery center is built in the basement of the HCCII building. The outpatient surgery center in HCCII will consist of eight newly created operating rooms with all brand new, state-of-the-art equipment.

A committee of USC physicians, staff and hospital administrators have been working with a team of architects for several months to put this plan together. They are looking forward to continuing the



Right, architect Michael Zakian describes the floor plan of the new temporary Outpatient Surgery Center during an Oct. 2 open house. The six operating rooms in the Doheny Eye Institute building that houses the center have been recently renovated.

Jon Naifick

journey and are enthusiastic about the progress made thus far.

“We are excited about the future of the Outpatient Surgery Center,” said Gucev. “With all of the latest technology available to us, we are able to offer new treatments as we continue providing world class care to our patients.”

President Sample fetes Avishai Sadan, new dean of the School of Dentistry

By Beth Dunham

A new School of Dentistry dean, Avishai Sadan, was formally installed during a ceremony at USC Town and Gown on Sept. 29, with Dentistry faculty and staff, as well as members of the larger USC community in attendance.

USC President Steven B. Sample introduced Sadan as an inspiring leader, clinician and researcher.

He said that during the search for the new dean of the USC School of Dentistry, Sadan was the only candidate who truly stood out from the others.

After receiving an engraved pewter plate, Sadan took

the podium and outlined his vision for the School of Dentistry.

The School of Dentistry is one of USC’s greatest assets, Sadan said.

“The USC School of Dentistry is known and respected worldwide for its numerous contributions to clinical education, research, and community outreach,” Sadan said. “What makes us truly special is how we are able to excel in the fields specific to dentistry while at the same time align perfectly with the university’s vision and mission.”

Sadan vowed to uphold the School’s reputation of excellent clinical education through advances in curri-

cula, faculty recruitment and infrastructure.

He also emphasized the need for nurturing the school’s strengths in scientific research and community outreach through careful assessment and the pursuit of new support opportunities.

“With a clear vision, alignment and focus, close monitoring of our financial abilities, and help from our alumni and corporate partners, the future is bright,” Sadan said. “We have started a journey; its destination is a place called eminence, the only place we belong.”

Sadan served previously as the associate dean for clinical affairs and chair of the De-



Left, USC President Steven B. Sample welcomes Avishai Sadan at a Sept. 29 ceremony.

partment of Comprehensive Care at the Case Western

Reserve University School of Dental Medicine.

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The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

An Oct. 2 HealthDay News article noted research by Assistant Professor of Clinical Neurology **Nerses Sanossian** which found that routine stroke interventions are underused in the very elderly.

An Oct. 2 *Daily Breeze* article reported that Professor of Psychiatry James Knowles and Director of the Zilkha Neurogenetic Institute **Pat Levitt** received \$9 million in federal funds to map how genes function in different regions of the brain throughout human development. KPCC-FM also reported on the grant.

An Oct. 2 *Los Angeles Daily News* article reported that Professor

of Preventive Medicine **Rob McConnell** will be honored with a Clean Air Award by the South Coast Air Quality Management District at a luncheon in downtown Los Angeles. *The Desert Sun* also reported the award.

An Oct. 2 *Financial Times* (U.K.) article quoted Associate Professor of Clinical Neurology Norman Kachuck about a new drug designed to improve walking ability in multiple sclerosis patients.

An Oct. 1 *Los Angeles Times* article reported that a \$100 million gift to St. John’s Health Center in Santa Monica will help link doctors and patients to hundreds of other hospitals,

as well as researchers at USC, so they can access medical discoveries quickly.

On Oct. 1, CNN’s “Your Bottom Line” ran an interview with Co-leader of the Women’s Cancer Program at USC Norris **Debu Tripathy** about medical tourism, in which patients travel to foreign countries to seek medical care.

A Sept. 30 *Los Angeles Daily News* article reported that the USC Epigenome Center received a \$10.4 million National Cancer Institute grant to help collect genetic data from cancer patients that researchers hope will lead to more effective treatments.

A Sept. 29 widely carried Reuters article highlighted research led by Professor of Medicine and oncologist at USC Norris **Heinz-Josef Lenz** on gender disparities in metastatic colon cancer survival. *U.S. News & World Report*, *Ivanhoe Newswire* and *WebMD* also covered the research.

A Sept. 24 *Businessweek* article highlighted USC in a story about the rising demand for physical therapists as the U.S. population ages. The story stated that USC’s physical therapy program is among the leading accredited programs in the United States.

Calendar of Events

This Calendar of events is also online at www.usc.edu/hscalendar for the Health Sciences Campus community

Tuesday, Oct. 13

9 a.m. Neurology Grand Rounds. "Multiple Sclerosis: Links Behind Place, Time and Self," Lilyana Amezcua, USC. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-7686

11:30 a.m. Psychiatry Grand Rounds. "Grief and Bereavement," Sidney Zisook, UC San Diego. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-4065

Wednesday, Oct. 14

8:30 a.m. "Introduction to Radiology," Alison Wilcox, USC. GNH 11-321. Info: (323) 226-7923

Noon. Renal Grand Rounds. "Prostatitis and BPH," Matthew Dunn, USC. GNH 4420. Info: (323) 226-7337

Noon. Research Center for Liver Diseases Seminar. "Disrupted Mitochondria Function and Nitric Oxide Biology in Fatty Liver Diseases," Shannon Bailey, Univ. of Alabama. HMR 100. Info: (323) 442-1283

Noon. ZNI Seminar. "Zooming in on Hippocampal Dysfunction: MRI Maps to Molecular Mechanisms," Scott Small, Columbia Univ. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-2144

4 p.m. KSOM Research Seminar. "Modeling Stem Cells," Arthur Lander, UC Irvine. MCH 149. Info: (323) 442-1144

Friday, Oct. 16

8 a.m. CHLA Grand Rounds. "Fish Oil: From Alpha to Omega (3)," Russell Merritt, USC/CHLA. Saban Research Aud. Info: (323) 361-2935

9 a.m. USC Childhood Obesity Research Ctr. "Sample-size Analysis: The Classical Approach, Plus More Crucial Issues," Ralph O'Brien, Western Reserve Univ. CSC 250. Info: (323) 442-2637

11 a.m. Hematology Grand Rounds. "CNS Lymphoma," Tracy Batchelor, Massachusetts General Hospital. IPT C2J103. Info: (323) 865-3950

Noon. Gastrointestinal Grand Rounds. "Case Presentations," Sarah Sheibani, USC. OPT A5C129. Info: (323) 409-7995

Noon. Pharmacology and Pharmaceutical Sciences Seminar. "Zinc Finger Nuclease Modified Hematopoietic Stem Cells Control HIV-1 in Vivo," Paula Cannon, USC. PSC 104. Info: (323) 442-2341

Saturday, Oct. 17

9 a.m. "Product Safety through Risk Communication," Various speakers. CHP 106. Info: (323) 442-3102

Monday, Oct. 19

Noon. Liver Grand Rounds. "Case Presentations," Joon Kim, USC. IPT C3J101. Info: (323) 409-7995

Noon. KSOM Research Seminar. "Paneth Cell A-Defensins: Peptide Mediators of Enteric Innate Immunity," Andre Ouellette, USC. NRT Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 442-1144

3 p.m. 12th Student, Faculty and Staff Art Gallery Show Opening Reception. KAM Basement Lobby. Info: (323) 442-2553

Tuesday, Oct. 20

4 p.m. "Beyond the Stimulus: Assessing Your Federal Research Outlook for 2010," Various speakers. NOR 7409. ESVP: usc.edu/esvp (code: federal)

Thursday, Oct. 22

Noon. Research Center for Live Diseases Seminar. "Progeroid Syndromes and the Molecular Basis of Aging," Lucio Comai, USC. HMR 100. Info: (323) 442-1283

5 p.m. USC Global Health Visions for Change Lecture Series. "Fighting the H1N1 Outbreak in Mexico," Mauricio Hernández Ávila, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health, Mexico. NRT Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 865-0419

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. 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



Jon Nalick

THE HEAT IS ON—Stressing the importance of disaster preparedness, campus safety officials held a fair on Sept. 30 at Harry and Celesta Pappas Quad with booths and demonstrations.

Above, flanked by trainer Chris Coppa, first-year medical student Andrew Gausepohl practices his firefighting skills.

Left, fair attendees hang on to furniture while getting tossed around by an earthquake simulator demonstrating the equivalent of a 5.5 magnitude quake.

Be prepared to shake and quake Oct. 15

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 on Oct. 15. Everyone on campus will be asked to "Drop, Cover, and Hold On" at that time as part of the statewide earthquake drill. For more information on the statewide drill, go to the state's Great California ShakeOut Web page at www.shakeout.org.

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