

The hospital upgrades 'will provide a more comfortable, convenient environment for our patients, [and] also allow our staff and physicians to offer better patient care.'

**—Mitch Creem,
USC hospitals CEO**



As part of the modernization project now under way, USC University Hospital is modernizing and improving hospital rooms in the tower built in 1991. Above is a computer rendering of how the rooms will be designed and appointed to offer patients and families a more comfortable, attractive environment.

USC University Hospital launches major renovation project

By Tania Chatila

USC University Hospital's 1991 Tower is about to undergo a major face-lift.

The first in a series of modernization projects at the hospital is under way and will include cosmetic upgrades in two patient care units in the 1991 Tower, 6-North and 7-North. Administrators say this is part of a larger plan to update all patient care units, and future plans will include upgrades requiring approval from the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development.

In this current project, 6-North and 7-North will be remodeled to include new furnishings in patient rooms and

family waiting rooms, such as tables, chairs, flat-screen televisions, window shades, curtains, message boards, clocks and lighting, as well as new finishes on the walls, hand rails, flooring and ceilings.

In addition, the nurse stations will receive a fresh, new look with new laminate surfaces and counter tops, along with a new accent wall.

The eight-week project kicked off on Jan. 13, when patients in 6-North and 7-North were transferred to other units in preparation for construction, which is scheduled to begin Jan. 18.

While the remodel is being completed, 6-North and 7-North will be closed

to staff and the public.

Construction is expected to be completed on Feb. 21, and patients will be moved back into the units on Feb. 25.

"We're very excited about this project, not only because it will provide a more comfortable, convenient environment for our patients, but because it will also allow our staff and physicians to offer better patient care to the people we serve day in and day out," said hospitals CEO Mitch Creem. "Once the work is completed, these units will serve as a reminder of the level of dedication we have here at USC University Hospital in providing quality patient care."

A similar plan to complete cosmetic

upgrades in 5-North and 6-South is expected to begin next month and culminate at the end of April.

Chief Nursing Officer Ellen Whalen said these cosmetic upgrades are very important to the patient experience.

"In addition to excellent staff and physicians, a hospital's look and feel can truly help patients feel confident about the care they are receiving," Whalen said.

Karen Ribback, executive director of transition and planning, said all of the planned improvements for the hospital—current and future—will help solidify USC University Hospital as a leading health care provider in the area.

Two Keck School faculty members named AAAS fellows

Two Keck School of Medicine faculty are among five USC faculty members who have been named fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in recognition of their outstanding contributions in science and engineering.

Peter Jones and Michael Stallcup of the Keck School, along with Michael Kassner, Shrikanth Narayanan and Viktor Prasanna of the USC Viterbi School of Engineering, will be among 531 scientists honored in February at the fellows forum of the 2010 association's annual meeting in San Diego.

Jones, director of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, was named for "general studies in the field of epigenetics which identified the pivotal role of DNA methylation in gene silencing in normal

development and cancer."

Stallcup, professor and chair of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, is being recognized for "distinguished contributions to the field of [gene] transcription, particularly the discovery and characterization of co-activators and roles of histone and non-histone methylation in transcriptional regulation."

The tradition of American Association for the Advancement of Science fellows began in 1874. Members are considered for the rank of fellow if nominated by the steering group of their respective sections, by three fellows or by the association's chief executive officer. The American Association for the Advancement of Science Council votes on the final list.

USC researcher awarded \$1.2 million NIMH grant to study autism diagnosis

By Sara Reeve

Olga Solomon, assistant professor of occupational science and occupational therapy research at the Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, received a \$1.2 million RO1 Challenge grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to examine pathways to autism diagnosis in African-American children in Los Angeles. The grant will fund a two-year study of 16 recently diagnosed children to examine how race, gender, socio-economic status,

family structure and health care communication affect diagnosis and provision of services.



Olga Solomon

"What we know about autism so far has not been considered in socio-cultural and socio-economic contexts, and there is still little understanding of everyday experiences and circumstances of children's and families' lives," said Solomon. "We know that even though the diagnosis of autism is carried out through standardized diagnostic instruments, it can

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SAVE THE DATE

USC president Steven B. Sample will deliver his annual address to the faculty on Jan. 26 at 12:30 p.m. The address will be broadcast on the Web at www.TakeOneDigital.com/Sample-20100126.

Hospital employees treated to special holiday meals

By Tania Chatila

More than 1,500 employees on both day and night shifts at USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital enjoyed a holiday party on Dec. 16, recognizing staff members for their efforts throughout the entire year.

The parking lot behind University Hospital was transformed into a winter wonderland for the daytime festivities, which included holiday singers and catered food.

USC University Hospital physical therapist Lissette Javier said the party was a good way to make employees feel appreciated. “The hospital environment is so dynamic. There are so many parts of the medical team,” she said. “It’s nice to see that collective pat on the back.”

Schelly Septda, manager of Medical Staff Services for USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital, said she was thankful administrators organized the event despite the nationwide recession.

“I know a lot of places aren’t doing anything this year,” she said. “I have a lot of friends whose companies didn’t have parties, so I’m really grateful.”

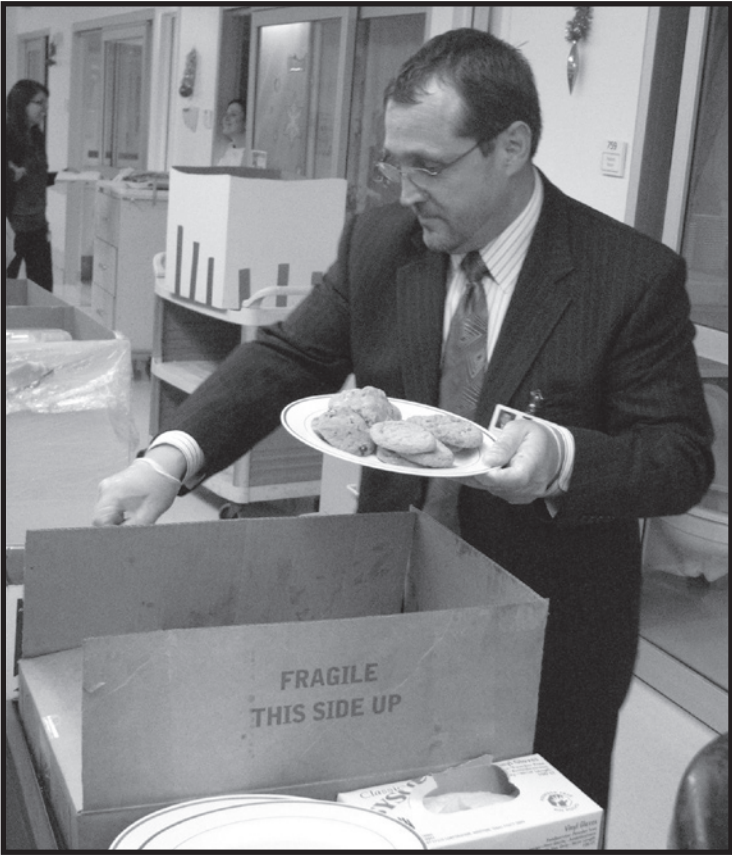
Later that evening, Mitch Creem, chief executive officer of the hospitals, led teams of administrators and other staff members to USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital to deliver meals to night shift personnel.

Vicky Ku, a nurse in University Hospital, said she was surprised and “impressed” to see Creem handing out trays of food.

“He’s the CEO. You usually don’t see them, especially this late,” she said. “This makes me feel more a part of the team.”

Tarek Salaway, executive administrator for Surgical Services/CVTI, also helped deliver meals to the night shift. He said it was important for the employees.

“Our hospital is a growing family, and all members of the family are core to our patient care team,” he said. “This



Leslie Ridgeway

Robert (Rob) Cooper, university vice provost for planning and budget, serves up cookies for the night shift at USC University Hospital as part of a Dec. 16 party recognizing staff members for their effort.

‘It’s nice to see that collective pat on the back.’

— USC University Hospital physical therapist Lissette Javier

was an opportunity for us to recognize and appreciate the team who takes care of our patients all through the night

and the efforts they make to make it a high quality environment to our patients and their families.”

USC opens new parking lot for hospital employees to accommodate growing demand

By Tania Chatila

In an effort to address the increased need for parking among employees at USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital, a new employee parking lot has opened up for day shift employees.

The Valley Warehouse Parking Lot, at 4121 Valley Boulevard, was opened Jan. 4 to accommodate the growing demand for patient, visitor and employee parking at the University Hospital structure, and increased patient demand from Healthcare Consultation Center I and II.

“With the growth of the Health Sciences Campus— increase in new patients and new hires—there are a lot more people parking in that structure,” said Charles Holloway, health care security

director. “This new lot will help ease that impact.”

The new lot is approximately 16,000 square feet, accommodates 300 parking spaces and is open Monday through Friday 5:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Shuttle service is provided for employees to and from USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital—with a goal of five- to seven-minutes from door to door, Holloway said.

In addition, an on-site security booth is staffed for the duration of the lot’s operating hours, making it a safe place for people to park, Holloway said.

“In the beginning, I was very skeptical about parking in the new lot,” said Theresa Murphy, nursing director at USC University Hospital. “But I’ve parked there a few

times now, and it couldn’t be any quicker or easier. And that flood light at night—it makes the lot look like an airport landing strip!”

Holloway said alleviating the parking impact on the University Hospital structure will help provide more parking for patients, which is the most important goal as the hospitals continue to attract more customers.

Paul Czajka, associate administrator for the hospitals, said, “Our organization is really growing, so it’s important that we are able to provide easy and convenient services to our patients. This new lot allows us to do that, while also giving us another opportunity to provide a new quick, safe and easy way for our employees to park and get to work every day. Our goal is

seven minutes or less.”

Holloway said that as of Jan. 8, nearly 100 employees were utilizing the new employee parking lot, but his goal is to reach 300.

As an incentive to encour-

age employees to park and ride, administrators will be holding weekly raffles with prizes such as gas cards and car washes, and monthly raffle prizes will include iPods, cameras and other items.

Stress Reduction Lab opens at HSC

By Joe Peters

The USC Center for Work and Family Life recently launched a Stress Reduction Lab on the Health Sciences Campus, featuring resources to help participants improve their mental and physical wellbeing.

The centerpiece of the lab is a biofeedback program called emWave, a program that measures heart rate data through a finger or ear clip sensor plugged into a computer.

Counselors at the center teach a simple technique that combines focus, breathing and the recall of positive emotional states to make heart rhythm patterns more smooth and coherent. According to Jason Sackett, repeated use of this technique in concert with emWave will “help reduce stress, improve concentration and even your mood.”

EmWave translates the information from a user’s heart rhythms into colorful graphics displayed on a computer monitor allowing users to watch, in real time, the effect of their thoughts and emotions on their heart rhythms.

Sackett explained that focusing on maintaining a consistent breathing pattern and visualizing positive emotions helps establish high coherence: that is, regularity in the user’s heart rate, which in turn leads to a reduction in stress hormones over time.

Initial training sessions last 30 minutes; subsequent sessions can be self-monitored and last from five to 15 minutes, depending on user preferences.

The Stress Reduction Lab is located in 233B CHP, and is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

For more information, contact the Center for Work and Family Life at (213)- 821-0800.

The Weekly

Next Issue: January 29

The Weekly is published for the faculty, staff, students, volunteers and visitors in the University of Southern California’s Health Sciences Campus community. It is written and produced by the Health Sciences Public Relations and Marketing staff. Comments, suggestions and story ideas are welcome. Permission to reprint articles with attribution is freely given.

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Did we say that?

A photo caption in the Jan. 8 issue of *The Weekly* incorrectly stated the hospital affiliation of post-anesthesia care nurse Beverly Talens. She works at USC University Hospital. *The Weekly* regrets the error.

History of USC Liver Unit presented at first Telfer Reynolds Lecture

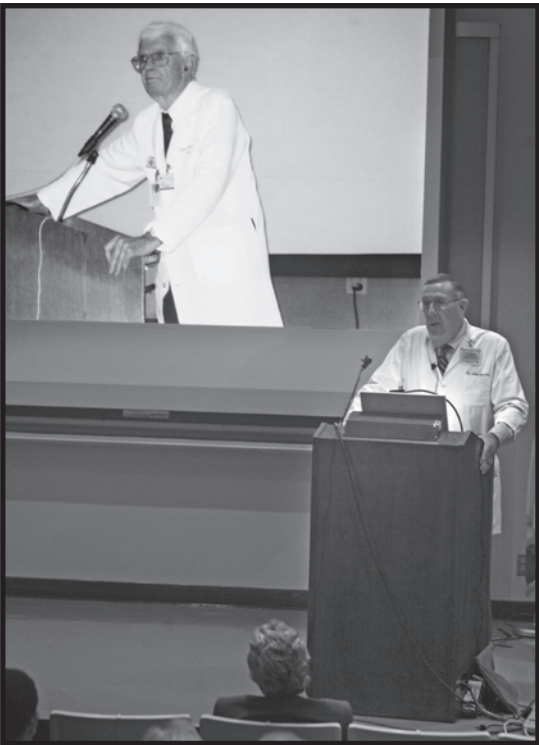
By Sara Reeve
Allan Redeker, professor emeritus at the Keck School of Medicine, presented a history of the USC Liver Unit at the first Telfer Reynolds Lecture on Dec. 10.
The lecture, sponsored by the USC Center for Liver Diseases, is named in honor of Telfer Reynolds, a longtime professor of medicine and founder of the hepatology program at USC, who passed away in 2004 at 82. The lectureship was funded through the donations of more than 100 individuals.
Redeker, who is a

renowned expert in the diagnosis and treatment of liver diseases, especially hepatitis, worked alongside Reynolds for 50 years.
“Few people will have the opportunity to work with one individual for such a long time period,” said Redeker, “much less work for that long and have no fights, and really become intimate friends.”
Redeker’s talk traced the beginning of USC’s liver program back to Reynolds’ realization, as a fellow in London, that he would get more hands-on experience during his

fellowship as a hepatologist than he would in cardiology—his original specialty. New expertise and techniques that Reynolds brought back to USC from that fellowship went on to form the core of USC’s program.
Speaking about then-novel hepatic vein catheterization procedure, Redeker said, “we made a lot out of this—it was the main procedure being done in the USC liver program at the time.” Redeker highlighted the groundbreaking research and clinical advances pioneered at USC, including supporting the earliest

liver transplants at USC.
He also spoke about the fellowship program, which attracted more than 100 fellows from around the globe. “From Israel to Australia, France to Taiwan, these doctors came to USC to learn the medical aspects of liver disease,” said Redeker.

Right, Allan Redeker, professor emeritus at the Keck School of Medicine, delivers the first lecture named in honor of Telfer Reynolds, a longtime professor of medicine and founder of the hepatology program at USC. A slide projection in the background shows Reynolds lecturing at the Health Sciences Campus.



Cancer Surveillance Program releases new report on cancer trends

By Meleeneh Kazarian
The USC-based Los Angeles Cancer Surveillance Program (CSP) has released a new report, “Cancer in Los Angeles County, Trends by Race/Ethnicity, 1976-2006,” which presents 30 years of surveillance data gathered at hospitals and other facilities diagnosing and treating cancer.
The data serve as a resource to generate new hypotheses regarding the causes of cancer, to monitor trends and patterns of cancer incidence, to identify high-risk population subgroups, and to develop effective strategies for cancer detection, prevention and treatment.
This is the first report that discusses the occurrence

of cancer in migrant populations, including Vietnamese, Pacific Islanders and South Asians.
Among males, African-Americans had the highest overall cancer rates. Among women, Hawaiian/Samoans and non-Latina whites had the highest rates of all cancers combined.
Cervical cancer rates declined among all groups, possibly due to effective screening methods. Lung cancer rates, on the other hand, increased in women for all groups, whereas rates declined in African-Americans and non-Latino white men. Colorectal cancer rates increased in Filipinos, Koreans and Japanese.
“It is worth highlighting that the data included in this report are not available anywhere else in the U.S.

because the CSP covers the most racially/ethnically diverse population in the country, while at the same time operating one of the most thorough surveillance programs in the U.S.,” said associate professor Myles Cockburn.
CSP is administered by the Keck School of Medicine and the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center.
The report was compiled by Cockburn, Lihua Liu, assistant professor, and Dennis Deapen, executive director of the Cancer Surveillance Program, in the Department of Preventative Medicine.
The report is available online at <http://tinyurl.com/yzcnxhv>.

AUTISM: Study seeks to improve and speed diagnosis of autism for African-American kids

Continued from page 1
also be quite subjective.”
The project, which is titled “Autism in Urban Context: Linking Heterogeneity with Health and Service Disparities,” features an interdisciplinary team, including Mary Lawlor,

professor of occupational therapy; Sharon Cermak, also professor of occupational therapy; Thomas Valente, professor of preventive medicine at the Keck School of Medicine; and three members from the USC University Center for

Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles—Marie Poulsen, Marian Williams and Larry Yin. Funds from the grant will support the team, as well as a post-doctoral position, several student positions, digital video

and audio data collection, management and analysis needs.
“I hope that because of the remarkable collective expertise of the research team, we will identify communicative and structural processes and dynamics that can be changed

to improve and speed up the acquisition of autism diagnoses for African-American children,” said Solomon. “This is so important because early identification and intervention in autism is critical and has lifelong implications for both children and families.”

The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

A Jan. 10 front page *Los Angeles Times* article quoted Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC director **Martin Pera** and featured the center in an article on state stem cell funding. Pera’s research was also featured in *La Opinion*.
A Jan. 9 *New York Times* article cited a study by **Neeraj Sood** of the USC School of Pharmacy and Harvard University colleagues, which found that an overhaul of the health care system would slow the growth of health care costs, allowing employers to spend less on health insurance and more on hiring workers.
On Jan. 8, MedCenter Today online ran a USC News story on the launch of the hospital marketing campaign.
A Jan. 6 Associated Press article

featured associate professor of research in the Department of Preventive Medicine, **Donna Spruijt-Metz** and the KNOWME Network, a wireless device that monitors activity levels and aims to help teens lose weight. The story ran in the *New York Times*, *USA Today* and on Yahoo! News. KTLA-TV and Telemundo also covered the project.
A Jan. 4 *New York Times* article quoted professor of obstetrics and gynecology and chief of the division of reproductive endocrinology and infertility **Richard Paulson** about the California Medical Board formally accusing Nadya Suleman’s fertility doctor of negligence and violation of professional guidelines.
A January *Chicago Reporter* article quoted associate professor of clinical preventive medicine **Andrea Hricko**

about potential health risks from rail yards.
The cover story in the January issue of *National Geographic* featured professor of ophthalmology **Mark Humayun** and the retinal eye implant he developed.
A Dec. 30 *New York Times Magazine* article featured **Drew Pinsky** and his work on TV and radio shows like “Celebrity Rehab with Dr. Drew” and “Loveline.” The profile noted that in addition to his media work, Pinsky maintains a private practice, teaches psychiatry at the Keck School of Medicine, and directs the chemical-dependency services department at Aurora Las Encinas Hospital.
A Dec. 29 *USA Today* article quoted professor of psychiatry, neurology and

gerontology **Lon Schneider** about a recent study, which found that ginkgo biloba doesn’t slow cognitive decline in elderly patients. ABC News and HealthDay News articles also quoted Schneider about the study.
On Dec. 25, KABC-TV interviewed Keck School of Medicine student **Ian MacQueen** about a Mexican clinic where American medical professionals donate their services.
A Dec. 23 *Los Angeles Daily News* article highlighted assistant professor of pediatrics and pathology **Elizabeth Lawlor** and director of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Program at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and associate professor of pediatrics **Markus Muschen**, who received grants from the organization Stand Up To Cancer to find innovative cures.

Calendar of Events

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

Tuesday, Jan. 19

9 a.m. Neurology Grand Rounds. “Bioenergetics of Menopause: Starving the Brain to Alzheimer’s Disease,” Roberta Brinton, USC. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-7686

11 a.m. “Diabetes and Obesity: Targeting the Gut and the Brain,” Tony Lam, University of Toronto. HMR 100. Info: (323) 442-2806

Noon. Psychiatry Grand Rounds. “Psychotherapy Training: E-resources for Program Development,” Priyanthy Weerasekera, McMaster Univ. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-4065

5 p.m. Institute for Global Health Lecture Series: Visions for Change. “The Global Tobacco Epidemic: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly,” Judith Mackay, World Health Org. NRT Aresty Aud. Info & RSVP: (323) 865-0419

Wednesday, Jan. 20

Noon. “Role of MeCP2 & HDACs in Regulating Synapse Function and Behavior,” Lisa Monteggia, UT Southwestern Medical Ctr. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-2144

Thursday, Jan. 21

Noon. Cellular Homeostasis Lecture Series. “Extracellular Matrix and Tissue Architecture Regulate Epigenetics of Tissue Specificity and Breast Cancer,” Mina Bissell, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. MCH 156. Info: (323) 442-3121

Friday, Jan. 22

11 a.m. “ASH Updates on Myeloma,” Ann Mohrbacher, USC. IPT C2J103. Info: (323) 865-3914

Noon. “The Poetry of Healing: A Doctor’s Education in Identity and Empathy,” Rafael Campo, Harvard. MCH 149. Info: (323) 442-2553

Monday, Jan. 25

Noon. KSOM Research Seminar. “Type VII Collagen Therapy for Skin Wounds and Genetic Dystrophic Epidermolysis Bullosa,” Mei Chen, USC. NRT Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 442-1144

Tuesday, Jan. 26

5:30 p.m. USC OT Lifestyle Redesign: Weight Management Series. CSC 133. Fees and info: (323) 442-3340

Thursday, Jan. 28

Noon. Cellular Homeostasis Lecture Series. “Roles of the Chaperones in the ER – Mitochondrion Cross-talk,” Tsung-Ping Su, NIH. MCH 156. Info: (323) 442-3121

Friday, Jan. 29

8 a.m. Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Grand Rounds. “Cervical Cancer Prevention in El Salvador,” Juan Felix, USC. NOR 7409. Info: (323) 442-1180

Thursday, Feb. 4

Noon. “Identification of Signaling Pathways Critical for Higher Cognitive Functions,” Genevieve Konopka, UCLA. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-1509

Monday, Feb. 8

Noon. “Secreted Semaphorins Control Spine Distribution and Morphogenesis in the Postnatal CNS,” Tracy Tran, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-1509

Tuesday, Feb. 9

Noon. Psychiatry Grand Rounds. “Initiatives to Improve Mental Health Services for Latinos with Serious Mental Illness,” Steve Lopez, UCLA. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-4065

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 *The 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.



Sara Reeve

HOLIDAY CHEER—School of Pharmacy Dean R. Pete Vanderveen (left) and Keck School of Medicine Dean Carmen A. Puliafito (right) offer holiday greetings to staff and faculty of their schools at a Dec. 21 breakfast at the Plaza Café. Hundreds of people attended the event, which featured visits by Santa and free food. The event was one of many held both on and off campus by units of the university during the holiday season (see related story, page 2) to show appreciation for the hard work of university staff, faculty, hospital employees and other members of the campus community.

Program offers up to \$5,000 for USC employees who refer qualified hospital job applicants

By Tania Chatila

A popular hospital recruiting program has been expanded to allow participation from all USC employees.

The employee referral program, which provides cash incentives for current employees who refer applicants for qualifying positions at USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital, is now open to all employees at both the Health Sciences Campus and the University Park Campus.

Administrators decided to extend the offer campus-wide as part of an aggressive effort to fill the more than 400 open positions at the two hospitals with the best qualified candidates.

“The hardest thing about recruitment is finding seasoned and qualified candidates who will support our hospitals’ needs,” said John Odom, hospital recruitment manager in the human resources department.

Odom states that not only does the organization reduce the cost of advertising for an open job listing, but referral incentives give employees

an opportunity to make extra money. It can also create a happier and more cohesive work environment if employees are working alongside friends or former co-workers.

The program is actively recruiting for nurses, physical and speech therapists, clinical lab scientists, respiratory therapists, echo technicians and environmental service workers.

At most, employees can receive up to \$5,000 for referring a nurse who is hired full-time at either of the USC hospitals.

Payouts for successfully referring an environmental service worker are up to \$300 for full-time positions.

Since she was hired in August, Darlene Aguilar, a licensed vocational nurse in University Hospital, has successfully referred at least two registered nurses for hire.

“It’s a wonderful program because it really awards an employee for being able to bring in great nurses to a great facility,” said Aguilar. “And it’s very rare in this economy to find a program like that.”

USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital currently have 414 open positions, of which 187 are for nurses.

And with a 92 percent retention rate in 2009, the hiring boom is a factor of the recent hospital acquisitions and the need for an increased workforce, Odom said.

Ellen Whalen, chief nursing officer for the hospitals, said the referral program is one of the top tools used to recruit well-qualified nurses.

“As our nurses are content with their work environment and challenged by their patient assignments, they refer nurses to us who they believe would enjoy the same challenges,” said Whalen. “Referrals bring a cohesiveness to our staff, because our nurses provide candidates they know they can count on to provide excellent care to our patients, and who will provide support to their colleagues.”

For more information about the employee referral program, visit the Human Resources office on the fifth floor of the Doheny Eye Institute.

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