

USC hospitals' staff, physicians unite for inpatient transition

By Tania Chatila

The USC Norris Cancer Hospital staff and the USC University Hospital staff joined forces this week in a collaborative effort to begin caring for all inpatients at USC University Hospital.

The plan has been years in the making, and is part of a larger modernization and expansion initiative to provide enhanced services and facilities for all patients at the USC hospitals. That initiative began with the March 1 opening of the new, state-of-the-art Norris Inpatient Tower at USC University Hospital to treat USC Norris Cancer Hospital inpatients.

CEO Mitch Creem touted all of the hard work and efforts put in by staff members and physicians this week, as well in the many months leading up to the transition of patients.

"This is a very significant milestone for the USC hospitals and something we should all be proud of," Creem said. "We have truly come together as one team. The Norris culture of compassion and expertise now blends with the USC University Hospital culture



Tania Chatila

Nurse Manager Debora Peterson opens up a box of cookies with nurse Latrice Holmes on the eighth floor of USC University Hospital on March 1. All employees at the USC hospitals received cookies and USC badge retractors on March 1 in celebration of the successful transition of USC Norris Cancer hospital inpatients to USC University Hospital.

of compassion and expertise, offering our patients the very best brand of care—the USC brand."

The transition was successful with no major incidents reported. By the morning of March 2, about 45 calls had been taken at the Transition Command Center, which was created specifically to resolve any immediate issues related to the transition.

Most of the issues were

resolved shortly after.

On the nursing floors, managers said staff members were being helpful and supportive of one another.

"The fact that we came here all together really made things easier," said Latrice Holmes, a nurse who transitioned from USC Norris Cancer Hospital to the eighth floor of USC University Hospital's Norris Inpatient

See **MOVE**, page 4

Looking ahead to 2035, USC maps out plan for campus

By Ina Fried

Making the USC Health Sciences Campus a more inviting place to study, work and live was high on the wish lists of students, faculty and staff during town halls conducted the week of Feb. 15 by the team that is developing the Health Sciences Campus Master Plan.

The plan, which looks ahead to the year 2035, is examining "how we make the campus a more efficient, functional and beautiful place" for patients, families and visitors, as well as for faculty, staff and students, said Laurie Stone, USC university counsel, who does land use and environmental planning for the university. "We're looking at every aspect of the campus."

At the town hall meetings, Stone introduced the architectural team working on the HSC Master Plan. The architects represent two companies that have worked extensively with other universities and academic medical centers.

Adam Gross, campus planning director, Ayers Saint Gross, based in Baltimore, and Scott P. Kelsey, principal in charge, CO Architects, Los Angeles, made brief presentations on the team's work in the master planning process and then encouraged members of the audience to provide input on campus needs. The architects said the broad perspectives of the participants, who spoke up for each other as well as for their own interests, impressed them.

One need mentioned was a conveniently located gym or fitness center with free weights, a swimming pool and a sauna. More and better on-campus housing for students, postdoctoral trainees and visiting scholars—with more convenient and varied food services—also emerged as important

See **PLAN**, page 3

'This is a very significant milestone for the USC hospitals and something we should all be proud of.'

—Mitch Creem, CEO of USC hospitals



Photos/Jon Nalick



THAT'S THE SPIRIT!

The Keck School of Medicine of USC and the USC School of Pharmacy celebrated Spirit Day on March 2, with In-N-Out Burgers, music and games in Harry and Celesta Pappas Quad (immediately above). Left, second-year pharmacy student Anna Deng races to complete a game of Operation as part of a Keck-versus-Pharmacy relay race that featured stations requiring contestants to count pills, dress in scrubs and scurry on crutches. The School of Pharmacy won the best of three heats. Top, Emmanuel Akinwale, a second-year pharmacy student, attempts to catch up to the competition after falling behind while dressing in scrubs.

First in series of USC University Hospital unit upgrades completed

By Tania Chatila

For USC nurse Svetlana Kosterina, walking into USC University Hospital's 7-North patient care unit after more than a month away was like walking into a brand new hospital.

"It looks so different, it's really beautiful," said Kosterina.

She was just one of dozens of nurses and patients who were temporarily moved out of 6-North and 7-North in the hospital's 1991 Tower while contractors completed a long-anticipated cosmetic upgrade. The units were reopened and patients and staff members moved back in on Feb. 26.

"I'm so excited that I get to come back to work here," Kosterina said. "It's so much more spacious and open and bright."

The renovations of 6-North and 7-North took about six weeks to complete and include new furnishing in patient rooms and family waiting rooms, as well as new finishes on the walls, handrails, flooring and ceilings. In addition, the nurse stations received a fresh look with new laminate surfaces and counter tops. New accent walls behind the nurse stations will be installed

in the coming weeks.

"After nearly two months of work, we are so pleased to see the finished project," said USC hospitals CEO Mitch Creem. "These renovations truly provide more comfortable, quality accommodations for our patients, and our physicians and staff are excited about working in a new, modernized environment. We look forward to completing similar projects throughout USC University Hospital."

On Feb. 25, about 40 employees from throughout the hospital toured the remodeled floors during a two-hour Open House. Charlene Tran, also a nurse on 7-North, said she loved the lavender color of the unit walls. "It's so calm and gives you peace of mind," she said. "Everything is really beautiful."

Many employees also commented on the flooring.

"I noticed it right when I walked in that the floors are not slippery," said Emilia Dewi, an Occupational Therapy resident. "That's always a concern with patients—that they might slip and fall—so this kind of flooring is really nice and important to have."

Administrators thanked



Tania Chatila

Patient luxury rooms in the newly-remodeled 6-North and 7-North patient care units at USC University Hospital include wood flooring, ample space for visiting family and friends, and amenities such as a sitting area with a table.

everyone involved in the renovation project, including the nursing and Environmental Services staff, for the extra time and effort they put in completing the patient moves, cleaning up the units and refurbishing the rooms.

"It really takes the dedication and teamwork of an entire staff to successfully complete a project like this on time," said Karen Ribback, executive director of Transition and Planning for the hospitals.

The 6-North, 7-North

upgrades were just the first in a series of modernization projects under way at the hospital. This week, patients were transferred out of 5-North to other units in preparation for a similar remodel there. That project is expected to be completed March 28, and patients moved back in on March 29. Then on April 1, patients will be moved out of 6-South. Renovations there are expected to be completed April 27, and patients moved back in on April 28.

Keck, USC Hospitals lead list of donors to Good Neighbors Campaign

By Joe Peters

In spite of a dismal economic climate, 2009 was a record-breaking year for the Good Neighbors Campaign, which raised \$1.2 million in donations from USC faculty and staff. Members of the Health Sciences Campus made significant contributions to this effort.

One major donor to the campaign was a relative newcomer to the Trojan family: USC Hospitals. Donations from USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital totaled \$55,731, the largest amount from any administrative unit. Not to be

outdone, the Keck School of Medicine topped the list of USC academic units, raising \$124,344 for the campaign, up from last year's total of \$95,786. The participation rate at the school increased as well, from 11 percent to 14 percent. Similarly, the School of Pharmacy boosted its participation rate this year three percentage points to 37 percent, bringing in a total of \$18,599.

The Health Science Libraries raised \$4,343 while achieving a 100 percent participation rate; it was one of only seven university units (and the only unit on the Health Sciences

Campus) to do so.

Started in 1993 by USC President Steven B. Sample, the Good Neighbors Campaign has raised over \$11 million in its 15-year history to help support community programs in local neighborhoods.

"This overwhelming generosity is a tangible measure of how much USC's faculty and staff have embraced their neighborhoods," said Sample. "They want to make a difference. And they are confident that this partnership will continue to strengthen both USC and its neighbors for decades to come."

Genetic variations may hint at better cancer treatments

By Meghan Lewit

USC researchers, for the first time, have identified specific genetic variations that predict clinical outcomes in patients with gastric (stomach) cancer.

Genetic variations within the CD44 gene may be responsible for early tumor recurrence and metastasis, said Thomas Winder, a postdoctoral research fellow at the Keck School of Medicine and the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, and the lead author on the study. The researchers, led by principal investigator Heinz-Josef Lenz, professor of medicine and preventive medicine in the division of medical oncology at the Keck School, found that patients with the genetic variations experience cancer recurrence more than three times sooner than patients without the variations.

Winder presented the findings during a news briefing at the American Society of Clinical Oncology 2010 Gastrointestinal Cancers Symposium. The symposium was held Jan. 22-24 at the Orlando World Center Marriott.

"If our findings are confirmed in larger, prospective clinical trials, testing for the CD44 genetic variations could help us to identify patients at high risk who might benefit from more aggressive treatment," Winder said. "CD44 might also be a potential target for drug development to individualize therapeutic strategies."

A major function of the CD44 gene is its role in cellular adhesion—the loss of which is associated with cancer development—and cell migration. Genetic variations may impact cell survival and proliferation, as well as making cancer cells more resistant to chemotherapy or radiation therapy.

Winder and colleagues isolated and analyzed DNA samples from 137 patients with localized gastric cancer treated at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. The investigators found that patients who had the CD44 genetic mutation had a significantly shorter time to recurrence (2.1 years) compared to those without this mutation (7 years).

"Additional studies are needed to confirm these preliminary results," Winder said. "However, this is a very promising development in understanding and predicting outcomes for patients with gastric cancer."

The Weekly

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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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Readers offer *The Weekly* good marks, call for broader coverage

In an online survey conducted in December, readers of *The Weekly* gave the publication generally good marks for news content and presentation, but also offered suggestions on how it could be improved, diversified and disseminated.

More than 100 readers completed the survey; one-third were students, one-third were staff members and 18 percent were faculty members. The remaining 16 percent were composed of alumni, donors and other USC affiliates.

The survey showed that most respondents (74 percent) view the publication as easy to obtain and that the overwhelming majority of readers pick up physical copies of the newspaper from campus racks or receive them in the mail.

Survey analysis also showed that despite the longstanding availability of *The Weekly* in HTML, PDF and RSS versions online, comparatively few readers (10 percent, 6 percent and 3 percent, respectively) accessed the publication in those formats—in some cases because readers were unaware that the electronic versions existed.

The addresses for electronic versions of *The Weekly* are published in every printed issue and are located in the masthead and staff box

at the bottom of Page 2. The addresses are:

- HTML—theweekly.usc.edu
- PDF—www.usc.edu/hsc/info/pr/1volpdf
- RSS—www.usc.edu/hscw

Overall, survey responses were positive. For example, a majority of readers surveyed (55 percent) said they consider *The Weekly* “a valuable resource.” They also overwhelmingly applauded the look and writing of *The Weekly*, with almost 74 percent of readers agreeing that the publication “is well written” and an equal number agreeing that it “is well designed/illustrated.”

In terms of content, half of readers surveyed said that *The Weekly* delivered news “I want to know,” while a smaller proportion (39 percent), agreed that it delivered “news I need to know.”

News subjects that garnered the most positive interest included (in descending order): community news, upcoming events, news-makers, research and researcher profiles, featured lectures and symposia, awards and honors, and construction projects and progress.

Survey responses underscored the value of broad coverage, with members of numerous schools, departments and programs suggesting expanded coverage of their constituencies.

Addresses
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PLAN: USC solicits input on improving Health Sciences Campus

Continued from page 1

issues to participants, who represented faculty, staff and graduate and professional students from the School of Pharmacy, Physical Therapy and Keck School of Medicine.

“Lack of adequate housing is one of the worst impediments to recruiting students,” said one faculty member. “It’s a serious problem for faculty, students and visitors. If you stay in Seaver (the only residence hall on campus), there’s no place to eat in the evening or on the weekend and no

place to shop. You need a car.”

Short-term housing—such as an on-campus hotel and a conference center—would be “great for families of patients, as well as for medical student interviews,” a student suggested. Faculty and staff added that the facilities also would be beneficial for continuing medical education programs.

Participants said the campus has few places for people to congregate—to study, to hold meetings, to eat or to relax. Among the proposed

solutions were more seating in outdoor areas, more lecture halls and classrooms of various sizes, and a university center building featuring varied food and beverage options.

Other concerns included better marking of the campus borders, more wayfinding signage, better lighting and improved transportation.

“What’s common in our work with academic medical centers is that we’re trying to facilitate better connections between bench and bed, between clinical enterprises, research enterprises and teaching enterprises and to support those connections—which is a movement nationally—with other amenities, with opportunities for more housing and more retail,” architect Gross said. “We want to make these places more attractive places 24/7, rather just places you go to your lab and then you get



At the table, leading the Feb. 16 discussion of the Campus Master Plan are (from left): Dana Perzynski and Adam Gross, of Ayers Saint Gross; Laurie Stone, USC university counsel; and Jorge de la Cal, of CO Architects.

in your car and go home.”

He said that having a long-term plan not only sets goals for the distant future, but also helps guide short-term planning to prevent future roadblocks.

In parallel with the site analysis, the Campus Master Plan team also began high-level program analysis, projecting out over 25 years. They met with numerous small groups and recently

made a presentation to USC Executive Vice President and Provost C.L. Max Nikias.

The planning team expects to return to the Health Sciences Campus in April to share options, get additional feedback and draft the plan. The goal is to complete the plan in the Fall.

For more information or comments about the HSC Master Plan, e-mail lmstone@usc.edu.



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The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

A March 1 *Los Angeles Times* article quoted professor of pediatrics and pediatric cardiologist at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles **Alan Lewis** about cholesterol screening for children.

A Feb. 26 *Los Angeles Times* article quoted assistant professor of clinical neurology **Nerses Sanossian** about a new study on the effectiveness of balloon angioplasty and stenting.

A Feb. 25 WebMD article featured research by assistant professor of neurology **Amytis Towfighi** that found that women ages 45 to 54 are now three times more likely than their male counterparts to report having had a stroke, with the culprit appearing to be abdominal fat. *La Opinion*, *Science News* and *The Suncoast News* also covered the research.

On Feb. 24, KPCC-FM quoted professor of preventive medicine and director of the USC Childhood Obesity Research Center **Michael Goran** about designated “fitness zones” in South Los Angeles.

A Feb. 24 *Los Angeles Times* column featured a health care reform proposal by clinical

professor of medicine **Paul Toffel**.

Two Feb. 23 *Los Angeles Times* articles quoted professor of medicine in the cardiovascular division Robert Kloner about former Vice President Dick Cheney’s fifth heart attack.

A Feb. 22 *Los Angeles Times* article quoted professor of orthopaedic surgery **Thomas Vangsness** in an article about whether supplements help prevent joint pain.

A Feb. 19 *Long Beach Press-Telegram* article quoted Chief Human Resources Officer at the USC hospitals **Matthew McElrath** and reported that medical centers run by USC created 500 new jobs in 2008 and are looking to hire an additional 400 new employees this year. Hiring soared after USC acquired the USC University Hospital and the USC Norris Cancer Hospital from Tenet Healthcare Corp., the story stated.

Denver affiliate KMGH-TV highlighted work by professor of ophthalmology **Mark Humayun** and colleagues at the USC Doheny Eye Institute in a story on technological advances toward curing blindness.

Calendar of Events

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

Monday, Mar. 8

11:30 a.m. NOR Auxiliary Speaker Series. “Advances in Surgical Treatment of Breast Cancer at Norris Cancer Center,” Stephen Sener, USC. NOR 7409. Info: (323) 865-0669

Noon. KSOM Research Seminar. “Implantable Drug Delivery Pumps Enabled by Polymer BioMEMS,” Ellis Meng, USC. NRT Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 442-1144

Noon. ZNI Seminar. “The HapMap Resource is Providing New Insights into Ourselves and its Application to Pharmacogenomics,” Wei Zhang, Univ. of Chicago. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-2144

Tuesday, Mar. 9

9 a.m. Neurology Grand Rounds. “Gray Matter Involvement in Multiple Sclerosis,” Nancy Sicotte, UCLA. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-7686

12:15 p.m. USC Center for Excellence in Teaching. “Extreme Makeover: Classroom Edition,” CET Teaching Assistant Fellows. KAM B21/23. Info: (213) 740-3959

Wednesday, Mar. 10

8:30 a.m. “Management of Vasospasm,” Arun Amar, USC. IRD 732. Info: (323) 226-7923

Noon. ZNI Seminar Series. “Secreted Semaphorins Control Spine Distribution and Morphogenesis in the Postnatal CNS,” Tracy Tran, Johns Hopkins. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-2144

Friday, Mar. 12

11 a.m. Hematology Grand Rounds. “Toxic Assets: Iron Overload in Patients with Hematologic Malignancies,” Vinod Pullarkat, City of Hope. IPT C2J103. Info: (323) 865-3950

Noon. “The Parasympathetic Nervous System Regulates Organogenesis by Controlling Progenitor Cell Proliferation,” Sarah Knox, NIH. CSC 120A. Info: (323) 442-3170

Noon. “Case Presentations,” Angie Sadeghi, USC. OPT A5C129. Info: (323) 409-7995

Tuesday, Mar. 16

Noon. KSOM Research Seminar. “Mechanism and

Targeting of DNA Binding by the RAG Proteins During V(D)J Recombination,” David Schatz, Yale. NRT Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 442-1144

Friday, Mar. 19

8:30 a.m. “Metalloproteinases: Effectors of Inflammation,” William Parks, Univ. of Washington. IRD 732. Info: (323) 226-7923

11 a.m. Hematology Grand Rounds. “AIDS Related Lymphomas: Update 2010,” Alexandra Levine, City of Hope. IPT C2J103. Info: (323) 865-3950

Noon. “Case Presentations,” Kian Keyashian, USC. OPT A5C129. Info: (323) 409-7995

2 p.m. Center for Applied Molecular Medicine Physical Sciences in Oncology Seminar. “Single Cell Signaling & Pathologies in Primary Cell Cancers and Autoimmunity: The Essential Link Between Mechanism and Accurate Diagnostics,” Garry Nolan, Stanford. CSC 201. Info: (310) 272-1640

Monday, Mar. 22

Noon. KSOM Research Seminar. “The Cochlear Amplifier – A Tale of Two Motors,” Federico Kalinec, House Ear Inst. NRT Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 442-1144

Wednesday, Mar. 24

8:30 a.m. “Lung Transplant,” Michael McFadden, USC. IRD 732. Info: (323) 226-7923

Noon. USC Center for Excellence in Teaching. “Best Practices to Provide Effective Feedback and Evaluate Your Learners,” Win May and Donna Elliott, USC. KAM B21/23. Info: (213) 740-3959

Noon. “Financing a Career in Primary Care,” Hector Flores and Chris Hiromura, White Memorial Medical Ctr., and Alicia Rugley, USC. HMR 100. Info: (323) 442-1678

Thursday, Mar. 25

4 p.m. “Immune Thrombocytopenic Purpura: Is the Management Paradigm Changing?” James George, Univ. of Oklahoma. IPT C2J104. Info: (323) 865-3913



A FEUDAL CONTEST—Two teams of mixed Keck School of Medicine and USC School of Pharmacy students clashed on Feb. 25 in a medicine-themed game of “The Family Feud.” Above, the winning gold team—from left: Daniel Stefanko (Keck), Chris Munoz (Pharmacy), Jenny Conti (Keck), Khang Vu (Pharmacy), Devonet Taylor (Pharmacy)—celebrate winning a round over the cardinal team as game show host Jaquelyn Manougian (Pharmacy) announces the score. The event was designed to boost student interaction.

Keck School professor honored for lifetime achievement

Robertson Parkman, professor of pediatrics and microbiology at the Keck School of Medicine and Childrens Hospital Los Angeles, has received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Pediatric Blood and Marrow Transplant Consortium (PBMTC).

Parkman received the honor at the PBMTC’s Spring Business Meeting on Feb. 25 in Florida.

Parkman said, “The goal of bone marrow trans-

plantation since the first successful transplant in 1968 has always been the same—how to provide the benefits of transplantation to all children who might benefit. The effort has taken the dedication of doctors, nurses and scientists to achieve the progress we have made.”

Parkman served as head of the division of research immunology/bone marrow transplantation at CHLA from 1983-2002.

MOVE: Focus now turns to renovation of Norris facilities

Continued from page 1
Tower on Monday. “I actually worked (at USC University Hospital) before, so to me there are a lot of familiar faces. And the floor is really nice.”

With all inpatient admissions being channeled to USC University Hospital, administrators are now focusing on plans to renovate and expand the current Norris facilities in the future. All outpatient services will continue to be provided at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and Hospital building.

To celebrate Monday’s events, trays of cookies and balloons were placed in several of the USC hospitals’ lobbies. Cookies, balloons and a special note from Creem were delivered to all departments at USC University Hospital, USC Norris Cancer Hospital, the Judy and Larry Freeman Cancer Day Hospital, and the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Additionally, employees at both hospitals received a special USC badge retractor,

and patients at the hospitals received a fleece blanket with the USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital logos.

“I thought it was a really nice gesture,” said patient Daniel Medrano, who

received his blanket while being cared for on the 7th floor intensive care unit at USC University Hospital. “This hospital is really fantastic. I’m going to take this blanket home with me and be really proud of it.”

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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.

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.