

## Patients drive success of Evaluation and Treatment Center

**'This center offers a quick and convenient way for patients to be seen, and for physicians, it affords them a centralized location where they can assess their patients' needs after hours.'**

**—Fred Weaver, chief of vascular surgery at the Keck School of Medicine**

By Tania Chatila

For Derek Morton, the thought of having to wait hours in an emergency room to be examined for a post-operative abscess was more than off-putting.

Luckily for Morton, a 34-year-old patient treated for colon cancer at USC Norris Cancer Hospital, he didn't have to. Instead, he was sent to the Evaluation and Treatment Center—a 24-hour clinic exclusively for patients of the USC hospitals.

"It's my first time here, but it's a really nice set-up and a good idea," said Morton, who had surgery with Rick Selby, professor of surgery at the Keck School, in February. Heinz-Josef Lenz, professor of medicine and preventive medicine at the Keck School, referred him to the center last week, after a scheduled office visit.

"Everything has been really quick, and everyone is really nice," he said.

Morton is one of hundreds of patients seen at the center since it opened eight months ago.



Tania Chatila

Licensed Vocational Nurse Dina Molina, right, examines patient Derek Morton, left, at the Evaluation and Treatment Center at USC University Hospital. Morton, who was treated for colon cancer at USC Norris Cancer Hospital, was referred to the center by his physician following a post-operative issue.

Located on the first floor of the Norris Inpatient Tower at USC University Hospital, the clinic serves as a 24-hour ambulatory care center, where established, private patients of USC providers can go for after-hours care.

Infrastructure for the center was developed from the ground up by a dedicated committee of hospital administrators and physicians, led by Fred Weaver, chief of vascular surgery at the Keck School. Since then, the center has

undergone significant growth in patient volume—sometimes treating between six and eight patients a day.

"This was a new model, and we essentially started with zero patients," said Weaver. "Now we are seeing an average of 100 to 120 patients a month, and we anticipate even more growth in the future."

The center includes two patient exam rooms, a waiting area, consultation area, nursing area and an adjacent admitting space, said Emma Wright, director of the Evaluation and Treatment Center. The center maintains a staff of about 20 full-time nurses—roughly half of whom are registered nurses and half of whom are licensed vocational nurses.

The clinic takes no walk-ins. Instead, USC physicians can refer a patient there for post-operative issues or other concerns. Then, that physician or a selected designee can visit with the patient once intakes have been completed.

"When patients come down here and spend time on the campus, they really

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## Two Keck School faculty members lauded at USC Academic Honors Convocation

University leaders recognized the contributions of two Keck School of Medicine luminaries at the annual Academic Honors Convocation, an event that culminated with USC alumnus, filmmaker and benefactor George Lucas '66 receiving the USC Presidential Medallion, the university's highest honor.

At the April 26 event, Allen W. Mathies, dean emeritus of the Keck School, received the USC Faculty Lifetime Achievement Award, and Mark Humayun, the Cornelius J. Pings Professor of Biomedical Sciences and professor of ophthalmology, and cell and neurobiology, received the USC Associates Award for Creativity in Research and Scholarship.

Mathies, known as a gifted clinician, educator and leader, played a pivotal role in the rising stature of the Keck School of Medicine of USC as its dean from 1975 to 1985.

Under his leadership, the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and Hospital was built and research expanded. The school flourished as faculty members and department chairs were recruited, a practice plan was adopted and plans to build the USC University Hospital were put into action.

Mathies retired from USC in 1985. He continued to shape the landscape of health care in Los Angeles as president and CEO of the Hunting-



Mark Humayun



Allen Mathies

ton Hospital, where many Keck School faculty hold staff privileges. He and his wife, Weta, remain active in the life of the Keck School, and he currently serves on the university's Institutional Biosafety Committee.

Humayun, the co-inventor of a retinal prosthesis, was honored for his pioneering research on diseases of the retina, original contributions to scholarship, and his ability to combine his expertise in ophthalmology and his craftsmanship in engineering to restore partial sight to the blind.

Humayun was the lead surgeon during the implantation of the world's first retinal device in 2002, and he led the engineering team that developed this electronic implant. His accomplishments have earned him membership in the Institute of Medicine.

His leadership positions include directing research in the Eye Concepts Laboratory at USC's Doheny Eye Institute. He is also the director of the U.S. Department of Energy's Artificial Retina Project and the founding director of the National Science Foundation-funded Biomimetic MicroElectronic Systems Engineering Research Center at USC.

Humayun joined USC in 2001. He earned his M.D. from Duke University and a Ph.D. in biomedical engineering from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.



Sara Reeve

**WHO YOU GONNA CALL? GERMBUSTERS!**—Students from elementary schools surrounding USC's Health Sciences Campus participated in the 10th annual USC-HSC Science Fair, held April 30, on Harry and Celesta Pappas Quad. Above, youngsters display their exhibit on how well various cleaning products disinfect surfaces.

## Keck School urology team reveals findings in trio of papers

By Leslie Ridgeway

Several studies published in top medical journals by USC surgeons have found that surgical treatment of kidney cancer is not the daunting prospect it once was.

Three papers, one published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* and two published in the *Journal of Urology*, indicate that kidney cancer patients can look forward to a speedier recovery and brighter future. The papers were authored by a team led by Inderbir S. Gill, director of the USC Institute of Urology at the Keck School of Medicine. The studies indicate that outcomes of minimally invasive treatments for patients with organ-confined kidney tumors have improved dramatically.

"We are now able to remove many of these cancers through tiny keyhole cuts to the abdomen," said Gill. "In a majority of the cases, we can even save the kidney, and remove only the cancer." Since no muscle is cut and blood loss is minimal, patients experience less pain and a shorter recovery time, he noted.

In their *New England Journal of Medicine* paper titled "Small Renal Mass" (*N Engl J Med* 2010 February;362: 624-34), Gill and colleagues provide an expert overview of the current state of knowledge regarding

small kidney cancers. Written for practicing physicians, the paper highlights modern diagnostic tests and the latest treatment outcomes.

In the *Journal of Urology* (*J Urol*. 2010 January; 183:34-41), Gill and colleagues published the world's largest single-surgeon experience with 800 patients with kidney tumors undergoing laparoscopic partial nephrectomy—a popular minimally invasive technique to remove a tumor while saving the kidney. The most critical part of this procedure is clamping (stopping) the blood supply to the kidney to create a bloodless operative field. Gill's team has pioneered the laparoscopic/robotic technique, which has dramatically decreased the clamp time.

"The shorter the clamp time, the better the kidney function," said Gill. "We deliver the fastest clamp times in the world, thus providing the best possible kidney function. As a result, patients no longer need to lose the kidney to lose the cancer."

Finally, in the March 2010 issue of the *Journal of Urology* (*J Urol* 2010;183: 889-895), the USC team presented the world's largest follow-up data for laparoscopic renal cryoablation of up to 11 years. Cryoablation, a technique to freeze and

kill the tumor, is a good option for destroying kidney tumors in patients who are not candidates for laparoscopic partial nephrectomy. These two latter papers present the experience of Gill's team at USC and the Cleveland Clinic. Co-authors include Monish Aron and Mihir Desai, both renowned surgeons at USC.

The USC Institute of Urology includes 23 full-time faculty and more than 30 post-graduate residents and fellows dedicated to world-class patient care and research. The institute comprises eight clinical centers, including the Center for Comprehensive Urologic Oncology, Center for Robotics and Advanced Laparoscopic Surgery, Center for Pediatric Urology, Image-Guided Surgery Center, and Center for Female Urology, among others. The USC Institute of Urology surgeons are world leaders and pioneers in robotic/laparoscopic and open surgery for cancers of the kidney, prostate and bladder. USC urologic surgeons are at the forefront of developing cutting-edge treatments such as scar-free "belly-button" surgery and novel organ-sparing focal treatments for prostate cancer.

For more information on the USC Institute of Urology, visit the web site at [www.uscurology.com/](http://www.uscurology.com/)

**'We are now able to remove many of these cancers through tiny keyhole cuts to the abdomen. In a majority of the cases, we can even save the kidney, and remove only the cancer.'**

— Inderbir S. Gill, director of the USC Institute of Urology at the Keck School of Medicine

## ETCETERA

**Sumita Adhya**, a third-year radiology resident has received an award for best student paper at the Radiological Society of North America's (RSNA) annual conference.

Adhya won the RSNA Trainee Research Prize for her paper, "Triple Negative Breast Cancer: An Evaluation of the Mammographic, Ultrasound, and MR Characteristics," on which she worked with Linda Hovanessian-Larsen, associate professor of radiology at the Keck School of Medicine.

The mission of the RSNA is to promote and develop the highest standards of radiology and related sciences through education and research.

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A delegation from the Nippon Medical School in Tokyo, Japan, visited the Keck School of Medicine on April 15 to tour the medical school as well as the LAC+USC Medical Center. The Keck School of Medicine signed an affiliation agreement with the Nippon Medical School that allows an exchange of fourth-year medical students between the Keck School and the Nippon Medical Center. From left are: Adam Clayton Powell, USC Vice Provost for Globalization; Sayaka Kosaka, Nippon secretary; Masao Miyashita, Nippon professor of surgery; Takashi Shimada, director International Exchange Center; Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito; Kiyoyuki Ogata, Nippon professor of hematology; Thomas Noguchi, a graduate of Nippon and a current USC emeritus faculty member; and Jonathan Samet, director of the USC Institute of Global Health.

## ETC: Clinic's success has spurred plans to expand its operations

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like it here. They don't want to go to an emergency room for non-urgent care," said Weaver. "This center offers a quick and convenient way for patients to be seen, and for physicians, it affords them a centralized location where

they can assess their patients' needs after hours."

All nurses work in pairs to closely screen patients before their physicians see them. The pairs consist of one RN and one LVN for each patient.

"We are self-sufficient. We do everything ourselves from

lab work to electrocardiograms to transportation within the hospital for other services or tests," said Wright.

All of the nurses come from critical care or urgent care backgrounds and are trained in a variety of specialties such as cardiovascular disease,

vascular disease, neurosurgery, neurology and oncology.

The licensed vocational nurses are challenged to maximize their potential by doing everything from starting intravenous therapy and drawing blood to administering medication. And because of the center's expanding ability to treat multiple patient types, the licensed vocational nurses also have the ability help treat all kinds of conditions.

"When I work here, I get to see all kinds of diseases and diagnoses," said Dina Molina, a licensed vocational nurse at the Evaluation and Treatment Center. "I can really put my knowledge to work."

As a growing operation, ongoing planning is already under way to continue expansion of the clinic as it nears its one-year anniversary. Administrators are developing a physician-staffing model and are also looking to expand the physical dimensions of the clinic to accommodate

increased patient volumes.

Scott Evans, executive administrator for medicine and hospital operations, credited the success and growth of the clinic to its staff.

"Without the dedication and professionalism of the ETC staff, none of this would be possible," he said. "It is because of their continued efforts to support our patients and physicians that we have been able to make this model a success."

For Brenda Jones, a nurse at the clinic, it has always been about patient satisfaction. That means safe, rapid treatment and the ability to offer patients the 24-hour expertise they have come to know and depend on.

"The great thing about the ETC is that we can cut out that third-party care from people who don't know our patients or can't properly treat them," Jones said. "Here, the patients start with USC and finish with USC."

The Weekly

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# Stop Cancer meeting recognizes support of cancer research at USC

By Ryan Ball

Members and beneficiaries of Stop Cancer met at USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center on April 15 to see how the funds raised by the non-profit, philanthropic organization are being used to further cancer research at USC.

Stop Cancer is dedicated to helping find a cure for cancer by funding research at National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer centers. The focus of the organization is to provide grants to scientists who are engaged in innovative cancer research and its subsequent clinical applications.

Carman A. Puliafito, dean of the Keck School of Medicine, was on hand to greet the visiting philanthropists. "I am personally grateful for the wonderful support that Stop Cancer has provided the USC cancer research family over the years," he said. "The money you raise makes a tremendous difference in cancer research here."

Peter Jones, director of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, acknowledged past and present Stop Cancer awardees, noting, "Your support has really played a major role in establishing their careers, and they've all gone

on to do an amazing job in terms of furthering the fight against cancer."

Jones welcomed two recently hired USC physicians in attendance: world-renowned hematologist Preet Chaudry, chief of the Jane Anne Nohl Division of Hematology and Center for the Study of Blood Diseases, and leader of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Program at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center; and internationally known breast cancer oncologist Debasish Tripathy, professor of clinical medicine at the Keck School of Medicine and co-leader of the Women's Cancer Program at USC.

"As we all know, Stop Cancer has been funding new investigators here for quite some time, and what you do is so important in terms of allowing people to get their careers up and going by alleviating them from the need to get research support right as they're beginning their careers," Jones remarked. "This kind of seed support was a brilliant idea of the original founders of Stop Cancer, and it's been hugely successful."

Jones also acknowledged the work of colleague Peter Laird, director of the USC Epigenome Center, stating, "Epigenetics is one of the

most exciting fields of science at the moment, and a lot of that excitement is due to the work of Peter Laird. We established the USC Epigenome Center about a year and a half ago, and it's a leader. It was the first one in California, the first one in the United States and the first one in the world."

Laird led the group on a tour of the center, which houses, among other things, machines capable of sequencing a human being's DNA in about a week, while the first human genome project took 15 years.

More information on Stop Cancer can be found at [www.stopcancer.net](http://www.stopcancer.net).

# Doctors of USC to participate in program to evaluate, treat retired NFL Players

The Doctors of USC is participating in a nationwide program focused on evaluating and treating retired National Football League players with possible neurological conditions.

The NFL Neurological Care Program was announced March 24 at the NFL's annual meeting. The new program is one of a series of NFL initiatives addressing the quality of life of retired players.

The five participating

medical centers, selected for their expertise, high-quality service and reputation are: Doctors of USC, Morehouse School of Medicine (Atlanta), Mount Sinai (New York, NY), University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine and Washington University School of Medicine/Barnes-Jewish Hospital (St. Louis).

Each center has available to retired NFL players a team of specialists, led by a neurologist who serves as a

program director.

At USC, the interdisciplinary team is led by Jeffrey Victoroff, associate professor of clinical neurology, and Carol McCleary, assistant professor of clinical neurology.

The neurological program is available to retired players vested under the Bert Bell/Pete Rozelle NFL Player Retirement Plan.

Players who cannot afford treatment may apply to the NFL Player Care Foundation

for a grant to cover some or all of the costs of treatment.

More than 500 physicians and specialists, who serve as

full-time faculty members of the Keck School of Medicine of USC, compose The Doctors of USC.

## The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

A May 3 *Los Angeles Times* article highlighted research by assistant professor of clinical medicine **Michael Hochman** and a Harvard University colleague which found that only 32 percent of medication studies published in top medical journals compared the effectiveness of existing treatments.

On May 3, KTLA-TV covered the announcement of a \$10 million NIH grant to fund the Center for Population Health and Health Disparities, a partnership between USC, UCLA and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and surgical critical care **Demetrios Demetriades** and trauma and critical care surgeons **Kenji Inaba, Lydia Lam** and **D.J. Green** and featured Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center, which held a celebration for trauma survivors who were treated at the hospital.

A May 2 *Los Angeles Times* article quoted director of trauma and surgical critical care **Demetrios Demetriades** and trauma and critical care surgeons **Kenji Inaba, Lydia Lam** and **D.J. Green** and featured Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center, which held a celebration for trauma survivors who were treated at the hospital.

A May 1 *Los Angeles Times* article quoted professor of ophthalmology and

preventive medicine **Rohit Varma** about new studies indicating that Latinos have higher rates of vision disorders than any other ethnic group in the United States. U.S. News & World Report and United Press International also featured the research.

An April 29 *Los Angeles Times* article quoted associate professor of medicine and medical director of the USC Norris Cancer Hospital **David Quinn** about new immune-boosting therapy for prostate cancer patients.

On April 29, KPCC-FM interviewed associate director of research for the Center for Community Health Studies **Gregory Stevens** about volunteering at the Remote Area Medical clinic at the Los Angeles Memorial Sports Arena. The *Los Angeles Times* also reported that the USC Mobile Dental Clinic provided free dental services at the clinic.

An April 28 *USA Today* article quoted **Roger Clemens** of the USC School of Pharmacy about reducing salt intake.

An April 28 *Nature* article quoted professor of pathology **Cheng-Ming Chung** about a fossil study of a dinosaur species at different growth stages, which showed that its feathers changed dramatically during development.

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# 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, May 10

4 p.m. "Biologically Inspired Artificial Haircell Sensors," Chang Liu, Northwestern. UPC: HNB 100. Info: (213) 821-2084

## Tuesday, May 11

9 a.m. Neurology Grand Rounds. "Morbidity and Mortality Report for Rancho Los Amigos Acute Stroke Service, April 2010," Rami Apelian, USC. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-7686

11:15 a.m. USC Hospital Guild Speaker Series. "Antibiotics Made by Our Blood Cells," Michael Selsted, USC. UNH Impatient Café. Info: (323) 254-0600

Noon. Psychiatry Grand Rounds. "Adolescent Bipolar Disorder," Douglas Levinson, Stanford. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-4065

5 p.m. Visions for Change Lecture. "Meeting the Survival Needs of the World's Least Healthy People," Larry Gostin, Institute for National and Global Health Law. NRT Mayer Aud. Info: (323) 865-0419

## Friday, May 14

11 a.m. Hematology Grand Rounds. "Novel Methods to Identify Regulators of Hematopoietic Stem Cell Function," Gregor Adams, USC. IPT C2J103. Info: (323) 865-3950

## Monday, May 17

11:30 a.m. USC Norris Auxiliary Speaker Series. "USC's World Class Institute of Urology," Inderbir Gill, USC. San Gabriel County Club. Info: (626) 282-9516

## Wednesday, May 19

8:30 a.m. "Arrhythmias in the Critically Ill," David Cesario, USC. IRD 734. Info: (323) 226-7923

## Friday, May 21

11 a.m. Hematology Grand Rounds. "PET/CT and Lymphomas," Robert Henderson, USC. IPT C2J103. Info: (323) 865-3950

1 p.m. USC Physical Sciences in Oncology Center Seminar. "Physical Sciences for Optical Molecular Imaging in Oncology – Adventures in the Translations Woods," Daniel Farkas, USC. CSC 201. Info: (323) 442-2596

## Friday, May 28

11 a.m. Hematology Grand Rounds. "Pathology of Follicular Lymphomas – Part 2," Bharat Nathwani, USC. IPT C2J103. Info: (323) 865-3950

## Friday, June 18

7 a.m. USC Physical Sciences in Oncology Center Symposium. Various speakers. UPC Davidson Conference Center. Info: (323) 442-2596

## Thursday, July 8 – Sunday, July 11

8 a.m. 6th Annual International Head & Neck Symposium. Various speakers. USC Health Sciences Campus. Registration deadline: May 15. Info: (323) 442-7432

**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 [ebalauw@usc.edu](mailto:ebalauw@usc.edu). Entries must include day, date, time, title of talk, first and last name of speaker, affiliation of speaker, location, and a phone number for information.



Tania Chatila

**AN UPSCALE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY EVENT**—Chloe Poole (right), an occupational therapy student, assists Linda Liang (left), an occupational therapist, in using a special body mass measuring scale during the National Occupational Therapy month event at USC University Hospital on April 7.

The Occupational Therapy Department of USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital and the USC Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice hosted the event, which attracted hundreds of employees.

## HSC COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES

### Wednesday, May 12

#### Keck School of Medicine – M.S., M.P.H. & Ph.D.

4 p.m. at the Harry and Celesta Pappas Quad. Speaker: Mina Bissell, distinguished scientist from the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. Reception immediately following on Upper Quad.

### Friday, May 14

#### Biokinesiology & Physical Therapy

11 a.m. at Bovard Auditorium at the University Park Campus. Speaker: Tommy Lasorda, special advisor to the chairman and former manager of the Los Angeles Dodgers.

#### Dentistry

11 a.m. at Intramural Field at the University Park Campus. Speaker: Rick Valachovic, executive director of the American Dental Education Association. Reception immediately following at the Robert D. Wood Plaza (adjacent to the Intramural Field, behind Heritage Hall).

#### Health Promotion

11 a.m. at Town and Gown, University Park campus. Speaker: Elahe Nezami, associate dean, Office of Undergraduate, Masters & Professional Degree Programs.

#### Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy

10:30 a.m. at the Davidson Conference Center (Embassy Room) at University Park Campus. Speaker: Susan Knox, director emeritus at Therapy in

Action in Tarzana, Calif., and author of the Knox Preschool Play Scale. Reception immediately following.

#### Physician Assistant Program

10:30 a.m. on lawn southwest of the Hancock Foundation (AHF) Building at University Park Campus. Speaker: State Assembly Speaker Emeritus Karen Bass, PA Program Alumnus, Class of 1982. Reception immediately following.

#### School of Pharmacy

3 p.m. at the Harry and Celesta Pappas Quad at Health Sciences Campus. Speaker: Stephen J. Trachtenberg, president emeritus of the George Washington University in Washington,

D.C. Tickets required. A live webcast of the ceremony will be available online and also broadcast in School of Pharmacy lecture halls. Reception immediately following on Upper Quad.

### Sunday, May 16

#### Keck School of Medicine – M.D.

3 p.m. at the Shrine Auditorium. Speaker: Henri Ford, vice dean for medical education, professor and vice chair for clinical affairs, Dept. of Surgery, vice president and chief of surgery at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles. Reception immediately following at Founders Park, University Park Campus.

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**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.