

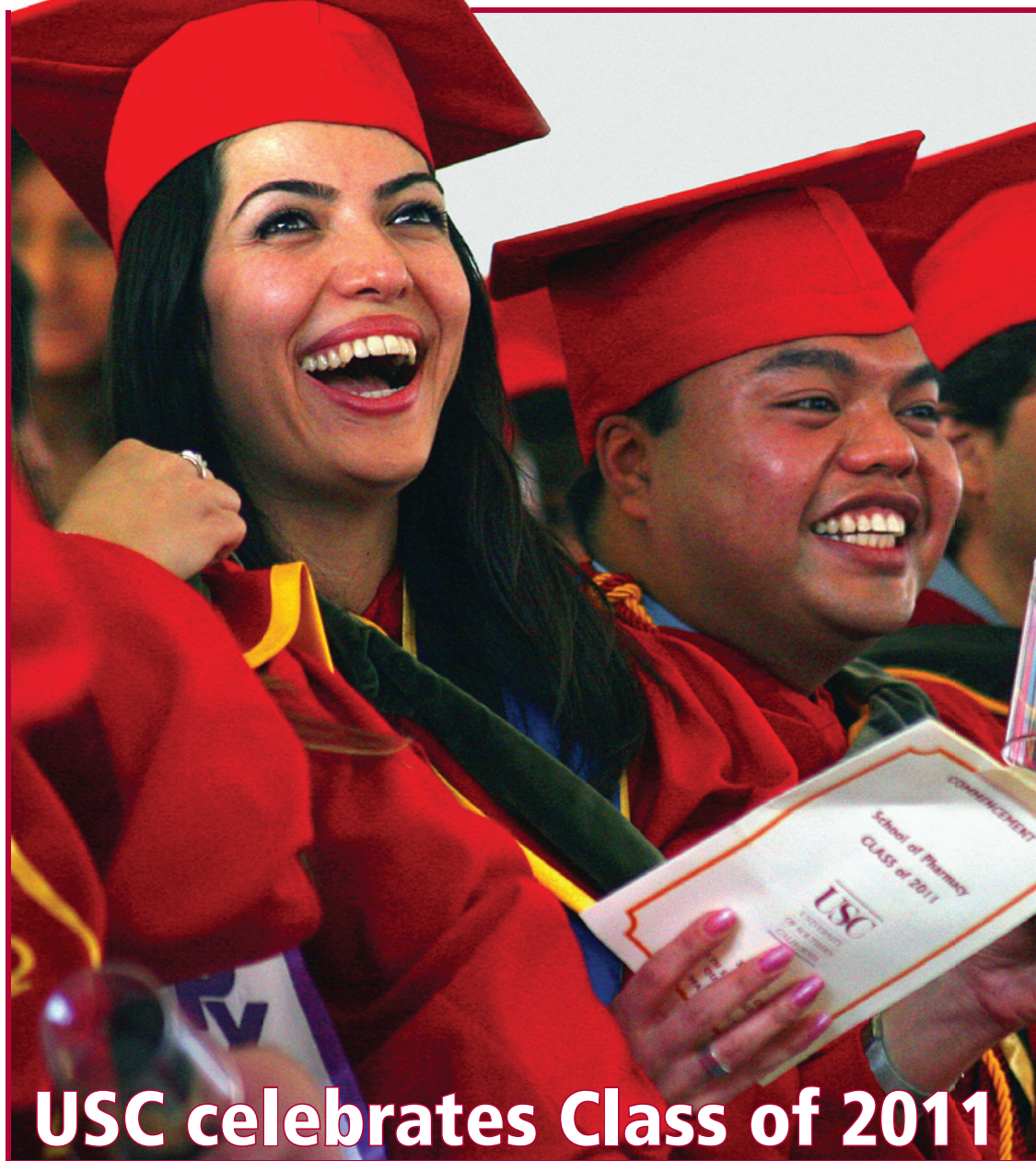
# The Weekly

**USC** UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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Ryan Ball

## USC celebrates Class of 2011

By Pauline Vu

The mood at the 126th Keck School of Medicine commencement ceremony was celebratory. But speakers at the May 15 event also touched on some of the medical field's current struggles and urged graduates to overcome those obstacles.

Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito urged the 163 M.D. graduates in the Shrine Auditorium to understand the needs of medically underserved patients and support efforts to improve access to care.

He referenced the Keck School's partnership with Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center, the largest single provider of health care in Los Angeles County, often to low-income and uninsured patients.

"All of you came here highly altruistic; do not let that altruism wane. Keep that sense of justice alive," Puliafito said. "Be generous in your service. Treat some of your patients for free.

Share your expertise by volunteering in clinics or hospitals at home or abroad."

The 2011 commencement was the first in which Elizabeth Garrett, who was installed as USC's provost and senior vice president for academic affairs in January, attended in her capacity as provost.

Garrett told the graduates that they were entering the profession at a time when society faces "grand challenges" as costs rise and new paradigms of health care are developed. "It is my hope that you will practice your profession with confidence, but also with a yearning to be innovators and leaders in your areas of expertise and beyond," she said.

Student speaker Jared M. Greenberg delivered a speech full of acknowledgements to individual classmates, whom he called out for being too tall, talkative, loud or laid-back. He also praised the class of 2011 for their myriad talents.

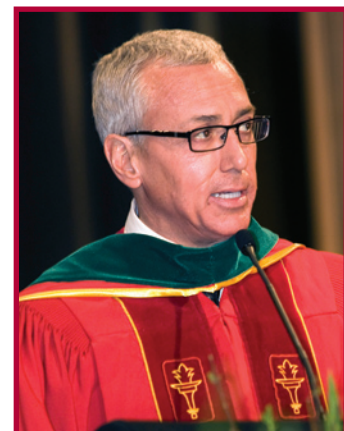
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Brook Photography



Ryan Ball



Brook Photography

Clockwise from top left: USC School of Pharmacy graduates Zahra Azadbadi (left) and Francis Baking cheer their class at commencement; Keck School grads Devon Isaacson (left) and Kim Ruby flash a victory sign minutes before receiving their degrees; Professor Sarah Hamm-Alvarez, the Gavin S. Herbert Professor in Pharmaceutical Sciences, hoods Asma El-Magboub, who received an MS in Pharmaceutical Sciences; physician and television personality Drew Pinsky delivers the keynote address at May 15 Keck School graduation ceremony at the Shrine Auditorium.

## USC Norris makes its mark at annual race for women's cancer research

By Tania Chatila

Patricia Lozano will never forget the first time she learned of the Entertainment Industry Foundation's annual Revlon Run/Walk For Women. She had just returned from a trip to Baja California and was on her way to the hospital to visit her aunt, Eva, who had recently been diagnosed with stage three ovarian cancer.

"We stopped at a Sav-On to buy sunscreen and I saw the sign," Lozano said. "I thought if I participated, maybe it would change things."

At 52 years old, Eva Lozano passed away just a few weeks before Patricia walked her first Revlon 5K alone. That was 15 years ago. But that hasn't kept Patricia, a biller with the Keck School of Medicine Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, from walking in her aunt's memory every year since her death. She has even recruited a support group made up of sisters, children, nieces and close friends to walk with her. The group proudly donned Team USC Norris T-shirts in this year's 18th annual race, which attracted a 40,000-strong crowd to the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum on May 7.

The walk raises money to help fight women's cancers. This year, USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center was selected as a race beneficiary.

"It was wonderful to see so many members of the Trojan family come out for an event that does so much for women's cancer research and the work done here at USC Norris," said Tonya Strom, captain of the 75-member Team USC Norris.

In addition to its team presence, the USC Norris Comprehensive

See **WALK**, page 2

## Doctors of USC celebrates grand opening of Beverly Hills location



©Steve Cohn

The Doctors of USC held its Beverly Hills site opening reception on May 10.

By Imelda Valenzuela

The cardinal and gold flag of USC was officially planted on the Westside of Los Angeles at the opening of the University's newest clinical satellite, The Doctors of USC Beverly Hills.

With over 100 administrators, faculty physicians, board members and other friends of the Trojan family in attendance, the opening reception was held at the beautifully appointed medical offices May 10.

"It's been a dream to come to the Westside for USC," said Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito. "This is the beginning of a new era in USC medicine. We're here to inaugurate this new outpost of USC medicine on the Westside."

The Doctors of USC Beverly Hills is located in suites 300 and 500 of the Archway Medical Plaza

building, at 9033 Wilshire Blvd at Wetherly. The new 14,000-square-foot location offers cutting-edge expertise from top specialists in three key areas of medicine, ophthalmology, urology and cancer care.

Neda Shamie, a leader in corneal transplantation, serves as medical director of the USC Doheny Eye Center, affiliated with USC's nationally ranked Doheny Eye Institute. Puliafito, an expert in macular degeneration, also is seeing patients at the USC Doheny Eye Center.

Leading oncologist David Agus sees patients in the USC Norris Westside Cancer Center, affiliated with the National Cancer Institute-designated USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center. Inderbir Gill, executive director of the

See **DOCTORS**, page 3



# Keck School, community leaders examine restructuring of ambulatory care in the DHS

**'You can find the very best of healthcare within DHS, but you can't find it across DHS.'**

**—Mitchell H. Katz, director of the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (DHS)**

By Ryan Ball

The latest meeting of Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito's Community Leadership Council featured a presentation by Mitchell H. Katz, director of the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (DHS).

During the May 11 assembly, Katz spoke of the challenges he faces in overseeing the second largest health system in the United States, and detailed some of his plans for improving the quality of care low-income residents receive at Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center and other County public hospitals.

Katz came to DHS in January of 2011 after serving as director of health for the City of San Francisco for 13 years. He said his goal is to make DHS the best safety net in the country, and invited the community leaders present to take part in the process. "Systems



Mitchell H. Katz, director of the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, discusses his goals for the organization at a Community Leadership Council convened by Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito.

don't change because of one person," he stated.

Katz said that when he first began to talk about making the move to DHS, he was hit with a lot of skepticism about the system and its potential for reform. But rather than focusing on the negative as-

sociations, Katz chose to look at what is working at DHS and try to systematize those elements.

"You can find the very best of healthcare within DHS, but you can't find it across DHS," Katz remarked, adding, "my job is to fix it so that the best

of us is all of us."

One of Katz's primary goals is to establish relationships between patients and primary care providers so that patients aren't going to the emergency room when they need to see a doctor.

Among Katz's accomplishments to date is facilitating a direct contract with health plan provider L.A. Care, something DHS was previously unable to do. The contract ensures that roughly 30,000 elderly and disabled individuals currently being treated at LAC+USC aren't bounced out of the system on July 1.

Puliafito praised Katz's strategic plan for DHS, noting similarities to USC's efforts to transform the culture of its private hospitals.

"It is about the culture," said Puliafito. "That is the most precious thing we have — that engagement of superbly trained physicians who actually want to work here."

## Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation awards CHLA \$1.15 million for cancer clinical trials

The Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation (PCRF) has awarded a five-year, \$1.15 million grant to support the Clinical Trials Program in the Children's Center for Cancer and Blood Diseases at Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

The grant will provide critical infrastructure support for clinical trials, and in gratitude, the hospital has named the program the Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation Clinical Trials Program.

This research will be overseen by Stuart E. Siegel, director of the Children's Center for Cancer and Blood Diseases and professor of pediatrics at the Keck School of Medicine, Marcio Malogolowkin, division head for Hematology-Oncology Clinical Affairs and Clinical

Research, and Leo Mascarenhas, director of the Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation Clinical Trials Program and associate professor of pediatrics at the Keck School.

The Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation Clinical Trials Program identifies and tests new therapies intended to decrease toxicity of these treatments and improve patient outcomes and survival rates.

The program works closely with other pediatric cancer centers around the world to carry out the necessary clinical trials of new agents and new combinations of agents in a rapid and efficient manner to battle pediatric cancers. By coordinating its studies with the overall agenda of the national Children's Oncology Group,

Children's Hospital Los Angeles has tangibly improved the outcome for children with previously resistant cancers and improved the initial treatment that children with cancer receive throughout the world.

Research breakthroughs in the treatment of childhood cancers during the past 50 years—many pioneered by physician-scientists at the Children's Center for Cancer and Blood Diseases—have helped the cure rate improve from 10 percent to 80 percent. Still, one in five children will not survive their disease, and many survivors—up to two-thirds in recent studies—suffer some long-term consequences of their curative treatment.

"Cancer is the number one cause of death by disease in children, teens and young

adults in the United States," said Siegel. "The road from initial idea to clinical application can be a long one for new anti-cancer agents, particularly for those agents to be used

for pediatric cancers. Knowing that we can rely on the support of PCRF to move the results we get at the lab bench quickly to our patients is essential to our future success."



Abner Soto and his mother Patricia Lozano prepare to walk in honor of Lozano's aunt at the 18th Annual Entertainment Industry Foundation Revlon Run/Walk For Women.

Tania Chatila

## WALK: Event part of 'inspirational day'

Continued from page 1

Cancer Center and Hospital also hosted a booth at the event's Health Expo. Organized by the USC Health Sciences Public Relations and Marketing Office, the booth attracted thousands of participants, who picked up copies of Norris publications and a drawstring backpack featuring the USC Norris Cancer Hospital and USC University Hospital logos.

"It was an inspirational day," Strom said. "I was proud to be a part of it."

## Did we say that?

In the May 6 issue of *The Weekly*, a story on a major new Keck School of Medicine study appearing in *Nature* ran with the wrong headline.

The story, available online at <http://tinyurl.com/43aev53>, should have been headlined, "Groundbreaking Keck School study shows human placenta's role in synthesizing serotonin." *The Weekly* regrets the error.

The Weekly

Next Issue: May 27

*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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# Born just blocks away, student’s journey to Keck School was still long and difficult

**By Pauline Vu**  
Claudia Martinez walked proudly across the Shrine Auditorium stage on May 15 to collect her degree from the Keck School of Medicine. Next up for her: a residency in emergency medicine at State University of New York Downstate Medical Center.

Her commencement success was a far cry from where she was five years ago, when, recognizing that she was battling depression, Martinez took an 18-month break from Keck after her first semester.

“I think I had been depressed my entire life and it wasn’t until I started medical school that I started to do counseling and try to get better,” Martinez said. “I just needed to take time to resolve a lot of the issues that I had and make sure that I was healthy before I came back.”

Martinez’s path to Keck wasn’t typical. She grew up in a one-bedroom apartment in Boyle Heights, just a few blocks from Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center, where she was born. Her mother worked as a seamstress and was the sole breadwinner for the family of six. Her family lacked health insurance and would end up in the county hospital’s emergency room whenever they needed medical care.

Those trips to LAC+USC,



Former Keck School of Medicine associate dean of admissions Erin Quinn (left) congratulates graduate Claudia Martinez, who overcame depression and other personal challenges to fulfill her longtime dream of becoming a physician.

along with Martinez’s six-year participation in the Keck School’s Med-COR program, starting when she was in middle school, made her realize she wanted to be a doctor.

After Martinez graduated from California State University, Northridge, she applied to the Keck School, primarily because she wanted to work at the county hospital and help people from her community.

Erin Quinn, former associate dean of admissions, said Martinez was the only person in all of Quinn’s 18 years of interviewing medical school applicants who arrived for the interview via public bus. From Northridge, it was more than a two-hour commute.

Another aspect of Martinez’s background that wowed Quinn: during high school and college she had logged more than 1,200 hours as a student volunteer at LAC+USC Medical Center. “I recall thinking, ‘We should just give her the degree now,’” Quinn said.

Martinez entered the Keck School in the fall of 2005. But then her depression resurfaced.

Keck School faculty and students rallied around her, especially Quinn, who made sure that Martinez received the care she needed, and who stayed in touch with phone calls and visits.

Faculty members suggested that Martinez take a break. It was just what she needed. “I took that time to find my own

strength that I didn’t know I had,” she said. “I realized how much I can accomplish and overcome.”

Martinez returned in fall 2007 and threw herself into her medical studies. She was selected for several scholarships, including a prestigious one from Health Care Partners.

As a senior she was named the Edward Zapanta Outstanding Medical Student of the Year by the Latino Alumni Association.

As part of the American Medical Student Association, Martinez helped organize the first-ever health fair for the local community on the Health Sciences campus. She traveled to Tijuana every three months for two years to set up mobile clinics with Healing Heart Across Borders.

“She’s a Renaissance woman in so many ways,” Quinn said. “She just forges ahead and does what needs to be done.”

Now Martinez is eager to start her residency at SUNY Downstate. She picked emergency medicine as her specialty to help people similar to her family—the uninsured who end up in the emergency room. When her residency is finished, Martinez hopes to return to Los Angeles and serve the community where she grew up.

**‘I took that time to find my own strength that I didn’t know I had. I realized how much I can accomplish and overcome..’**

**—2011 Keck School of Medicine graduate Claudia Martinez**

## DOCTORS: USC plants a cardinal and gold flag in Los Angeles’ Westside

Continued from page 1  
USC Institute of Urology, sees patients there as well.

Puliafito said that buying USC University Hospital and Norris Cancer Hospital in 2009 “sent a signal that USC is on the move” and that opening the Beverly Hills offices were the next step in USC’s plan for its academic medical center.

“This center on the fifth floor was designed to align the clinical with the academic teaching mission of USC,” said Puliafito referring to the satellite’s video conferencing center. “We anticipate that this will be a very important location for continuing medical educa-

tion for physicians, for community outreach and for donor and alumni events for USC.”

USC President C. L. Max Nikias and his wife, Niki, were in attendance after taking a red-eye flight home from another USC event the day prior in Philadelphia.

“I am thrilled—it is wonderful to plant the cardinal and gold flag in Beverly Hills,” said Nikias. “Most of all it is deeply satisfying to be able to provide specialty care that is so vital and so very convenient to those who live and work on the Westside. While we aspire to expand USC’s global reach, we also aspire to build one of the very

best academic medical centers right here in Los Angeles.”

Nikias acknowledged the physicians who practice at the new center, as well as the Keck School and its other doctors. “At this Beverly Hills location, the doctors practicing here, Dean Puliafito, Dr. Agus, Dr. Gill, Dr. Shamie and others, will help heal those suffering from devastating diseases such as cancer and blindness. They will give hope to patients and their families,” he said. “I’m very proud of USC’s doctors, our professors of the Keck School of Medicine. On the front lines of clinical care, they are healers. In the research labs, they are inno-



From left: David Agus, USC President C. L. Max Nikias, Neda Shamie, Keck School of Medicine Dean Carmen A. Puliafito and Mitchell Gross.

vators and scholars. In their specialties, they are pioneers in developing new treatments and surgical techniques.”

## The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

On May 5 U.S. *News & World Report* quoted **Rodney Mason**, associate professor of surgery at the Keck School of Medicine, as disagreeing with recent findings indicating that surgery is the most effective treatment for appendicitis.

*The Tehran Times* (Iran), MedPage Today, TopNewsUnited States, American Council on Science and Health and 6minutes also covered the story.

A May 6 story in the *Daily Pilot* reported that USC University Hospital honored one of its patients by arranging for her to throw out the first pitch at a Los Angeles Dodgers game, and featuring her in a video shown at the game.

On May 9 Medscape Medical News quoted **Mark Humayun**, of the Doheny Eye Institute, about the Argus II retinal prostheses system. With the retinal implant, Humayun states, “subjects are able to detect light and do well with certain performance parameters. We’re continuing to study this in their daily lives and develop it into a rehabilitation program,” he added.

A May 10 article in Medscape Medical News quoted **Gene Sung**, director of the Neurocritical Care and Stroke Division at USC, about a study that found tat about 14 percent of all ischemic strokes occur during sleep. “A significant number of stroke patients wake up with stroke, making them ineligible

for advanced treatment,” Sung said. Dr. Sung was not involved in the study, the story stated.

On May 11 *Shape* magazine featured research by **Richard Bergman**, professor and chair of the Department of Physiology and Biophysics, and colleagues, who found a new way to measure percent body fat, called the Body Adiposity Index (BAI).

The story reported that the currently used standard, Body Mass Index (BMI), doesn’t reflect true adiposity—the state of being obese. If its accuracy holds up, BAI just might replace BMI as the body fat test of choice, the story stated.



# COMMENCEMENT: Health Sciences Campus unleashes eager health professionals

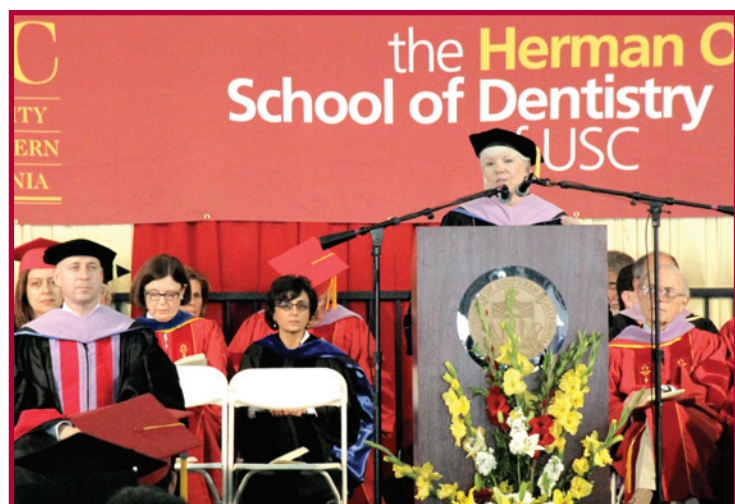
Continued from page 1

"I'm talking about things like art, music, dance, athletics, surfing, writing, singing, rock climbing, singing while rock climbing, standup comedy, sitdown comedy, kind of the whole orthostatics of comedy," he said. "As long as it's legal, I'm pretty sure somebody in this class can do it."

But his speech also mentioned the difficult experiences the students discovered as they worked and learned at LAC+USC Medical Center: the scarce resources for some patients, incurable conditions and jaded resident superiors.

"So that's the bad news. But the good news is that the Keck Class of 2011 is the future of medicine," Greenberg said. "Whenever I would start to feel disheartened, even feel that I had chosen the wrong profession, it was you, dear class, your actions that lifted my spirits and gave me hope."

The commencement address was delivered by Drew Pinsky, a Keck School alumnus and clinical assistant professor of psychiatry who hosts the nationally syndicated radio show "Loveline" and is executive producer of the VH1 television show



Above, keynote speaker Connie Drisko, dean of the Medical College of Georgia School of Dentistry, delivers her address to the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry.

Right, Keck School graduate Kelsey Richardson displays the numerous awards she received at the school's Senior Awards Ceremony on May 14. A full list of awardees is online at: <http://tinyurl.com/42enonc>.



"Celebrity Rehab with Dr. Drew."

"This ceremony is one of the few degrees that, once conferred, changes who you are and what you can do and your relationship to the world forever," he said. "So, my esteemed colleagues to be, I welcome you to this profession."

Of the 163 M.D. graduates, four students received a combined M.D./Ph.D. while two also received their MBAs

Other Health Sciences schools held their graduations earlier in the week. The Keck School's Master of Science, Master of Public Health and Ph.D. students walked on May 11 in Pappas Quad.

The Ostrow School of Dentistry graduated 176 new doctors of dental surgery, 42 dental specialists and 13 masters of craniofacial biology in a May 13 ceremony at USC's McAllister Field near the University Park Campus.

"The school has a storied history of educating individuals that go on to lead the profession, and we fully expect that you will all strive to be leaders in your community, your field and beyond," said Dean Avishai Sadan.

The USC School of Pharmacy awarded 178 doctors of pharmacy, 29 M.S. and 12 Ph.D. degrees, and 27 certificates to those completing residency or fellowship programs on May 13 on Pappas Quad. The Physician Assistant Program awarded 38 master of physician assistant practice degrees the same day.

On May 13 at Bovard Auditorium, the Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy graduated 92 new doctors of physical therapy, five Ph.D.s in Biokinesiology and an M.S. degree in Biokinesiology, while the Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy honored 25 bachelor of science and 113 M.S. recipients, 23 doctor of occupational therapy and two Ph.D. recipients.



Top, Keck School of Medicine graduate Erica Kreller celebrates with family at Founders Park. Bottom, Keck School students gather before marching into their May 15 ceremony at the Shrine Auditorium.

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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 23

**4 p.m.** Neurology Grand Rounds. "fMRI in Disease: Applications, Challenges, and Solutions," Scott Small, Columbia Univ. UPC: Tutor Campus Center, 352. Info: (323) 442-7686

### Tuesday, May 24

**9 a.m.** Neurology Grand Rounds. "Zooming in on Hippocampal Dysfunction: MRI Maps to Molecular Mechanisms," Scott Small, Columbia Univ. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-7686

**Noon.** Psychiatry Grand Rounds. "Mental Illness in the Homeless Population," Suzanne Wenzel, USC. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-4065

**Noon.** Women In Management Seminar. "Heart Disease in Women," Helga Van Herle, USC. NRT LG 503/504. Cost: \$15 members, \$18 non-members. Info: (323) 442-1865

### Wednesday, May 25

**6 p.m.** Urology Seminar. "Life After Prostate Cancer Surgery," Daniel Park, USC. NRT Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 865-3731

### Saturday, June 4

**8 a.m. – 4 p.m.** Continuing Medical Education Seminar. "Pulmonary Updates 2011," Various speakers. Los Angeles Marriott Hotel, Downtown Los Angeles. Info: (323) 442-2547

**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.

## 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.

