

Pasadena Magazine lauds 170 USC physicians

By Alison Trinidad

One hundred seventy USC physicians are included in *Pasadena Magazine's* June 2011 "Top Doctors" issue, an annual recognition of more than 600 medical doctors practicing in the San Gabriel Valley area and deemed by peers to be at the top of their profession.

"To have more than one-fourth of *Pasadena Magazine's* 600 Top Doctors represent USC this year is a wonderful honor and reflective of the medical expertise at the Keck School of Medicine," said Carmen A. Puliafito, dean of the Keck School.

This year, the list includes 96 Doctors of USC and also 74 Keck faculty members who practice at Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

The Doctors of USC is a team of more than 600 physicians who are full-time faculty members of the Keck School. These physicians practice at USC University Hospital, USC Norris

Cancer Hospital, LAC+USC Medical Center, among other locations.

"This recognition is a testament to the exceptional care that our doctors provide to patients on a daily basis in both outpatient and inpatient settings, including our operating rooms," added Mitch Creem, CEO of USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital. "Our hospital staff and all of our physicians are proud to serve the Pasadena community."

To be considered for inclusion in *Pasadena Magazine's* Top Doctors list, physicians were nominated and voted on by their peers, who submitted confidential ballots over a 2.5-month period. The votes were tabulated and the physicians' credentials verified by the

Yee & Belilove law firm in Pasadena. Doctors cannot pay to be included on the list.

USC doctors appeared in 50 specialty categories. In 33 of those categories, more physicians from USC appeared than doctors from any other health provider in the area. These specialties include breast cancer, cardiac surgery, colorectal surgery, critical care medicine, gynecologic oncology, hepatobiliary (gallbladder/liver) surgery, neurology, neuroradiology, obstetrics/gynecology, oncology/hematology, ophthalmology, orthopedic surgery, plastic surgery, radiology, vascular surgery and 18 pediatric subspecialties.

Other specialties in which USC doctors appear include cardiology, dermatology, endocrinology/diabetes,

gastroenterology, general surgery, general/family practice, infectious diseases, infertility, internal medicine, nephrology, neurosurgery, oncology, orthopedics, otolaryngology, pulmonary medicine, rheumatology and urology.

The June 2011 issue also includes profiles of USC neurosurgeon Steven L. Giannotta, orthopedic surgeon Daniel A. Oakes, spine surgeon Mark J. Spoonamore, gastroenterologist Jacques Van Dam, the USC Fertility practice, and both USC hospitals.

Pasadena Magazine is a monthly regional publication serving the greater San Gabriel Valley. It has published its own Top Doctors directory since June 2008.

The full lists of the Doctors of USC and Children's Hospital Los Angeles physicians as published in the magazine are available online at <http://bit.ly/mdkcFj>.



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—Carmen A. Puliafito, dean of the Keck School of Medicine

USC solidifies contract with CNA

By Tania Chatila

Registered nurses at USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital have voted to ratify a contract between USC and the California Nurses Association (CNA). The three-year contract is effective Jan. 1, 2011, through Dec. 31, 2013.

Hospital leaders commended the negotiating teams on both sides for successfully reaching an agreement.

"This contract is just one example of our mutual commitment to building a truly outstanding medical center for USC," said hospitals CEO Mitch Creem. "We look forward to this new partnership with CNA that continues to put our patients first."

Theresa Murphy, associate administrator of inpatient nursing at USC University Hospital and a member of the USC negotiating team, echoed Creem's sentiments. "Together we developed a contract that is favorable for the nurses and the hospital, and will support our mission to be fully present in the delivery of uncompromising health care."

This is the first time CNA and USC have negotiated a contract. Highlights of the contract include:

- Continued annual wage increases beginning July 1;
- Additional pay for registered nurses who serve as preceptors;
- Eligibility in USC's Retirement Savings Plan beginning July 1;
- Eligibility in USC's Tuition Assistance and Tuition Exchange programs;
- Recognition of Martin Luther King Jr. Day

See **CONTRACT**, page 2



Photos/Brian Morri

TROJANS FOR A HALF-CENTURY, AND LONGER

The Keck School of Medicine held its 50-Year Fellows Luncheon on June 3, inducting alumni of the class of 1961 (left) as its newest members of the fellowship. The USC Trojan Marching Band joined the group on the steps of LAC+USC Medical Center, where many of the physicians trained.

Above, Phil R. Manning, professor emeritus of medicine at the Keck School, accepts the Distinguished Alumni Award for his service to the university, which spanned 48 years until his retirement in 2002, and his continued service as an active alumnus.

LAC+USC launches universal rapid HIV testing program to limit new infections

By Ryan Ball

In an effort to boost early detection and decrease the spread of HIV in the Los Angeles area, the Los Angeles County+University of Southern California Medical Center Emergency Department (LAC+USC ED) has launched universal, opt-out rapid HIV screening.

The new testing method and modified guidelines follow months of planning and collaboration among the Pacific AIDS Education and Training Center (PAETC) in the Department of Family Medicine, the Office of AIDS Program and Policies, and the LAC Rand Schrader HIV Clinic.

Studies have found that roughly 60 percent of people in the U.S. have never been tested for HIV, and an estimated 21 percent of

those infected don't know they've been infected. In a Los Angeles County sample of HIV-positive individuals, over half of the subjects first learned of their HIV status after developing symptoms of AIDS, which appear an average of eight years after HIV transmission. The LAC+USC ED hopes rapid testing can help close this dangerous gap between infection and treatment.

With rapid HIV testing, results are available within 40 minutes and patients know their HIV status before they leave the emergency room. They can then begin receiving proper medical care and modify their behavior so they don't spread the infection.

Citing a recent study, Kathleen Jacobson, medical director for the PAETC, said treating HIV-positive patients

and getting their HIV viral load down to an undetectable level can nearly eliminate the chance of HIV transmission among couples. "Getting these patients tested, diagnosed and into care means we can impact their risk to transmit to their partners by 96 percent," she said.

Jacobson said LAC+USC is implementing rapid, point-of-care testing on a scale unmatched by any other health care provider in the country.

Previously, HIV screening at LAC+USC ED was reserved for women in labor, victims of sexual assault, individuals stuck by needles, and anyone under clinical suspicion. Now, universal point-of-care screening will be administered to 15,000 patients, regardless of their chief complaint. California's opt-out HIV screening legislation, passed in October

of 2007, does not require separate written consent for HIV screening. However, providers must notify patients when an HIV test is being ordered, and patients have the right to refuse the test.

This significant change in HIV screening at LAC+USC ED was facilitated by key individuals from the Emergency Department including Sanjay Arora, Nico Forget,

Mike Menchine, Kim Newton, Shira Schlesinger and Alicia Schechter, in collaboration with Jacobson and with the support of Joe Cadden and Stella Quan from the Rand Schrader clinic. The program is funded by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through the Office of AIDS Program and Policies with additional support from the LAC+USC ED and the PAETC.

The Weekly ETCETERA

The Society of Neurological Surgeons recently conferred its highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award for service to neurosurgery, to **Martin H. Weiss**, professor and The Martin H. Weiss Chair in Neurological Surgery at the Keck School.

During his 38-year tenure at USC, Weiss served as chair of the Department of Neurosurgery from 1978–2004 and also served as chair of the American Board of Neurological Surgery, the Residency Review Committee for Neurological Surgery, the NIH Neuro B Study Section and the Advisory Council for Neurosurgery of the American College of Surgeons.

Weiss also has served as president of the Society of Neurological Surgeons as well as the American Association of Neurological Surgeons from which he received the Cushing Medal, neurosurgery's highest honor.

The Russian Academy of Medical Science recently awarded the Negovsky Medal to two Keck School of Medicine physicians, honoring their work in critical care medicine.

Philip Lumb, professor and chair of the Department of Anesthesiology, and **Vladimir Zelman**, professor and co-chair of anesthesiology, accepted the awards in Moscow in late March under the auspices of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences and the Negovsky Institute of General Reanimatology.

The medal is a prestigious award that is given only once every three years to international leaders in the field of critical care medicine. The award is named for academian Vladimir A. Negovsky, known as "the father of reanimatology" for his studies in the physiology of resuscitation.

Michele D. Kipke, professor of clinical pediatrics and preventive medicine at the Keck School and vice chair of research for the Department of Pediatrics at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, has

been named a fellow of the Hedwig van Ameringen Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine (ELAM) Program for Women.

The program, based at Drexel University College of Medicine, selected 54 senior women faculty nationally for the 2011–2012 class of fellows.

ELAM's mission is to increase the number of women in senior academic leadership positions, where they can ultimately help change the culture of academic health organizations to become more accepting of different perspectives and responsive to societal needs and expectations.

Stanley Azen, professor and co-director of biostatistics in the Keck School of Medicine Department of Preventive Medicine, recently received an award for his training, mentoring and research contributions to the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy for the last 25 years.

Carolee Winstein, who was a student in Azen's first class, and who is now a professor of biokinesiology and physical therapy at the division, presented the award at the division's graduation ceremony on May 13.

David Woodley, professor and chair of the Keck School Department of Dermatology has been elected to the Association of American Physicians (AAP).

The AAP is a nonprofit, professional organization founded in 1885 for the advancement of scientific and practical medicine. The goals of its members include the pursuit of medical knowledge, and the advancement through experimentation and discovery of basic and clinical science and their application to clinical medicine.

Election to the AAP is an honor extended to individuals with outstanding credentials in biomedical science or translational biomedical research and is limited to 60 persons per year.

RUN/WALK HELPS DONATE LIFE—

At right, the USC Transplant Institute assembles for a team photo at the annual Donate Life Run/Walk at Cal State Fullerton in late April. The 5K benefited the Donate Life California Organ and Tissue Donor Registry.

This year, the USC Transplant Institute team was represented by more than 80 people, including institute staff, USC transplant recipients, their family members and friends.

Team members said they participated in an effort to raise awareness for the need for organ donation.



CONTRACT: Staffing levels, retention of experienced nurses are key

Continued from page 1
as a paid holiday; and

- Centralized scheduling of "premium" shifts, or shifts that will provide overtime or extra shift bonuses.

Frances McKeever, a USC University Hospital nurse who was on the CNA negotiating team, said the contract helps to ensure appropriate staffing levels and promotes retention of experienced nurses at the bedside.

Tony Davila, another USC University Hospital nurse who was part of the CNA negotiating team, said the new contract with USC University Hospital "demonstrates how much they value the care and hard work their nurses provide day in and day out. Hats off to both sides for collectively and professionally working together in reaching this agreement."

USC acquired USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital from Tenet Healthcare in 2009. CNA had a four-year contract with Tenet Healthcare, which ended Dec. 31, 2010.

Negotiations between USC and CNA began on Oct. 20, 2010. CNA represents more than 600 registered nurses at both USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital.

The Weekly

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Keck School tests medical home program at LAC+USC Medical Center

By Pauline Vu
When a patient at Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center calls one of its clinics with a problem, he typically reaches a clerk, who may not be able to answer the patient’s question. A possible result: the patient puts off dealing with the problem, only to later end up in the emergency room.

It would be much better if the patient could reach a knowledgeable person who could quickly determine the seriousness of the problem, answer questions, and even schedule an appointment for the same day.

That’s how things should work under the new medical home model that LAC+USC Medical Center is planning to roll out at one of its three clinics in early July. The rollout is thanks to a \$750,000 grant from the UniHealth Foundation, a private foundation that funds health services and programs at qualified charitable hospitals in Los Angeles and northern Orange counties.

“Our emergency room is overcrowded, our hospital is overcrowded, and we know that a lot of these patients are going to the emergency room for things that they should be seen in the outpatient setting for. Not

only is this bad care, it’s also very costly for the system,” said Michael Hochman, an assistant professor of clinical medicine at the Keck School of Medicine and one of the program’s principal investigators.

“We’re hoping that this will be a more efficient way of providing care and at the same time provide higher quality. That’s what I think is exciting about UniHealth investing in this,” Hochman added.

The program, known as Galaxy Care, will be administered by Keck School faculty and run in a clinic staffed by its residents.

It will involve about 4,000 patients, 50 residents and 15 faculty members. The UniHealth funding will allow the program to run for two and a half years after its inception, but it could draw new money and continue if it proves to be a success.

“We believe that Galaxy Care has great potential for finding a better way to deliver care to patients, and that the grant-funded program evaluation will promote the sustainability and spread of

the model,” said Mary Odell, president of the UniHealth Foundation.

The medical home concept—which is a method of delivering care, as opposed to

a physical place—gained prominence during the recent health care debate. The model’s goal is to make care more patient-centered and lead to better preventative care and chronic disease management. Its principles include providing more access to care,

improving care coordination, and establishing a personal physician for each patient.

While the private sector has long used some form of a medical home system and, in the public sector, a handful of localities are testing it, this experiment will be one of the country’s first in a public teaching hospital setting, Hochman said.

The clinic’s patient population suffers from a high rate of chronic illnesses such as diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and mental health problems. They average 0.7 emergency room visits each year, considerably higher than the rate in the general population.



Michael Hochman

Don Millic

Currently patients can contact the clinic only during regular office hours, must schedule appointments several weeks in advance, and cannot contact nurses or doctors in between visits.

But under Galaxy Care, the clinic will have a 24-7 hotline where patients can reach a patient care coordinator who will provide case management, raise patients’ questions with physicians, and also schedule same-day appointments for more pressing problems. The program will initially allot five slots a day for those appointments.

LAC+USC Medical Center’s other two clinics will serve as control groups. After a year the investigators will assess the program’s effectiveness by measuring emergency room visits, hospitalizations, patient and resident satisfaction, and quality-of-care metrics such as hemoglobin A1C, which monitors diabetes control, and LDL level, which monitors cholesterol.

If the experiment is successful, Hochman hopes to draw additional funding to spread the medical home model to the other two clinics. “Then we’ll be able to make the case when the grant runs out that the program should be continued and expanded by the county,” he said.

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—Michael Hochman, assistant professor of clinical medicine at the Keck School of Medicine



HONORING EXCELLENCE—The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors honored LAC+USC Healthcare Network’s Patient Safety programs in April, specifically citing two programs aimed at improving patient safety. Receiving scrolls honoring their achievement were program leaders Ron Ben-Ari, Eric Hsieh, Sunita Saxena, Aarti Vaishnav, Joseph York, Joseph Allevato, Gregory Roybal and Teresa Lau. Pictured receiving their scrolls with Supervisor Michael Antonovich and other presenters are Saxena (center) and Vaishnav (center right).

CHLA researchers zero in on drug-resistant leukemia

Acute lymphoblastic leukemia, or ALL, is the most common form of childhood cancer. While most children treated for this disease survive, in a subgroup of patients the disease does not respond to treatment.

Now a team of scientists led by researchers at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles and the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) have identified the reason for this drug resistance: BCL6, a protein that leukemia cells use to stay alive in spite of chemotherapy. Targeting this protein provides a novel key mechanism to fighting drug-resistant leukemia.

“We believe this discovery is of immediate relevance to patient care,” said Markus Müschen, an investigator at The Saban Research Institute of Children’s Hospital and lead author on the study.

In a significant breakthrough, inves-

tigators working at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles and UCSF have been able to overcome resistance to targeted drug therapy, demonstrating complete eradication of the cancer in cell and animal studies.

The study, published in the May 19 issue of *Nature*, shows that an investigational drug, RI-BPI, developed at the Weill Cornell College of Medicine, used in combination with the drug Gleevec, shut down stem cells that give rise to leukemic cancer cells. Gleevec is a targeted therapy effective against many different cancers including ALL, a cancer of white blood cells that affects older adults as well as young children. While Gleevec has greatly improved survival of leukemia patients, there continues to be a small subset of patients who do not respond to therapy and ultimately die from their disease.

The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

On May 29 *The Bakersfield Californian* reported that **Anne Peters**, director of the USC Clinical Diabetes Program, helped diabetic IndyCar driver Charlie Kimball to monitor and regulate his blood sugar levels during races.

A May 31 article in *The New York Times* reported that **Jonathan Samet**, a physician and epidemiologist at the Keck School of Medicine and a member of President Obama’s National Cancer Advisory Board, led the World Health Organization panel which released a new decision classifying cell phones as possibly carcinogenic.

This was based largely on epidemiological data showing an increased risk among heavy cell phone users of a rare type of brain tumor called a glioma, Samet said. The story was also covered by *The Wall Street Journal*, four stories in *The*

Washington Post, The Associated Press, *USA Today*, *Los Angeles Times*, among many others.

On May 31 CBS News interviewed **Thomas Mack**, professor of preventive medicine and pathology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, about a new study on stress and multiple sclerosis. This new research did not find a link between stress and MS, the story stated.

A May 31 article in *The New York Times* reported that California energy executive **John Bryson**, chairman of the Keck School Board of Overseers, will be nominated as secretary of commerce by President Obama. The *Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post* also covered the news.

Cancer survivors and their families celebrate at 21st annual Festival of Life

By Sara Reeve

The feeling of warmth that spread across the Health Sciences Campus on June 4 didn't emanate from the sunny skies above.

Instead, it radiated from the hundreds of cancer survivors along with their friends and family who gathered for the 21st Annual Festival of Life, held in the Harry and Celesta Pappas Quad.

Hosted by the USC Norris Hospital in recognition of National Cancer Survivors Day, the festival featured music, entertainment and inspiring speakers who shared their personal stories of living with cancer.

The speakers, who included USC hospitals chief operating officer Scott Evans, City of Los Angeles Councilmember Tom LaBonge, assistant professor of radiology Pulin Sheth, and patients Barbara Kral and Paul Jordan, all expounded on a similar theme—the dedicated, patient-centered care available at USC Norris Hospital.

Kral related how amazed she was to feel the positive attitudes present at USC



Above, cancer survivor Paul Jordan speaks at the Festival of Life. Left, festival participant Obie Becerra signs a banner at the June 4 event, held in Harry and Celesta Pappas Quad.

Norris when admitted with acute myeloid leukemia. She told the crowd that, upon being wheeled into the hospital, she spoke with a physician. "I said, 'They told me I was dying.' He said, 'No, we're going to get you well.' And I thought, 'I love this place!'"

Sheth, who is also the director of breast imaging at the Harold E. and Henrietta C. Lee Breast Center at USC, described his decision to leave

private practice to come to USC Norris. "I was seeing patients, but I wanted to do more," he said. "I wanted to be around people who were giving more of themselves. After a quick search, I came to USC Norris and it was a 'no-brainer' after I spoke with some patients."

The event also featured informational tables from internal and external groups and organizations that provide supportive services to cancer

survivors. Nurse practitioner Pamela Merriam, who runs USC Norris Cancer Hospital's CARE Team/Pain Medicine program said that she attends the event because it gives her a "shot in the arm" that allows her to keep going.

"People stop by our booth and say, 'I'm glad I don't need to see you!' And I know what they mean," she said. "It's just wonderful seeing familiar faces that aren't in patient gowns."

The program concluded with the Bayou Brass Band's rendition of the Diana Ross classic, "Reach Out and Touch (Somebody's Hand)" and a ceremonial release of 100 doves.

Dedicated exclusively to treating cancer patients, USC Norris Cancer Hospital is affiliated with the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, one of only 40 centers in the United States designated as comprehensive by the National Cancer Institute.

USC researchers discover genetic mutation causing excessive hair growth

By Leslie Ridgeway

Keck School of Medicine researchers, with scientists in Beijing, China, have discovered a chromosomal mutation responsible for a very rare condition in which people grow excess hair all over their

bodies. Investigators hope the finding will lead to new treatments for this and less severe forms of excessive hair growth, as well as baldness.

The study, "X-linked congenital hypertrichosis syndrome is associated with

interchromosomal insertions mediated by a human-specific palindrome near SOX3," appeared in the June 2, 2011, issue of the *American Journal of Human Genetics*.

Pragna Patel, professor at the Keck School, the USC Institute for Genetic Medicine, and the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC, is a co-investigator of the study, and Sunju Choi, a research associate in Patel's lab, is a co-first author. The principal investigator is Xue Zhang, professor and chair of medical genetics at the Peking Union Medical College.

The initial discovery of the mutation came from Zhang's lab, which examined the condition, known as CGH, in a Chinese family. Researchers there worked with Choi to confirm the finding in a Mexican family that Patel first began studying in 1993. Males with this disorder have hair covering their entire face including their eyelids and their upper body, while females have thick patches of hair on their bodies.

"In 1995, we traced the approximate location of the mutation responsible for CGH

to a section of the X chromosome in the Mexican family," said Patel, whose laboratory focuses on understanding the genetic basis of inherited diseases. "We sequenced nearly 100 genes but could not find any mutations. Then recently, Xue Zhang and his colleagues in Beijing were able to pinpoint the exact location,

discovering that there was an insertion of chromosome 5 into the X chromosome in the Chinese family. When the Mexican family was examined, a piece of chromosome 4 was found to be inserted into the same part of the X chromosome, thus confirming that these extremely rare events caused the disorder."

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Calendar of Events

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

Monday, June 13

Noon. KSOM Research Seminar. "The Human Epigenome in Health and Disease," Peter A. Jones, USC. NRT Aresty Auditorium. Info: (323) 442-2605

Friday, June 17

1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. "LAC+USC Breathmobile 15th Anniversary Celebration," Pete Delgado, CEO, LAC+USC Health Network. 1100 N. State St., Los Angeles. Info: (800) 624-0044

Tuesday, June 21

Noon. Cancer Center Grand Rounds. "Targeting Radioresistance in Head and Neck Cancer by Inhibition of Thioredoxin Reductase 1: Basic Mechanisms and Clinical Implications," Constantinos Koumenis, Univ. of Pennsylvania. NRT Aresty Auditorium. Info: (323) 865-0801

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.