

# Stephen Gruber named USC Norris Cancer Center director

By Sara Reeve

Stephen B. Gruber, a renowned physician-scientist from the University of Michigan, has been named to the position of director of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, effective Dec. 1. Gruber has also been named the H. Leslie Hoffman and Elaine S. Hoffman Chair in Cancer Research and visiting professor of medicine at the Keck School.

“Dr. Gruber is ideally suited to lead USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center,” said Carmen A. Puliafito, dean of the Keck School of Medicine. “He is actively involved in research, patient care and administration, and he has a strong appreciation for the important role of each area to our academic mission, as well as to USC’s commitment to the growth of our academic medical center.”

Gruber was selected after a national search, led by Jon Samet, founding director of the USC Institute for Global Health and chair of the Keck School’s Department of Preventive Medicine.



Jon Nalick

A festive Oct. 12 town hall meeting at the Aresty Conference Center celebrated the appointment of Stephen Gruber (left) as director of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center. He assumes the post held by outgoing director Peter Jones (right).

Gruber succeeds Peter Jones, who has led the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center for the past 17 years.

Gruber comes to USC from the University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center, where he is the associate

director for cancer prevention and control. He also holds the H. Marvin Pollard Chair of Medicine and faculty appointments in the Departments of Internal Medicine, Epidemiology and Human Genetics at the University of Michigan

Medical School and School of Public Health.

“Recognizing that research is the foundation of all that we do in cancer care, I’ve really been looking for ways to optimize our ability to advance the

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**‘Dr. Gruber is ideally suited to lead USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center.’**

**—Keck School of Medicine Dean Carmen A. Puliafito**

## Keck School expands PA program

By Ryan Ball

As the demand for health care professionals grows, physician assistant (PA) programs across the country are expanding. The USC Primary Care Physician Assistant Program received a \$704,000 expansion grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

The grant allows for four additional students in each class over the next three years, bringing the class size to 54, and provides each of those additional students with \$22,000 to be applied to their tuition over two years.

The USC Primary Care Physician Assistant Program has been continually accredited for the past 35 years and will graduate its 40th class in 2012. There are currently 159 accredited PA programs in the United States, with another 42 seeking accreditation over the next four years, according to Kevin Lohenry, who

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## Going up? USC hospitals elevators make sure you’ve got handwashing down

By Amy E. Hamaker

Hand hygiene was the talk of the USC hospitals on Sept. 23, as new elevator screens touting the importance of proper hand hygiene were introduced in 14 locations at USC University Hospital.

Each screen featured a different USC “hand hygiene hero,” either a patient or hospital employee, who had been a role model for good hand hygiene. The screens feature the tagline “Clean hands save lives,” and will remain in place indefinitely to help remind people to wash their hands.

Along with the new screens, infection control employees staffed booths to share information about the hand hygiene program. There, medical personnel, patients and hospital visitors could learn more about germs that can cause disease and received free mints and hand sanitizers.

The booths were located at the USC University Hospital main lobby and cafeteria and at the USC Norris Cancer Hospital Rainbow Café.

Several administrators, including USC hospitals CEO Mitch Creem, worked alongside booth workers to show their support of the hand washing initiative.

“We are trying to improve the quality of care for our patients and reduce the rate of infection,” said Creem, adding that the screens will help increase the overall awareness of hand hygiene. “We’re here



Jon Nalick

Peering out at hospital employees and visitors passing by, new elevator screens remind staff and visitors of the importance of clean hands in caring for patients.

to show our patients and our staff just how much organizational support is behind this initiative.”

Cortney Montgomery, clinical and nutritional manager, food and nutrition, added, “The national average is very low

for hand hygiene, and we want to change that culture here at the USC hospitals. We’re hoping to see an improvement for hand hygiene and patient safety. When you emphasize that it’s for the patients, the support is really there.”



# GRUBER: 'Looking forward to 'transformative opportunity' at USC Norris

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care of patients and families with cancer,” said Gruber. “The Trojan Family allows me to do that best, and I’m looking forward to this transformative opportunity here at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center to really make a difference in the lives of our patients and families, as well as our research community.”

Gruber is a medical oncologist, cancer geneticist and epidemiologist whose research focuses on genetic and environmental contributions to cancer. His particular research interests include the genetic epidemiology of cancer, with emphasis on colorectal cancer; the molecular pathogenesis of cancer, integrated with genetic epidemiology; methods in genetic and molecular epidemiology; and clinical cancer genetics and translational research in cancer prevention.

Max S. Wicha, distinguished professor of oncology and director, University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Cen-

ter, said, “Dr. Gruber is one of the world’s leading investigators studying the molecular epidemiology of cancer. He has been a wonderful leader for our Cancer Center as the associate director for cancer prevention. We will miss Steve at Michigan but are excited by the opportunities he will have at USC. We hope that we can work together in the future.”

As director of the Cancer Genetics Clinic at the University of Michigan, Gruber concentrates his clinical practice on the care of patients and families with inherited susceptibility to cancer.

“Dr. Gruber is the perfect candidate for the job,” said Jones. “He is qualified as both a scientist and as a practicing physician. He brings his expertise in genetics to the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, and also his experience in operations as the associate director of cancer prevention and control at the University of Michi-

gan Comprehensive Cancer Center—which is arguably one of the best cancer centers in the country. I could not be happier with the selection of the search committee.”

In addition to serving on editorial boards for several professional journals, Gruber is active in national organizations. Since 2005, he has been chair of the Colorectal Family Registries Advisory Panel for the National Cancer Institute. For the past three years, he chaired the Cancer Genetics Education Committee of the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

He also holds two patents on a mutation associated with familial colorectal cancer.

The USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center was established in 1971 and has benefited from continuous recognition and funding from the National Cancer Institute since 1973, when it was named one of the original eight comprehensive cancer centers. It is one of only 40

comprehensive cancer centers in the country. The NCI recently awarded the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center a five-year, \$32.5 million core grant renewal to support its broad range of clinical, research and educational programs.

“In general terms, the priorities I have for the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center are to invest in research in a way that transforms clinical care and to provide the infrastructure that facilitates those discoveries and the highest quality of care available to cancer patients in the United States and the world,” said Gruber.

Gruber has been with the University of Michigan since 1997. He was appointed associate director for cancer

prevention and control at the University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center in 2009, and has been a professor of internal medicine, epidemiology and human genetics since 2008.

Gruber received his bachelor’s degree from the University of Pennsylvania, and his master of public health and doctorate from Yale University. For his medical degree, he returned to the University of Pennsylvania, where he also completed his internship and residency. He completed fellowships in medical oncology at Johns Hopkins Hospital and in clinical medical genetics at the University of Michigan.

He will be joined in Los Angeles by his wife, Robin, and their three children, Ellen, Claire and Megan.

## USC Norris faculty and staff welcome their new director

By Sara Reeve

The mood was celebratory and the champagne was flowing for staff and faculty of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center at a reception for the naming of Stephen Gruber as the center’s incoming director.

Keck School of Medicine Dean Carmen A. Puliafito opened the reception, held on Oct. 11 in the Aresty Auditorium, by thanking Jon Samet, founding director of the USC Institute for Global Health, who led the search committee. Puliafito told the audience of the inherent difficulty of filling the position of director.

“We embarked upon this search with great trepidation because we knew it would be quite difficult to find someone who can fill the shoes of Peter Jones, who in 17 years as director of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, has established a record of scientific distinction unparalleled at USC and developed a research program in epigenetics that is one of the world-class programs at this university,” said Puliafito.

Many in the audience noticed the smile on the face of Peter Jones, outgoing director of USC Norris. He was jovial as he expressed not only his excitement at devoting his time to research, but also his pleasure at the selection of a

proven physician-scientist to be his successor.

“I can’t imagine a better outcome,” said Jones. “[Gruber] has incredible credentials for this position. ... He brings his experience in operations as associate director of cancer prevention and control at the University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center. ... He is a funded scientist. ... He brings a strength in genetics, which is an area we have always wanted to develop, and he treats patients. This is really important for us, moving forward. Having a physician who is actually treating patients is very important because of the expansion we see in the clinical arena.”

Champagne corks were literally popping as Stephen Gruber addressed the assembled crowd.

“As I came through and recognized the unbelievable talent that is here at the University of Southern California among my colleagues, I saw that there is a lot going on here right now, and we are in a unique position to move forward,” said Gruber. “We are really in a wonderful place to be able to advance cancer research and cancer care.”

Faculty and staff applauded as glasses were raised to usher in a new era for the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center.

## ShakeOut quake drill set for Oct. 20 at 10:20 a.m.

All faculty and staff members at USC are being asked to join millions of other Southern Californians participating in the Great California ShakeOut on Oct. 20 at 10:20 a.m.

Everyone is being encouraged to practice the “drop, cover and hold on” technique for 30 seconds, as part of the largest earthquake drill in U.S. history with more than 8 million Californians participating.

For detailed instructions and additional information, visit [www.usc.edu/dept/hr/shakeout](http://www.usc.edu/dept/hr/shakeout).



Tania Chatila



Tania Chatila

**USC UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL PULLS TOGETHER DURING STRIKE**—Above, USC University Hospital staff set up a command center on Oct. 12 in response to a 24-hour strike by the National Union of Healthcare Workers. The center was one piece of a comprehensive strike action plan initiated to ensure smooth patient care operations during the day-long strike, which began at 6 a.m. on Oct. 12 and ended at 6 a.m. on Oct. 13. Heightened security was in place, and the hospital was under restricted access to ensure a safe environment. Left, hospital directors serve free meals to staffers as a thank you for working together during the strike. Hospitals CEO Mitch Creem said, “Operations ran smoothly and we owe it all to the dedicated staff members and physicians of our hospital who truly understand what it means to rise to the occasion. I can’t thank them enough for their uncompromising commitment to our organizational mission of caring for our patients.”

The Weekly

Next Issue: Oct. 21

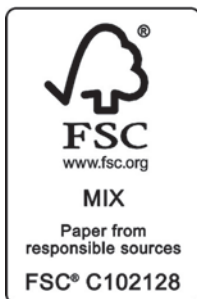
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# PA: Program expands to meet rising demand

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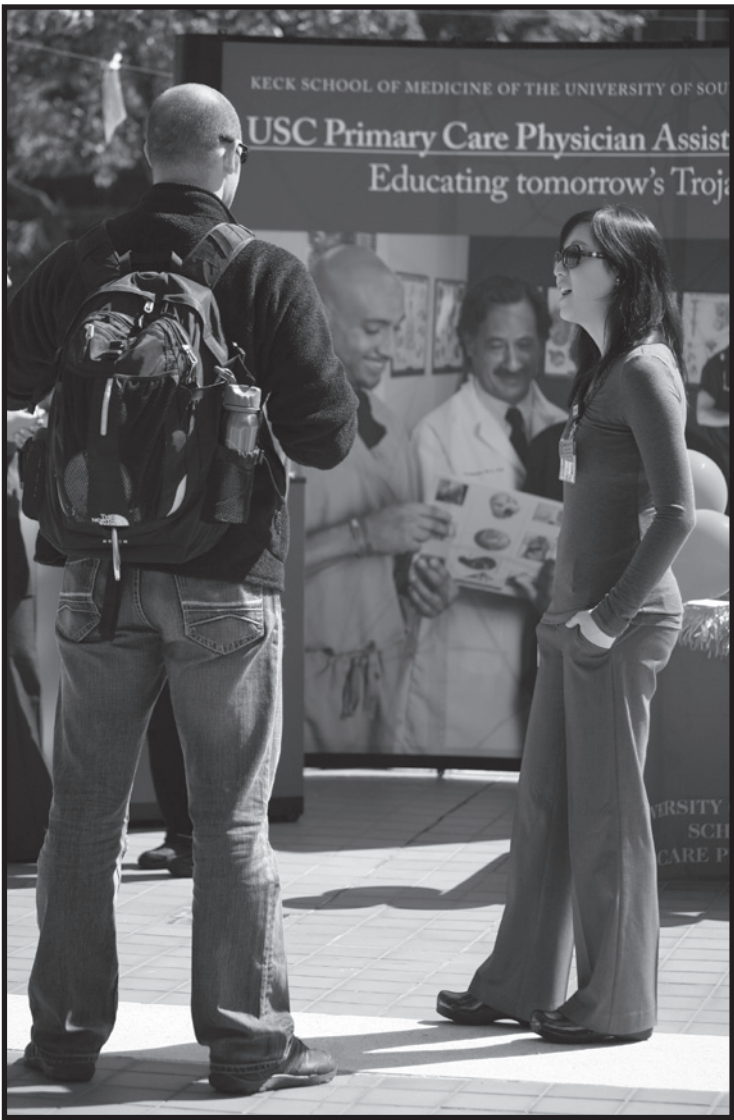
earlier this year succeeded Anne Walsh as director of the USC Primary Care Physician Assistant Program.

“The shortage of health care providers that is projected for 2020 is behind the big push for this expansion,” said Lohenry.

Lohenry took part in a workforce taskforce for the PA profession this past spring and says it is predicted that less than a decade from now the U.S. will see a shortage of 91,000 physicians across primary care and specialties. The shortage is due to overall population growth compounded by the aging baby boomer set and more than 30 million people gaining access to health care through the Affordable Care Act.

“The PA profession has been looking at this to try to determine what we should be doing as part of that team practice,” Lohenry said. “We recognize that there is a need for our profession to expand, but there is also a need to break down barriers to expansion in our profession as well.”

A number of states, including California, limit the number of PAs a physician can supervise. Lohenry said those laws may change as more patients require access



Physician assistant student Jessica Lee chats with passersby at Harry and Celesta Pappas Quad on Oct. 6. Lee helped staff a booth aimed at educating people about the role of physician assistants as part of Physician Assistant Week.

to health care and become more comfortable with non-physician providers.

The average PA student graduates with a master’s degree in 26 months. Given medical school’s greater investment of time and money, the PA program provides an attractive alternative to

prospective students. The program also offers greater flexibility to switch specialties after graduation.

As the program grows, it will remain dedicated to recruiting students from diverse backgrounds so that a number of them can be deployed to underserved communities.

## Upcoming lecture to highlight real-world implications of medical humanitarianism

By Amy E. Hamaker

An upcoming free lecture in the Visions and Voices lecture series will take a realistic look at what is involved in medical humanitarianism on a global scale.

Paul Farmer, the Presley Professor of Social Medicine and chair of the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School, will present “Medical Humanitarianism: Possibilities and Pitfalls” twice on Tuesday, Oct. 18:

- At 10:30 a.m. at the Mayer Auditorium on the Health Sciences Campus, with a medically focused conversation facilitated by Henri Ford, vice dean of medical education at the Keck School. Seating priority will be given to USC health-professional students.
- At 4 p.m. at the Bovard Auditorium on the University Park Campus. Seating will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

Farmer is a medical anthropologist, physician and founding director of Partners In Health, an international nonprofit organization that provides direct health care services. He and his colleagues in the United States and in Haiti, Peru, Russia, Rwanda, Lesotho and Ma-

lawi have pioneered novel community-based treatment strategies that demonstrate the delivery of high-quality health care in resource-poor settings.

He will present information not only on immediate emergency treatment in a devastated area, but also how long-term care will play out after medical teams have left.

The lecture was organized by Erin Quinn, former associate dean of admissions for the Keck School; Pamela Schaff, director of the Program in Medical Humanities, Arts and Ethics for the Keck School; and Lyn M. Boyd-Judson, director of the USC Levan Institute for Humanities and Ethics. It is co-sponsored by the Program in Medical Humanities, Arts and Ethics; the USC Pacific Center for Health Policy and Ethics; and the USC Levan Institute for Humanities and Ethics.

The Visions and Voices initiative, started in 2006 by USC President C. L. Max Nikias during his tenure as provost, offers dynamic events in the arts and humanities, encouraging students to interact with artists, writers, professors and special guests.

## USC to help CareNow bring free health services to L.A. residents

By Amy E. Hamaker

Partnering with the community is one of USC’s core values, and faculty and students will have the chance to do just that at the 2011 CareNow Los Angeles community free clinic event.

This year’s event will be held from Thursday, Oct. 20, to Sunday, Oct. 23, at the

Los Angeles Memorial Sports Arena, 3939 South Figueroa St. The Keck School is an official sponsor, and faculty and student volunteers from the Keck School of Medicine, the USC School of Pharmacy and the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry at USC will help provide free medical, dental and vision services to the

uninsured, underinsured and underserved populations in the Los Angeles community.

Visitors to the CareNow event will also be able to receive follow-up care. Several Los Angeles-based clinics and health care centers have volunteered to provide medical homes for patients who need continuing medical attention.

Glenn Ault, associate dean for clinical administration (Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center), is spearheading Keck School and School of Pharmacy participation.

“This is a huge community-based effort to provide care to those less fortunate, which is at the crux of the Keck School’s mission,” said Ault.

“This event is right in our backyard.”

Faculty and students are encouraged to volunteer.

For more information on USC’s participation, call Diana Breda at (323) 442-4093.

To volunteer, visit <http://carenowusa.org/la/volunteer.html> and sign up under the appropriate category.

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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

**Sunday, Oct. 16**

**10 a.m. – 2 p.m.** Epilepsy Foundation of Greater Los Angeles 5K to End Epilepsy. Rose Bowl, Pasadena. Join the USC Epilepsy Team. To register [www.walktoendepilepsy.org](http://www.walktoendepilepsy.org). Info: (800) 564-0445

**Monday, Oct. 17**

**7 a.m. – 8 p.m.** USC Physical Sciences in Oncology Center Short Course. Free registration. UPC: Davidson Conference Ctr. Info: (323) 442-3849

**10 a.m. – 2 p.m.** CHLA Saban Research Institute Free Workshop. “Light Microscopy and Image Processing Workshop,” G. Esteban Fernandez, CHLA. CHLA: Saban Auditorium. Info: (323) 361-4110

**Tuesday, Oct. 18**

**10:30 a.m.** Visions and Voices: The USC Arts & Humanities Initiative. “Medical Humanitarianism: Possibilities and Pitfalls,” Paul Farmer, Harvard. KAM Mayer Auditorium. Seating is limited. Info: (213) 740-0483

**10:30 a.m.** USC Hospital Guild Women’s Health Focus. “You Are What You Do,” Camille Dieterie, USC, and Christy Russell, USC. Coffee reception at 10 a.m.; lunch following program. \$45 per person. Wilshire Country Club. Info: (323) 254-0600

**Noon.** Cancer Center Grand Rounds. “Genome Organization and Targeted DNA Damage Determine the Location and Frequency of Chromosomal Translocations,” Rafael Casellas, NCI. NRT Aresty Auditorium. Info: (323) 865-0801

**1:30 p.m.** Ming Hsieh Institute for Engineering Medicine for Cancer Seminar. “The Advances in Nanotechnology in Cancer,” Piotr Grodzinski, National Cancer Inst. NRT Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 442-2605

**Wednesday, Oct. 19**

**Noon.** Center for Excellence in Research. “How to Manage a Research Lab: A Workshop for New Faculty,” various speakers. NML West Conference Rm. Info: (213) 740-6709

**Thursday, Oct. 20**

**Noon.** Center for Excellence in Research. “A Panel on Medical Informatics,” Urbashi Mitra, USC. UPC: RTH 526 (webcast

at HSC NML East Conference Room). Info: (213) 740-6709

**Friday, Oct. 21**

**8:30 a.m.** Surgical Grand Rounds. “The Future of General Surgery,” E. Christopher Ellison, Ohio State University. DOH 100. Info: (323) 442-2506

**11 a.m.** Hematology Grand Rounds. “Transfusional Iron Overload: What MRI Has Taught Us,” John Wood, USC. IPT C2J103. Info: (323) 865-3950

**11:45 a.m.** Southern California Environmental Health Sciences Center Seminar. “Modern Diesel Engine Exhaust: New Insights into the Potential Biological Effects of Inhalation Exposure,” Jacob McDonald, Lovelace Respiratory Research Institute. SSB 116. Info: (323) 442-7874

**Noon.** USC Center for Excellence in Teaching. “Who’s Talking? Learning by Actively Connecting with Others: A Learner-Centered Approach,” Win May and Terri Woehrl, USC. KAM B21/23. Info: (213) 740-3959

**Saturday, Oct. 22**

**9 a.m. – 1 p.m.** USC Norris Women’s Cancer Event. “Personalizing Breast Cancer Care,” Debu Tripathy, USC. This free multidisciplinary half-day conference will feature updates on personalized approaches for the prevention and treatment of breast cancer. Includes breakfast reception and tours of screening, care and research facilities. KAM Mayer Aud. Info: (323) 442-7050

**Tuesday, Oct. 25**

**Noon.** Psychiatry Grand Rounds. “Publicly Funded Outpatient Care for Childhood ADHD,” Bonnie Zima, UCLA. CSC 250. Info: (323) 442-4065

**Noon.** ZNI Seminar. “Mechanisms of Plasticity, Competition, and Recovery from Deprivation in the Visual Cortex,” Michael Stryker, UC San Francisco. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-2144

**Wednesday, Oct. 26**

**Noon.** ZNI Seminar. “Functional Organization of ON and OFF Channels in Visual Cortex,” Jose-Manuel Alonso, State University of New York College of Optometry. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-2144



Jon Mallick

**KECK SCHOOL WELCOMES NEW FACULTY**—Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito welcomed dozens of new faculty members to the school at a party at his Pasadena home on Oct. 2. Above left, Natalie Strand, assistant professor of clinical medicine, mingles with her fellow faculty members. Although new to the Health Sciences Campus, Strand may look familiar to viewers of season 17 of *The Amazing Race*—she was a member of that season’s winning team. Right, Keck School newcomers Afsaneh Barzi (left) and Cynthia Martel, both assistant professors of clinical medicine specializing in oncology, chat at the opening of the welcome ceremony.

## USC scientist wins award for groundbreaking research

Alexandre Bonnin, assistant professor of research at the Keck School of Medicine’s Department of Cell and Neurobiology, is the winner of the 2011 Freedman Award from the Brain and Behavior Research Foundation for his research on the role of serotonin in the fetal brain during development.

Bonnin and four other outstanding researchers were

recognized July 29 in New York City. The Freedman award is given in honor of Daniel X. Freedman, whose legacy as a researcher, teacher, physician and administrator has long influenced and inspired neuropsychiatry.

Bonnin has received two Young Investigator grants from the Brain and Behavior Research Foundation, formerly known as the National Alliance

for Research on Schizophrenia and Depression.

Bonnin’s research, published in April 2011 in the journal *Nature*, showed for the first time that the human placenta plays an active role in synthesizing serotonin, paving the way for new treatment strategies that could mitigate health impacts such as cardiovascular disease and mental illness.

### ONLINE EXTRAS

Read more HSC news online:

• “Healthy” habits linked to childhood obesity in China  
<http://tinyurl.com/42zy7z5>

• USC researchers find significant hip fracture risk for women who discontinue hormone therapy  
<http://tinyurl.com/3vhpnyj>

• Occupational Therapy welcomes international students  
<http://tinyurl.com/5vsnr6v>

• Severe morning sickness may be more than a passing thing  
<http://tinyurl.com/3sdba5h>

• Keck School researchers engineer functioning small intestine in laboratory experiments  
<http://tinyurl.com/3vt8zeg>

• CHLA researcher earns competitive grants for

work in neural tumors  
<http://tinyurl.com/3vvle7c>

• Blind photographer’s eyesight improves after artificial cornea transplant

<http://tinyurl.com/6b3cf44>

• American Architecture Award honors Eli & Edythe Broad CIRM Center  
<http://tinyurl.com/3clgncx>

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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 email to [eblaauw@usc.edu](mailto: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.