



Melissa Masatani

**ROYAL VISIT:** The 2016 Tournament of Roses Royal Court was at USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center on Dec. 1 — the 21st year that the Royal Court visited patients, staff and faculty. At left are princesses Donaly Marquez, Rachelle Liu, Natalie Hernandez-Barber and Sarah Shaklan; Bryce Bakewell is in back, with queen Erika Winter and princess Regina Pullens on the other side of patient Jim Galindo.

## New marketing effort shows how ‘Keck Effect’ benefits patients

Keck Medicine of USC is launching a new campaign that further evolves the meaning of the organization’s tagline, Beyond Exceptional Medicine.

Created to express the brand voice, The Keck Effect showcases the positive outcomes for both health care consumers and referring physicians. The intent of the campaign is to position Keck Medicine of USC as the gold standard in specialty and sub-specialty care — treating the world’s most complex cases, said Shawn Sheffield, MBA, MHA, chief strategy and business development

officer for Keck Medicine of USC.

“Think of The Keck Effect as the result of Keck’s approach to care,” Sheffield said. “The Keck Effect is the benefit that patients or referring physicians derive when Keck Medicine of USC physicians, researchers, faculty and experts unite around research, teaching and clinical care. As a result of this approach, patients get more access to more experts, more treatment options and more innovative surgical therapies.”

In advertisements, better clinical outcomes are

expressed as allowing an individual patient to enjoy more celebrations, more family time and more of what matters most to them. For referring physicians, The Keck Effect can be expressed as more resources, more treatment options and more positive outcomes.

“You’ll see (and hear) this campaign across various media, including print ads in local publications, online advertisements, billboards and radio spots,” said Jeana Rettig, executive director of clinical marketing for Keck Medicine of USC.

See **CAMPAIGN**, page 4

## Pulse Survey sees big response — and prompts quick action

By Les Dunseith

In October, Keck Medicine of USC sent out its first Pulse Survey to give employees an opportunity to provide anonymous feedback regarding their satisfaction with the organization, how well values are being upheld and to gauge awareness of key initiatives. The response was overwhelming.

One out of every four employees and faculty, 1,183 in all, responded with answers to the three questions included in this first online survey. Over 85 of these responses were from physicians. The turnout exceeded expectations, and the results were enlightening.

“We were also very pleased with the positive sentiment expressed through the responses to the survey,” said Tom Jackie-wicz, senior vice president and chief executive officer of Keck Medicine of USC.

In answer to the question, “Overall, I am satisfied with the organization,” more than three-quarters of respondents said they tend to agree or strongly agree. Almost as many, 75.9 percent, responded positively to a question about whether we uphold one of our values: “We deliver quality health care through uncompromised service excellence.”

Additionally, 274 thought-



ful comments were received, said Felipe Osorno, associate administrator of performance management at Keck Medicine of USC. Those comments either highlighted great successes in the organization or offered suggestions about how to further improve.

“The survey proved to be an innovative, nimble and dynamic way to understand the current pulse of the organization,” Osorno said. “We typically do employee surveys once a year and realized that frequency was just not enough in a quickly changing environment. This tool will allow us to listen to our employees and respond more effectively and quickly.”

Osorno highlighted five primary themes that emerged from the comments:

- Improve communication
- Leadership visibility and support during times of change
- Seek input from employees before change is implemented

See **SURVEYS**, page 4



Courtesy 2014 Lexus LaceUp Running Series

Steve Chaffee, with his fiancée Joan Brennan, continues to participate in 10K races.

## Advanced pacemaker technology offers potential for faster recovery

By Leslie Ridgeway

Steve Chaffee loves to exercise. A former marathon runner, the resident of Sierra Madre continued to run every day as he grew older, entering 10K runs and maintaining a steady weightlifting routine. A couple of years ago, he noticed he could no longer run as long. Alarmed, he met with his doctor and soon learned

he was a candidate for a new kind of pacemaker.

“They put a heart monitor on me, and said, ‘Bad news,’” said Chaffee, 58, the director of finance for a specialty chemical manufacturing company in Pasadena. “They discovered I had atrial fibrillation, and that my heart was stopping for five seconds at a time.

See **CHAFFEE**, page 2

## New entrance to Health Sciences Campus is open

By Douglas Morino

A new signalized intersection at Soto and Norfolk streets is now open, easing traffic and providing an additional entrance to the Health Sciences Campus.

The completed intersection signals another milestone in the HSC Beautification Project — a multiyear construction initiative that includes 12 phases across the 79 acres of campus.

“Keck Medicine of USC is experiencing a time of tremendous growth, both in patient volume and in building new facilities,” said Rod Hanners, CEO of Keck Medical Center of USC. “This work is being done to build Keck Medicine of USC into a leader of cutting-edge research and world-class health care for generations to come.”

The next phase of the beautification project includes modifying traffic lanes on San Pablo Street and Zonal Avenue. These modifications will be in place through Jan. 29 to



Douglas Morino

Norfolk Street was extended to Soto Street to create the new entrance.

accommodate construction on the east side of San Pablo Street and south side of Zonal Avenue, said Kelly Estes, senior capital construction project manager.

In order to maintain two-way traffic in the affected areas, parking meters have been taken down and “Tow Away, No Stopping Any Time” signs have been posted. Towing will be enforced.

Driveways to the Legacy parking lot and to the Parkview Lot P7 will remain open.

Traffic control officers from the Los Angeles Department of Transportation continue to assist with rush hour traffic flows at San Pablo Street intersections near HSC.

In September, the final steel beam was placed atop the Norris Healthcare Center, which will stand near the corner of Alcazar and San Pablo streets.

The Norris Healthcare Center will be dedicated to cancer treatment, with

See **EXPANSION**, page 2



# All the global health news that’s fit to print — for kids, by kids

By Melisa Acoba

“Do the Write Thing” is a phrase often associated with the idea that words have the potential to bring about a sort of social justice. For student mentors at the Global Health Symposium for Kids on Nov. 14, it served as a guiding theme.

Working with PressFriends, a non-profit designed to help elementary school students hone their writing skills, graduate students from the Master of Science in Global Medicine program at the Keck School of Medicine of USC hosted 140 youngsters on the Health Sciences Campus.

PressFriends volunteers from local high schools and USC undergraduates mentored the third- and fourth-graders who learned how to combine the tenets of good journalism with in-depth investigations into multiple health topics here and around the world.

Graduate students focused on pollution and the environment, disability, food and water security, infection care/hand hygiene, human rights, oral health, refugees and the effects of culture on nutrition, diet and exercise. Elementary students not only received an education about global health disparities, but they also learned about the importance of good research, asking questions,



Program Director Elahe Nezami says the program helps kids learn health habits.

making comparisons and connections, and effective communication as they completed article-writing exercises throughout the day.

“What we want is to really educate these children about these important topics because they’re going to hear about it in the news, they’re going to hear about it from their friends, they’re going to hear about it from their parents,” said Farah Zarehi, an adviser for the MS program. “We want them to be informed about what’s going on, and we also want them to get excited about this really awesome field of global medicine.”

According to Luke Southwell, president of PressFriends of USC, engaging students in writing news articles helps them absorb information better. “When kids communicate to their own peers about [issues], it tends to come across stronger ....



Photos by Gus Ruelas

Students in attendance at the Global Health Symposium for Kids learned about journalism and health topics around the world.

When they read an article written by their friends, and it’s coming from their own peers, they tend to take it more to heart.”

Eric Parker, a parent volunteer from Foshay Learning Center, added: “I’m just amazed that these children have the opportunity to come to a university to experience what it’s like to be here and to talk about some of these different topics that aren’t necessarily always explained in school. This exposes them to a higher level of education. I learned a lot just being here myself.”

Elahe Nezami, PhD, director of the Global Medicine program and associate professor of clinical preventive medicine, said: “It’s wonderful to see that the students are enthusiastic, happy, and excited, and very well engaged. We want them to learn about [healthy habits] that they can practice in their local communities. It’s important for students to think about the world, but also to consider how they might put healthy habits into practice both in local communities and at a larger level where we can practice being better people in the world.”

## Calendar of Events

### Monday, Dec. 7

**Noon.** KSOM Research Seminar Series Seminar. “Cytoplasmic Control of Nuclear Identity,” Shoukhrat Mitalipov, PhD, Oregon Health and Science University. Aresty Auditorium. Info: Mary Jane Chua, (323) 442-7732, maryjane.chua@med.usc.edu

### Tuesday, Dec. 8

**7:30 a.m.** Committee on Microbiome-Host Interactions in Disease (CMHID) Symposium. “Microbiome Matters Symposium Series,” Jonathan Braun, MD, PhD, UCLA, and David Pride, MD, PhD, UCSD. Harlyne Tower, LG 503/504. Info: Amy Parker, (978) 500-9269, parkeram@usc.edu, www.cmhid.org

**5:30 p.m.** Ophthalmology Grand Rounds. Arman Zaman, MD, USC. HC4 Conference Room, 3rd Floor. Info: Tyaisha Christopher, (323) 409-5233, Tyaisha.Christopher@med.usc.edu, usceye.org

### Wednesday, Dec. 9

**Noon.** Zilkha Neurogenetic Institute (ZNI) Seminar. “Flexible Sensory Representations in Auditory Cortex,” Jeff Isaacson, PhD, professor, Department of Neuroscience, UCSD. Herklotz Seminar Room, ZNI 112. Info: Emily Chu, (323) 442-3219, Emily.Chu@med.usc.edu, www.keck.usc.edu/zilkha/

### Thursday, Dec. 10

**1:30 p.m.** Keck Medicine of USC Stroke Support Group Meeting. “Demystifying Stroke,” Peggy Nguyen, MD, USC. Keck Hospital, 3 North, Day Room (3261A). Info: Ozzy Obiwuru, (323) 442-0049, obiwuru@med.usc.edu

### Friday, Dec. 11

**Noon.** 7th annual Telfer B. Pete Reynolds Memorial Lecture. “Autoimmune Liver Disease — The Klatskin-Kaplan Legacy,” James L. Boyer, MD, Yale University School of Medicine. Hastings Auditorium. Info: Dolores Mendoza, (323) 442-1283, dmmendoza@usc.edu

**8:30 a.m.** Hastings Center for Pulmonary

Research Seminar. “How a Gene Variant Predisposes to Mucous Hypersecretion,” Yohannes Tesfaigzi, PhD, Lovelace Respiratory Research Institute. IRD, Room 734. Info: Elva Rubio, (323) 226-7923, elvarubi@usc.edu

### Wednesday, Dec. 16

**Noon.** Zilkha Neurogenetic Institute Seminar. “ZNI Seminar Series: Genetic Dissection of Cortical Circuit Organization and Assembly — Chandeliers Light Up Pyramids,” Z. Josh Huang, PhD, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, NY. Herklotz Seminar Room, ZNI 112. Info: Emily Chu, (323) 442-3219, Emily.Chu@med.usc.edu, http://www.keck.usc.edu/zilkha/

**Noon.** The Saban Research Institute Seminar. “Reverse Engineering the Sense of Touch,” Samuel Andrew Hires, PhD, USC. Parking is available at the main hospital garage. Auditorium, Saban Building, 4661 Sunset Blvd. Info: Ritu Gill, (323) 361-8715, tecpad@chla.usc.edu, http://chla.org/tecpad

**9 a.m.** USC Women in Management Workshop. “Tools for Effective E-mail Communication,” Brenda Miller, USC. CHP 233D. Free for members, \$10 non-members. Info and RSVP: Ginger Mayerson, (323) 227-1092, mayerson@usc.edu, http://uscwim.org

### Saturday, Jan. 16

**7 a.m.-5 p.m.** Continuing Medical Education 2nd Annual Update on Esophageal Diseases Conference. USC course directors: Edy Soffer, MD, and John Lipham, MD. University Club of Pasadena. Info: Anika Bobb, (323) 442-2547, anika.bobb@med.usc.edu, http://usc.edu/cme

### Thursday, Jan. 28

**11 a.m.** USC Stem Cell Seminar. Didier Stainier, Max Planck Institute for Heart and Lung Research, Eli and Edythe Broad CIRM Center Auditorium, BCC 101. Info: Cristy Lytal, (323) 442-2172, lytal@med.usc.edu http://stemcell.usc.edu

## CHAFEE: Innovative device helps distance runner keep on pace

Continued from page 1

It was shocking. I’ve always been so healthy. I said, “Pacemakers are for older, sedentary people — not for me!”

He knew people who had pace-makers. Their devices were visible through clothing. At the beach, he’d never be able to hide it. Then he was referred to Keck Medicine of USC cardiologist Rahul Doshi, MD, who told Chaffee he was a candidate for the Nanostim, a leadless pacemaker that is implanted in the heart.

“The Nanostim is for patients like Steve who need pacing for atrial fibrillation, and for other patients such as those who have vascular access issues or have a history of infection,” said Doshi, director of electrophysiology and associate professor of medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. “It’s a dramatic, game-changing technology in the field of cardiac pacing, and will lead to further refinements to make it available to an expanded patient population.”

More than 4 million Americans, typically over the age of 60, experience irregular heartbeat. Also known as arrhythmia, it may lead to serious complications, including stroke, breathing problems or loss of consciousness. Many arrhythmias, including atrial fibrillation, are detected only when medical tests are done.

Keck Medicine of USC was the first medical center in Southern California to perform a Nanostim implant, in 2014. Since then, 15 of the pacemakers have been implanted by Keck Medicine doctors.

The Nanostim is one of two leadless pacemakers currently being studied in clinical trials nationwide. Keck Medicine of USC is part of a multicenter clinical trial that ended in September, with a continued access study beginning immediately after. A post-market approval application was submitted this year to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) by St. Jude Medical, the device manufacturer.

Traditional pacemakers, designed

to steady irregular heartbeat, are about the size of a drink coaster. They are implanted in a pocket under the skin to the left of the heart and attached to the heart with leads. The battery-driven Nanostim is less than an inch long and fits inside the heart’s right ventricle. It is implanted under local anesthetic in a minimally invasive procedure that typically lasts an hour. The device is delivered to the heart via catheter through the groin. The catheter is guided with the help of X-ray.

Chaffee was initially wary of the procedure. “I dragged my feet,” he said. After speaking to a fellow congregant at his church who said he’d had the procedure, Chaffee decided to go ahead. He was surprised by his recovery.

“We’re talking days, not weeks or months,” he said. “I’ve had zero effect from the procedure. Unless you told me I had (the implant), I wouldn’t know it’s there.”

Two months after the implant, he entered a 5K race, then a 10K three months after that.

“I’m thrilled to do these races and pretend I’m an Olympian,” he said with a chuckle. “I think I’m younger than I am.”

## EXPANSION: Parking garage to open soon

Continued from page 1

an ambulatory surgery center and a women’s cancer program. The building will also feature several new dining options. Construction is scheduled for completion in December 2016.

Additionally, occupancy of the new parking structure on San Pablo Street is expected to begin in January. The six-story structure will provide parking for day shift employees currently using the Keck Hospital structure.

With the opening of the new structure, the Keck Hospital structure will become a patient and visitor parking facility during daytime hours.

**Notice:** Calendar items are due at least 10 days before publication date. Timely submission does not guarantee publication in print. See more calendar entries at [hscnews.usc.edu/calendar-of-events](http://hscnews.usc.edu/calendar-of-events). Submit items at [tinyurl.com/calendar-hsc](http://tinyurl.com/calendar-hsc). Include day, date, time, title of talk, first and last name of speaker, affiliation of speaker, location and a phone number/email address.





Photos courtesy of Second Sight

Terry Byland and his wife Sue, just before his surgery to implant an Argus II prosthetic device in his left eye.

## USC Eye Institute patient is first to receive retinal implants in each eye

By Meg Aldrich

In June, USC Eye Institute patient Terry Byland became the first person in the world to have two retinal prostheses — one in each eye — and his progress regaining some sight signals hope for people going blind from retinitis pigmentosa.

“I just can’t get over what I can see, and all the things I’ve seen so far,” said Byland, 66, who lives in Riverside, CA.

The reason: the Argus II Retinal Prosthesis system, the first FDA-approved implanted device to re-establish some sight in blind patients, giving them the ability to perceive images and movement.

Like most people with retinitis pigmentosa, Byland experienced gradual loss of sight, going completely blind at age 45, when his youngest son was 5. He had to retire from a job he loved, selling power tools.

“It’s one thing to give up driving, but it’s another thing to give up your work,” Byland said. “My co-workers were like a second family. I struggled with depression and mood swings. It’s paralyzing to lose your sight.”

Byland was part of the clinical trial for the original prosthesis, Argus I, from 2004 to 2010. His right eye was implanted with a 16-electrode retinal prosthesis on June 23, 2004.

“That study gave me a sense of worth,” Byland said. “The biggest thing for me was to see how far we could go before we hit that wall. The prosthesis allows more independence. And the more independent you are, the happier you are.”

“Terry is a true pioneer,” said Mark Humayun, MD, PhD, co-inventor of the device, who holds appointments at the Keck School of Medicine of USC and the USC Viterbi School of Engineering. “His work with the first-generation implant helped our team develop the FDA-approved Argus II. For him to enjoy the benefit of this smaller, better device is gratifying.”

Byland’s left eye was implanted with the new 60-electrode Argus II

on June 22 — almost 11 years to the day from the first implant — by Lisa Olmos de Koo, MD, MBA, of the USC Eye Institute.

“Once the Argus II was activated, I was immediately able to see what it took the original device more than two years to let me see,” Byland said.

“The Argus II uses software that we can upgrade as we go,” said Olmos de Koo, who is assistant professor of ophthalmology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. “As there are new innovations in image processing technology, we can continue to introduce new features that might help improve the way a patient can see in the future.”

The Argus II helps patients recognize large letters, locate the position of objects and more. It restores some visual capabilities for patients whose blindness is caused by retinitis pigmentosa (RP), an inherited retinal degenerative disease that affects about 100,000 people nationwide.

The system includes a small video camera mounted on a pair of eye-glasses, a video processing unit that transforms images from the camera into wirelessly transmitted electronic signals and an implanted retinal prosthesis (artificial retina) to stimulate visual neurons. The receiver sends signals to the retina that travel through the optic nerve to the brain, where they can be interpreted as a visual picture.

The external device runs on rechargeable battery packs that provide four to six hours of operation. Byland wears it as often as he can, especially when he goes out. The more that he wears it, the more he is able to see. He has a retinal prosthesis in each eye but can only use one at a time.

The Argus II is manufactured by Sylmar-based Second Sight. It is the result of a close collaboration among the Keck School of Medicine of USC, the USC Eye Institute and the USC Viterbi School of Engineering. It is available to qualified patients at Keck Medical Center of USC.



Terry Byland wears the Argus II device as he speaks with physician Lisa Olmos de Koo of the USC Eye Institute, along with his wife Sue and son Daniel.

## Alzheimer’s expert talks about why he moved to USC

By Hope Hamashige

Paul Aisen, MD, the founding director of the USC Alzheimer’s Therapeutic Research Institute, is the newest member of the Keck School of Medicine of USC whose focus is Alzheimer’s disease research. He recently answered a few questions.



Paul Aisen

**Q: What excites you about joining the Keck School of Medicine of USC?**

A: I think Keck is the perfect home for my research group. We have enjoyed terrific support at all levels, allowing us to get our studies running in record time. And the academic environment is likewise terrific, as we build collaborations with outstanding leaders in Alzheimer’s disease research, including Arthur Toga, Paul Thompson and Helena Chui.

**Q: There is a significant amount of research going on at Keck Medicine through the Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center, USC Stevens Institute of Neuroimaging and Neuroinformatics and the Zilkha Neurogenetic Institute. How do you think the Alzheimer’s Therapeutic Research Institute (ATRI) fits into that landscape?**

A: ATRI’s mission is to accelerate the development of effective treatments for Alzheimer’s disease. We work on new methods (trial designs, outcome measures, analytical approaches), and design and implement multicenter trials. We look forward to collaboration with all of the research groups at the Keck School — all will contribute to our therapeutic studies.

**Q: Take us back to when you first decided to pursue research on Alzheimer’s disease. What was it like then?**

A: I think I was very fortunate to enter academic medicine just as the field of Alzheimer’s therapeutic research was beginning. I had the opportunity to participate in the earliest studies, contributing to the development of the first drugs to be approved for the disease. Over the past 25 years, I have worked with remarkable investigators around the world on setting the stage for a new genera-

tion of therapies that we hope will bring this terrible disease under control.

**Q: What changes have been most beneficial to advancing research?**

A: Let me focus on one area: PET imaging. There are two primary abnormalities in the Alzheimer’s disease brain: plaques, made of aggregated protein called amyloid, and tangles, deposits within brain cells made up of a protein called tau. For the past 10 years, we have been able to study the accumulation of amyloid plaques in the brain using PET scans. This changed our entire perspective on the disease, and revolutionized drug development. We now know that amyloid, the root cause of the disease, accumulates 15 years before the onset of symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease. So we are now conducting our anti-amyloid trials during this asymptomatic phase when removal of amyloid is likely to be effective. We have been able to visualize tangles as well, with a different type of PET scanning. With these neuroimaging tools, we can analyze the course of the disease as never before, allowing accurate diagnosis very, very early, and enabling the accurate tracking of disease progression.

**Q: You have said there is reason for optimism for patients with Alzheimer’s disease. What give you hope?**

A: With our new neuroimaging tools, and very promising therapeutic agents, I am confident that we will have effective treatments within the coming years. Ultimately, I believe we will be able to screen people in mid-life for evidence of amyloid dysregulation, so that we can administer treatments to prevent the accumulation of amyloid in brain, just as we treat elevated cholesterol to prevent the accumulation of plaques in arteries. We will be able to change the course of the most feared disease of aging.

## Stram is named AAAS fellow

By Zen Vuong

Daniel Stram, PhD, MPH, of the Keck School of Medicine of USC is now a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the nonprofit has announced.

Stram, a preventive medicine professor in USC’s Division of Biostatistics and Genetic Epidemiology, said he was pleasantly surprised to be named a fellow. He has been a member of AAAS for 25 years.

“They listed a lot of different fields that I contributed to,” Stram said. “I’ve tried to solve statistical problems in many areas. It’s gratifying to see that the sum total of the work was being honored.”

AAAS gave 347 members fellow status in 2015. They were given the honor because of their efforts to advance science or its applications. Stram was selected “for development and application of innovative statistical procedures for laboratory, clinical and field studies, and for signature collaborations in genomics, cancer treatment, and radiation effects.”

The AAAS fellows tradition began in 1874. AAAS, the world’s largest general scientific society, is publisher of the journal *Science*, which has an



Daniel Stram

estimated total readership of 1 million, making it the largest paid circulation of any peer-reviewed general science journal in the world.

Stram spent three years in Hiroshima in the late 1980s to work on a health follow-up study of atomic bomb survivors. In that study, he developed risk estimation methods by looking at measurement error in radiation dose estimates. This led to his longstanding interest in the statistical treatment of uncertainty in risk analysis.

“I’m interested in making statistical decisions in the presence of uncertainty in exposures for different diseases,” Stram said. “If those exposures are not perfectly measured, then we have an exposure measurement problem. I help address those problems.”

New fellows will receive an official certificate and gold and blue rosette pin on Feb. 13 at the annual AAAS meeting in Washington, DC.



# HSC Newsmakers

A roundup of news items related to Keck Medicine of USC, which may include philanthropic donations, research grants, publication in academic journals and mentions in the news media:



Lilyana Amezcua, center, receives her award from National MS officials Eli Rubenstein and Cynthia Zagieboylo.

Courtesy of National MS Society

## MS Society chooses Amezcua for its Volunteer Hall of Fame

THE NATIONAL MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SOCIETY recently presented its Volunteer Hall of Fame: Health Professionals Award to Lilyana Amezcua, MD, MS, assistant professor of neurology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC and fellowship director of the USC MS Comprehensive Care Center and Research Group. The award honors individuals who have donated a significant amount of time and expertise as a health professional and MS Society volunteer. Recipients must have significantly improved or addressed issues related to quality of care, access to care, quality of life and long-term care options for people with MS. They also demonstrate leadership, creativity and innovation as an MS Society volunteer. Amezcua also serves as adviser and medical liaison for the Wellness Center at Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center. Since 2007, she has been a member of the MS Society’s Latino/Hispanic Advisory Council, leading and participating in initiatives. She also received the NMSS Clinical Fellowship award. In addition to connecting her patients with the society, volunteering and engaging the medical community, Amezcua involves her professional network in Walk MS each year. The award presentation took place Nov. 6 during the society’s Leadership Conference in Fort Worth, TX. Since 1997, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society has recognized roughly 500 volunteers with induction to the Volunteer Hall of Fame.

## Specialties unite to help patients review prostate cancer treatments

THE USC INSTITUTE OF UROLOGY has launched a multidisciplinary approach to prostate cancer treatment known as the Comprehensive Consult, a one-stop visit for those who need prostate cancer treatment. The approach brings together world-class surgeons, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists and cancer resource specialists all on the same day. Patients have the opportunity to get their questions answered and talk about various treatment options in the comfort of an individual suite. Time is of the essence when dealing with prostate cancer, and the organizers of the Comprehensive Consult created the program to in part to save time. It also relieves prostate cancer patients of the additional stress of having to meet with multiple specialists at different locations at various times. To find out more, go to [urology.keckmedicine.org](http://urology.keckmedicine.org).

## Hearing loss from chemotherapy impacts neurocognitive function

MORE CHILDREN ARE SURVIVING malignant brain tumors thanks to platinum-based chemotherapy (cisplatin and high-dose carboplatin). But it has a known side effect of permanent hearing loss resulting from damage to the inner ear. Investigators at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles report that the hearing loss may then contribute to long-term neurocognitive deficits. The study was published online in the journal *Pediatric Blood & Cancer*. “Neurocognitive effects are associated with radiation therapy for brain tumors; however, the use of platinum-based chemotherapy regimens to reduce or eliminate radiation therapy were thought to spare these harmful side effects to the brain, despite their known impact on hearing,” said principal investigator Etan Orgel, MD, MS, an attending physician at CHLA and assistant professor of clinical pediatrics at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. “Our research suggests that, despite this practice shift in therapy, the impact of hearing loss itself in brain tumor survivors leads to long-term neurocognitive problems.” — **Ellin Kavanagh**



Etan Orgel



Billboards featuring the new campaign are visible throughout Southern California.

## CAMPAIGN: New ads stress ‘Keck Effect’

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For an ambulatory ad, “more access to more experts” informs potential patients that their nearby ambulatory clinic connects with the broad expertise of

specialists across the Keck Medicine of USC system.

When applied to less promotional cases, such as press releases or items in news releases, Rettig said the idea of The Keck Effect

will be more subtle, woven into the narrative by noting, for example, how Keck Medicine of USC integrates research, teaching and clinical expertise to deliver exceptional care.

## SURVEYS: Participation is high in first poll

Continued from page 1

- Fix specific operational and patient experience issues
- Department-specific workplace opportunities

“All senior leaders have reviewed every single comment in a lot of detail, and we are crafting a detailed action plan to ensure we respond to the common themes that arose,” Osorno said. “Showing change and responsiveness will be key to maintaining trust and engagement, ensuring our staff and faculty will continue to leverage the Pulse Survey to voice their opinions.”

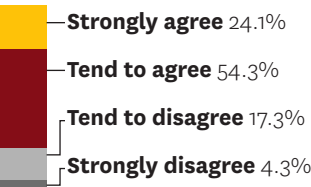
The surveys will be a regular part of the organization’s efforts to improve. The next one is expected to launch Dec. 7, with a focus on further exploring some of the opportunities identified in the first survey, especially around communication and patient safety culture.

One of the survey questions has already led to a specific action. Three Town Halls took place in November to provide information about the R3 initiative, which seeks to streamline operations while maintaining the highest levels of quality and patient satisfaction. In the Pulse Survey, a third of the respondents said they wished they knew more about R3 or said they didn’t know anything at all about it.

“The Town Halls were very eye opening,” Osorno said. “Our staff and faculty want to be part of the change, to help in Keck Medicine of USC’s journey. They just wanted to be more informed — once you explain to them the R3 initiative and encourage frank dialogue and tough questions, folks want to jump on board. The question shifts from ‘What are you talking about?’ to ‘I have several ideas, where can we start?’”

The response to the Pulse Survey was vast, but it was also broadly based, with responses coming from throughout the organization. Facilities with the most employees, Keck Hospital of USC and USC Norris Cancer Hospital, had the most respondents, but a significant number of surveys originated elsewhere, including many from Soto

“OVERALL, I AM SATISFIED WITH THIS ORGANIZATION.”



offices, USC Verdugo Hills Hospital and the Alhambra business office.

The respondents themselves were also varied. The biggest percentage of responses came from nurses (22.1 percent), but significant percentages of the surveys came from attending and resident physicians, other clinicians, clinical support staff, administrative employees and other staff.

“We want to hear from everyone — we will not evolve as a health system until everyone is involved in improvement, and we understand what our starting point is,” Osorno said. “Hearing from such a wide variety of staff, and especially from

physicians from every corner of our expanding health system, was very exciting.”

The Pulse Survey originated from the FY16 Operational Goal Deployment. As senior leaders were developing priorities for the fiscal year, developing a methodology for engagement was top of mind.

These frequent updates in answer to brief questions are valuable, but they are not a replacement for the comprehensive annual Press Ganey employee surveys, which are scheduled to take place in early 2016.

“We will continue doing the Pulse Survey every two months, being completely transparent about the responses and clear about what actions are being taken,” Osorno said. “We hope to respond effectively and solve issues that currently affect satisfaction. We hope to see an increase in satisfaction and hope to see even greater participation in future Pulse Surveys.”

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## HSC News

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