

University leaders celebrate opening of Currie Hall

By Douglas Morino

USC leaders celebrated in August the opening of a new, resort-style residence hall on the Health Sciences Campus.

The Malcolm and Barbara Currie Residence Hall can house up to 456 students in a modern, spacious complex with 178 apartments, a fitness center, swimming pool, barbecues and an “academic success center” with computers, printers and two study rooms. Medical students living on the Health Sciences Campus were previously limited to the 90-bed Seaver Residence Hall.

USC President C. L. Max Nikias, PhD, commended Malcolm and Barbara Currie for their steadfast support to the university, as well as their visionary philanthropy. The residence hall is named in recognition

of their investment in the university’s biomedical research and education.

The Curries gave \$10 million in 2015 toward the endowment of the Keck School of Medicine of USC and construction of the USC Michelson Center for Convergent Bioscience.

“The Curries, in fact, have long believed in the soaring possibilities that come when science and engineering join forces,” he said. “Lives can be improved; lives can be saved; lives can be transformed. That is why USC made a dedicated choice to build at this campus, where we are investing not only in the future — not only in our students — but in this community.”

Keck School of Medicine Interim Dean and Director of the USC Gayle and Edward Roski Eye Institute, Rohit Varma, MD, MPH, described the

See **CURRIE HALL**, page 3



Photos by Steve Cohn

Top, from left, Keck School of Medicine of USC Interim Dean Rohit Varma, USC Board of Trustees Chairman John Mork, philanthropists Malcolm and Barbara Currie, and USC President C. L. Max Nikias are seen during a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Malcolm and Barbara Currie Residence Hall, held Aug. 25 on the Health Sciences Campus. **Lower left**, Malcolm Currie speaks during the ceremony. **Lower right**, confetti streamers fly while the USC Trojan Marching Band plays at the residence hall opening.

Taking skills on deployment

Nurse anesthesia graduate part of Operation Inherent Resolve



Photos courtesy Joe Romero

Joe Romero was deployed to Iraq to serve as a nurse anesthetist with the 948th Forward Surgical Team in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

By Mary Dacuma

Although medical students comprise the majority of the graduates from the Keck School of Medicine of USC, the school offers robust programs in a number of other disciplines, including nurse anesthesia. The rigorous program, which accepts only 16 students each year, provides comprehensive academic and clinical training in every aspect of anesthesiology.

Joe Romero, a 2013 graduate of the nurse anesthesia program and a captain in the U.S. Army Reserve, certainly found the program helpful in his unique role abroad. In 2016, Romero was deployed to Iraq to serve as a nurse anesthetist with the 948th Forward Surgical Team (FST) in support of Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR). OIR’s mission is to assist the Iraqis in the fight against Islamic State militants and end the sectarian violence in the Middle East.

“The FST’s role is simple, but significant,” Romero said. “We provide life-saving surgery and are a morale force multiplier for the Iraqi soldiers on the ground. With us here, they have the courage and confidence to do the dangerous work of clearing neighborhoods, removing explosives and fighting ISIS knowing that somebody will care for them if they are injured.”

On average, Romero administered anesthesia to one patient each day. On the busiest days, he provided airway management, advanced trauma life support and critical care management to as many as four patients simultaneously. Most patients were men from the Iraq Army, although the FST has also saved women and small children. Typical injury patterns are the result of direct mortar fire, explosives and gun shot wounds.

See **DEPLOYMENT**, page 3

Chief health information officer begins

By L. Alexis Young

Timothy James (TJ) Malseed has been appointed as chief health information officer for Keck Medicine of USC and associate dean for information sciences at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, administrators announced recently.

Malseed will lead growth and oversee operations for information systems and support the planning, operating and optimizing information management across the care continuum for the hospital sites, ambulatory locations and office-based practices of Keck Medicine, according to a memo sent by Tom Jackiewicz, MPH, senior vice president and CEO of Keck Medicine, and Rohit Varma, MD, MPH, interim dean of the Keck School and director of the USC Gayle and Edward Roski Eye Institute.

Additionally, Malseed will support the integration of care for Keck’s patient population at its owned sites and at other locations that may collaborate with Keck on population health management programs. He also will lead the integration of clinical care and biomedical research to develop new paradigms of care.

Malseed most recently worked at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA), where he held positions as vice president and chief information officer, and chief applications officer. With 20 years of experience in IT, he oversaw the strategy and direction for CHLA’s technology efforts and led numerous clinical, revenue cycle, financial, human

See **CIO**, page 4

Strategic planning panel eyes school’s goals

By Amanda Busick

To define the vision and strategic direction and develop a better understanding of what core values, goals and strategies matter most at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, leadership has launched a six-month strategic planning initiative. A steering

committee is creating this plan with help from AMC Strategies, a Los Angeles-based consultancy group that specializes in working with academic medical centers.

The committee is co-chaired by Keck School Interim Dean Rohit Varma, MD, MPH; Helena Chui, MD, chair and professor of neurol-

ogy; and Andrew McMahon, PhD, chair and W.M. Keck Provost Professor of Stem Cell Research and Regenerative Medicine, and director of the Edythe and Eli Broad Center for Stem Cell Research and Regenerative Medicine. The committee also includes members from

See **GOALS**, page 3

Flu vaccine available Sept. 12

Flu vaccines will be available to all faculty, nurses and Keck Medicine of USC staff starting Sept. 12 at Employee Health Services, Monday through Friday from 7:45 a.m. to 4 p.m. and the Evaluation & Treatment Clinic, Monday through Friday from 4 p.m. to 7:45 a.m., weekends and holidays.

Preservative-free and egg-free vaccines are available on request. Flu season begins Nov. 1 and stretches to March 31.

Janine Cadet speaks during the sixth annual Bridging the Gaps Summer Research Poster Day on Aug. 4 in the Broad CIRM Center.



Douglas Morino

Undergraduates present summer research projects

By L. Alexis Young

Keck School of Medicine of USC hosted the sixth annual Bridging the Gaps Summer Research Poster Day on Aug. 4 in the Broad CIRM Center. Bridging the Gaps is a summer research program that provides underrepresented undergraduate students an opportunity to gain exposure to basic science, translational and clinical research at the Keck School.

The program began in the summer of 2011 and serves as a recruitment effort for the medical and graduate school programs. It runs for eight weeks in the laboratories of Keck School faculty members who also serve as mentors for the students. This year, 15 students participated in the program, which culminated with a presentation of their research posters.

“I am always impressed with the magnitude of their accomplishments in such a short period of time,” said Joyce Richey, PhD, chief diversity officer and assistant dean for student affairs. “Understandably, students are not expected to or even able to complete a research project in the time allotted. However, they all develop a full understanding of their respective research programs and some learn new investigative techniques.”

To date, 86 minority undergraduate students have participated in the program and 39 have matriculated into programs of their interests.

Alumni of the summer program are now members of the Trojan Family and are enrolled in MD, PhD and Global Medicine programs.

Janine Cadet, a senior at Princeton University, said she found the program provided experiences she hasn’t yet had.

“I really appreciate this experience and specifically the opportunities to shadow physicians,” explained Cadet, who presented her poster about the risks associated with driving and cell phone usage. “I was able to shadow a pulmonologist and a pediatric surgeon, so I gained exposure to areas that I haven’t previously been exposed to.”

Program participant Andrew Homere said the program gave him an opportunity to see a different side of medicine.

“I loved that we got to do a little bit of everything: we got to shadow physicians, hear lectures from different doctors and do our own research about something that we’re interested in,” explained Homere, who recently graduated from the University of Chicago. “It’s definitely a place I would want to come for medical school.”

Fellowship ties CareMore physicians to Gehr Center for training, research

By Mary Dacuma

A new fellowship will allow physicians to study innovative methods to care for high-cost, high-need patients, as the Gehr Family Center for Implementation Science at the Keck School of Medicine of USC and CareMore Health System announced a collaboration to train the next generation of leaders in health care delivery and implementation science.

The collaboration allows for CareMore physicians, through the CareMore-Gehr Fellowship, to receive policy and research training at Keck Medical Center of USC under the mentorship of Gehr Center faculty. The fellows will work on health care delivery innovation projects related to CareMore’s patient base. Sauda Bholat, MD, most recently chief resident in internal medicine at the Yale School of Medicine, has been chosen as the inaugural fellow for the program.

“This fellowship is a novel partnership between a leading academic medical center and an innovative managed care delivery system,” said Michael Hochman, MD, MPH, director of the Gehr Center and assistant professor of clinical medicine. “Examining CareMore’s model, which has successfully treated the highest risk patients in complex health care delivery environments, will surely provide key learnings around how we can provide more value to patients while operating an efficient health system.”

With the ever-changing health care marketplace, it remains crucial to continuously

develop and recreate effective health care delivery methods. The CareMore-Gehr Fellowship seeks to help with that.

“Dr. Bholat’s work with the Gehr Center will help us better understand our existing model of care and identify opportunities to change it to more effectively serve patients,” noted Sachin Jain, MD, MBA, CEO of CareMore. “The Gehr Center and the Keck School of Medicine is one of the premier institutions in the emerging fields of health care delivery science and implementation.”

The CareMore and Gehr Center collaboration also provides a model for effective academic partnerships with novel health systems and delivery models.

“Some of the most exciting ideas in health care are generated in clinical practice outside of the academic medical center environment,” said Edward Crandall, PhD, MD, chair of the Department of Medicine at the Keck School. “Academic study of health systems like CareMore can help us understand how these models work to improve care delivery.”

The program also will provide important training for future clinical leaders. Many of the skills that will be emphasized in the CareMore-Gehr Fellowship program are imperative for effectively improving the quality and efficiency of care delivery, as well as the health of populations.

The Fellowship will be co-led by Hochman and Anil Hanuman, DO, regional chief medical officer at CareMore.

Calendar of Events

Friday, Sept. 9

8 a.m. USC Caruso Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery. “John K. Niparko Research Seminar,” Shuman He, MD, PhD. Eli and Edythe Broad CIRM Center Auditorium. Info: Jacqueline Jimenez, (323) 442-5579, jimenez1@med.usc.edu

Noon. USC Stem Cell Special Seminar. “Doerr Stem Cell Challenge Grantees,” Michaela Patterson, PhD, Lindsey Barske, PhD, Ang Li, PhD, and Yuwei Li, PhD. Broad CIRM Center First Floor Auditorium.

Saturday, Sept. 10

8 a.m.-Noon. Department of Ophthalmology. “Ophthalmology Specialty Conferences: Pediatric Ophthalmology.” Healthcare Center 4 Conference Room, Third Floor.

9 a.m.-3 p.m. USC Verdugo Hills Hospital Seminar. “Having Courageous Conversations About Preventing Suicide,” Johan Smith; Barbara Lang, RN; Timothy Pytko, MD; and Robert David Jaffee. USC-VHH, 1812 Verdugo Blvd., Glendale. Info and RSVP: <http://uscvh.org/suicide-prevention-conference>

Tuesday, Sept. 13

11 a.m. USC Stem Cell Seminar. “A molecular switch for the orienta-

tion of epithelial cell polarization,” Keith Mostov, MD, PhD, University of California, San Francisco. Broad CIRM Center First Floor Conference Room. Info: <http://keckmedia.usc.edu/stem-cell-seminar>

Wednesday, Sept. 14

Noon. The Saban Research Institute Seminar. “Research Seminar: Developing Clinical Services for Families with Inherited Cardiovascular Disease,” Dominic Abrams, MD, Boston Children’s Hospital. Saban Research Building Auditorium, 4661 Sunset Blvd. Info: Ritu Gill, (323) 361-8715, tecpad@chla.usc.edu, <http://chla.org/tecpad>

Thursday, Sept. 15

10:30 a.m.-Noon. Amgen and the Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC. “R&D Insights from Lab Bench to Patient Bedside.” Broad CIRM Center First Floor Conference Room or Zilkha Neurogenetic Institute Herklotz Seminar Room. Info: qliumich@usc.edu, karenw03@amgen.com. RSVP: www.usc.edu/esvp, Code: amgenlecture

Noon. Department of Radiology Grand Rounds. “Neuroradiology.” Aresty Auditorium. Info and RSVP: Rosy Diaz, (323) 442-7469,

rosaura.diaz@med.usc.edu, <http://keck.usc.edu/radiology>. Lunch will be provided, please RSVP for accurate head count

Noon-2 p.m. Office of Research Workshop. “Writing Compelling NSF Proposals,” Paul Ronney, ScD, professor, aerospace and mechanical engineering. DML 240, University Park Campus. Info and RSVP: (213) 740-6709, uscce@usc.edu, <http://research.usc.edu/writing-compelling-nsf-proposals/>

12:30 p.m. USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center Discussion. “One Book, One Community: Norris Reads,” Sunita Puri, MD. Jennifer Diamond Cancer Resource Library, NRT G501. Info and RSVP: Mary Aalto, (323) 442-7805, marytaalto@gmail.com. Book discussion of *Knocking on Heaven’s Door* by Katy Butler. RSVP requested by Sept. 12. Lunch will be provided

Thursday-Friday, Sept. 15-16

8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Department of Family Medicine Symposium. “USC Judith D. Tamkin Symposium on Elder Abuse.” The Concourse Hotel at LAX. Info: Ana Poblet-Kouttjie, (626) 457-6621, Ana.Poblet-Kouttjie@med.usc.edu. RSVP: <http://bit.ly/1U4eF8Y>

Monday, Sept. 19

4 p.m. USC Visions & Voices Medical Humanities, Arts, and Ethics Series. “Two Men Talking.” Mayer Auditorium. Info and RSVP: <http://bit.ly/2aX6Mmr>

Tuesday, Sept. 20

11 a.m. USC Stem Cell Seminar. Kim Cooper, PhD, University of California, San Diego. Broad CIRM Center First Floor Conference Room. Info: <http://keckmedia.usc.edu/stem-cell-seminar>

Noon. Department of Psychiatry Grand Rounds. Herklotz Seminar Room, ZNI 112. Info: Lunch will be provided.

Wednesday, Sept. 21

Noon-2 p.m. Office of Research Workshop. “Developing NIH Grant Applications,” Steve Moldin, PhD, executive director, Washington, D.C., Office of Research Advancement. Norris Medical Library West Conference Room. Info and RSVP: (213) 740-6709, uscce@usc.edu, <https://research.usc.edu/developing-nih-grant-applications/>

Thursday, Sept. 22

10:30 a.m.-Noon. Amgen and the Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC. “R&D

Insights from Lab Bench to Patient Bedside.” Broad CIRM Center First Floor Conference Room or Zilkha Neurogenetic Institute Herklotz Seminar Room. Info: qliumich@usc.edu, karenw03@amgen.com. RSVP: www.usc.edu/esvp, Code: amgen-lecture

2 p.m. USC Stem Cell. “California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) Roadshow.” Broad CIRM Center First Floor Conference Room. Info and RSVP: <http://cirm.ca.gov/about-cirm/cirm-roadshow>

Friday, Sept. 23

Noon. USC Research Center for Liver Diseases Seminar. “Human Liver Engineering: From Safer Drugs to Regenerative Medicine,” Gary Peltz, MD, PhD, Stanford University School of Medicine. Hastings Auditorium. Info: Dolores Mendoza, (323) 442-1283, dmmendoza@usc.edu

Friday-Saturday, Sept. 23-24

7 a.m. USC Institute of Urology Symposium. “Live Surgery Symposium: A-to-Z Robotic Radical Cystectomy & Intracorporeal Diversion.” Aresty Auditorium. Info and RSVP: Regina Rezex, (323) 865-3594, rezex@med.usc.edu, <http://urology.keckmedicine.org>

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. Submit items at 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.

USC Chan taps new associate dean

By John Hobbs

The USC Mrs. T.H. Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy recently announced the appointment of Grace Baranek, PhD, as associate dean and chair of the division.

Baranek comes to USC from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she has been a faculty member for 20 years. She currently is the associate chair for research in UNC's Department of Allied Health Sciences, a professor in the division of occupational science and occupational therapy and has a dual appointment with the department of psychology and neuroscience.

"There is no one better among those in the occupational science and occupational therapy community to lead our program into its next phase of excellence," said Florence Clark, PhD, the division's outgoing chair and associate dean who has served as its administrative leader since 1989. "I am excited to see what Dr. Baranek will create as we enter into the 100th anniversary of the occupational

therapy profession and the 75th anniversary of occupational therapy at the University of Southern California."

The announcement comes after an extensive nationwide search, led by Avishai Sadan, DMD, MBA, dean of the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC, after Clark announced last fall her intention to step down from administrative duties to focus on research and teaching.

"It has been an incredible honor to work shoulder to shoulder with Florence," Sadan said. "She's a force of nature, and I can confidently say the occupational science discipline and occupational therapy profession have taken quantum leaps because of Clark's hard work and scholarship."

Baranek assumes the chair and associate dean position on February 1, 2017.

Clark will take a year-long sabbatical before returning to focus on teaching, research and continuing to expand USC Chan's global presence throughout Asia and the Pacific Rim.

Baranek received a bachelor's degree in occupational therapy from the



Grace Baranek

University of Illinois at the Medical Center before pursuing her master's and PhD degrees in psychology from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

The USC Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, like the USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy, is a division within USC's dental school.

Meet the Faculty: Justin Ichida, researcher with rhythm

As a third-generation Hawaiian, USC Stem Cell researcher Justin Ichida, PhD, is equally comfortable with lu'aus and lead guitars as with laboratories.

As an assistant professor of stem cell biology and regenerative medicine at USC, he dedicates his days to finding new ways to study and treat ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease.

As an undergraduate at UCLA, he served as president of the Hawai'i Club, or the Hui O 'Imiloa, and danced hula in shows across Los Angeles.

For the Hawai'i Club's signature lu'au, Ichida and his fellow officers cooked a pig in the traditional fashion and flew the feast to the UCLA campus.

"There's just a special way that we wanted to cook it," he said. "You use hot rocks, and then you bury that whole thing, and it just steams in

Get to know the faculty members on the Health Sciences Campus and beyond!

Do you have a special skill or interest that nobody expects? Is there a professor whose hidden talent should be celebrated?

Let us know by emailing hsnews@usc.edu with your nominations for our Meet the Faculty feature and you might see them in a future *HSC News* issue.

there. And I just didn't have any place that we could do it at UCLA in my apartment. So we actually cooked a huge meal in Hawai'i, flew it up and catered it."



In addition to playing several instruments, Justin Ichida dances the hula, seen here in 1994.

Courtesy Justin Ichida

Two classes mark career beginnings at white coat celebrations



Jessica Roe

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY: On Aug. 26 at the Health Sciences Campus, 233 Trojan occupational therapy graduate students — who hail from 19 states and 13 nations and who collectively hold undergraduate degrees in more than 70 majors — pledged their commitment to the values and ideals of the health and wellness profession during the USC Mrs. T.H. Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy's 2016 White Coat Ceremony. — **Mike McNulty**



Grad Images

PHYSICAL THERAPY: The USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy Class of 2019 donned their white coats for the first time at the 2016 White Coat Ceremony on Aug. 25. The ceremony, held on the Broad Lawn, welcomed 97 future doctors of physical therapy and their families to the profession. The class of 2019 is made up of 56 women and 41 men, hailing from 20 different states as well as China and Canada.

— **Yasmine Pezeshkpour**

CURRIE HALL: Complex to include units for patients and families

Continued from page 1

opening of Currie Hall as a "historic moment" for the school.

"The life of a medical student is relentlessly challenging and demanding," he said. "We have always been there for our students and today we take a momentous step forward towards that effort."

Varma and Nikias were joined

at the celebration by Malcolm and Barbara Currie; Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael Quick, PhD; Keck Medicine of USC CEO Tom Jackiewicz, MPH; Chief Medical Officer of Keck Medicine of USC and the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs for the Keck School of Medicine Stephanie Hall, MD; and John Mork, chairman of the

USC Board of Trustees.

The complex features 24-hour, on-call staff, card-controlled access, bike storage, garage parking and fully furnished apartments.

Currie Hall also will feature nine 3-bedroom units specifically for Keck Medical Center of USC patients and family members staying on campus for more than a week.

DEPLOYMENT

Continued from page 1

To remain mobile, resources and equipment are limited compared to what one would find in a traditional surgical setting. For example, while the team has a basic x-ray and ultrasound capability, Romero does not have an anesthesia machine. Instead, he infuses anesthetics intravenously and uses a portable mechanical ventilator for surgeries. In many cases, he had to improvise equipment and create new ways of helping his patients, a skill he credits both to his clinical intuition as well as his foundational education and training at the Keck School.

The USC Program of Nurse Anesthesia allows students to build upon their extensive experience in critical care medicine in order to provide evidence-based anesthesia care to patients facing all types of surgery. Students also hone their leadership and precise decision-making skills necessary to excel as independent, advanced practice anesthesia. Although some nurse anesthetists work alongside anesthesiologists, many are the sole anesthesia providers for most rural community hospitals nationwide and combat outposts across the world.

"The Keck School's top-notch program prepared me academically and gave me the confidence to take on this challenge, and I could not be more proud of my degree," Romero said. "Working with my FST is one of the most professionally gratifying things I have ever done. I am honored to serve and help these soldiers."

GOALS

Continued from page 1

basic science, clinical, educational, Keck Medical enterprise and administrative branches of the organization.

"I am very pleased with our progress so far in this project," said Varma, who also is director of the USC Gayle and Edward Roski Eye Institute. "It's very important that we have a solid understanding of what the goals and priorities of the medical school should be going forward, and the strategic planning committee is working hard to accomplish this in the most thoughtful way possible."

Initial information for the strategic plan was gathered in close to 100 interviews with members from a cross-section of the Keck School, the USC provost and trustees, as well as faculty and staff from Keck Medicine of USC. Several deans from other schools within USC also were interviewed. The committee recently distributed a survey to gather input on the core values and strategic goals that are most important to all students, faculty, and staff of the medical school and medical enterprise.

Environmental assessments also were conducted to gather data in 19 different areas in the categories of research, education, clinical services and resources.

The results will be presented at a daylong retreat Sept. 21 at the Huntington Library and Gardens. During the retreat, committee members will review interview and survey results, as well as key findings from the environmental assessment, in order to discuss and define the vision and goals for the Keck School. Retreat discussions also will include three breakout groups to refine the priorities that should be the main focus of the strategic plan.

Following the retreat, smaller teams will be formed to develop strategies and tactics to address these goals, with recommendations will be presented to the steering committee. The committee then will develop an implementation plan that will be presented to the Keck School as a whole in March of 2017.

For more information on the strategic planning committee, go to keck.usc.edu/strategicplan.

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:



David Hess delivers a grand rounds lecture on neuroprotection, Aug. 9 at the Health Sciences Campus.

Melody Sharifi

Expert neurologist delivers lecture on stroke protection

A RENOWNED NEUROLOGIST AND EXPERT IN neuroprotection visited the Roxanna Todd Hodges (RTH) Stroke and Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA) Program of USC recently, delivering a grand rounds lecture and discussing his work. David C. Hess, MD, chairman, professor and distinguished presidential chair in the department of neurology at the Medical College of Georgia at Augusta University, delivered the lecture on neuroprotection, with a focus on preconditioning, remote limb conditioning and exercise on Aug. 9. Hess, who helped develop the REACH telestroke network in rural Georgia and is cofounder of the telestroke company REACH Health Inc., is working with colleagues at Augusta University to develop remote ischemic conditioning as a treatment for acute ischemic stroke and vascular cognitive impairment. Nerses Sanossian, MD, director of the RTH Stroke Program and associate professor of neurology (clinical scholar) at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, awarded Hess with the 2016 Roxanna Todd Hodges Visiting Lectureship on Stroke Education and Prevention. — **Melody Sharifi**

Study shows being overweight can shorten a person’s life span

BEING OVERWEIGHT INCREASES THE CHANCES of premature death, according to a USC researcher. Although people accept that obesity can shorten a person's life span, scientists have debated whether the weight category between normal and obese is, in fact, a health risk. Being overweight definitely does not help people live longer, said Jonathan Samet, MD, MS, director of the USC Institute for Global Health. His statement is backed by a four-continent effort involving 239 studies and data from 10.6 million people. The collaborative and comprehensive study — one of the largest to date — was published in *The Lancet*. “Increasing the risk of dying is a powerful indicator of health. The new results on overweight should be strong motivation for people to return to a healthy weight,” said Samet, one of the study’s authors and holder of the Flora L. Thornton Chair in Preventive Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. — **Zen Vuong**



Steven Heritage

The second male specimen of Zenkerella insignis was found near the village of Ureca on Bioko, an island off the west coast of Africa.

Biologists seek squirrel never before seen alive by scientists

RESEARCHERS ARE ON A REAL-LIFE SEARCH for what one calls “the ultimate Pokémon”: Zenkerella, an elusive scaly-tailed squirrel that has never been spotted alive by scientists. *Zenkerella insignis*, a mysterious rodent from central Africa, is among the least studied of all living mammals, said Erik Seiffert, PhD, study senior author and a professor of clinical cell and neurobiology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. Using three whole-body specimens, scientists sampled Zenkerella’s DNA for the first time. The study, published in the journal *PeerJ* on Aug. 16, details how researchers analyzed Zenkerella’s genes using cells from cheek swabs. Based on DNA results, the researchers determined that, contrary to expectation, Zenkerella is a very distant cousin of two scaly-tailed squirrels with webbing between their legs and elbows that allows them to glide from tree to tree. Thus, Zenkerella, who cannot glide, should be placed in the newly named Zenkerellidae family, researchers said. — **Zen Vuong**



Ricardo Carrasco III

WELCOME TO CAMPUS: The new entrance monuments for the Health Sciences Campus are unveiled at Zonal Avenue and Biggy Street. Entrance monuments were unveiled this month at Biggy Street and Zonal Avenue, as well as Soto and Alcazar streets, as part of the HSC Beautification Project. The work aims to develop a more university-like feel on the Health Sciences Campus, with architectural elements from the University Park Campus incorporated into the Health Sciences Campus streetscape.

Participants sought for 2016 Los Angeles Heart Walk

By L. Alexis Young

Keck Medicine of USC is a sponsor of the 2016 Los Angeles Heart Walk on Oct. 8 at the Pasadena Rose Bowl. With a fundraising goal of \$125,000, Keck Medicine is hoping to engage 1,000 employees to participate in its efforts to help the American Heart Association fight heart disease and stroke.

Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of men and women in the United States, and affects the lives of many of Keck Medicine employees, patients and their families.

The USC CardioVascular Thoracic Institute (CVTI) has recruited 55 members for their Trojan Hearts team and raised more than \$4,000 within one month. Team captains Ashley Valentino, support coordinator, and Liz Vela, clinic manager, have found creative ways to engage their staff, such as a practice heart walk culminating with a celebration, an ice cream social and raffles.

“I lost my father to a heart attack and another teammate lost her mom, so we’re doing this for our families and our patients who are impacted every day,” Vela explained.

The team is selling American Heart Association paper hearts in efforts to help Keck Medicine meet the fundraising goal and raise awareness.

Registered walkers are able to create personalized fundraising pages with the capability



Douglas Morino

Participants pose for a photograph during the 2015 Los Angeles Heart Walk at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena.

to send fundraising emails, connect to social media and track fundraising progress. The suggested fundraising goal for each walker is \$20, and free T-shirts will be provided for those who meet this goal. There is still time to form a team or join an existing team to help the American Heart Association

fund research and education for cardiovascular disease.

The Heart Walk begins at 8 a.m. Oct. 8 at the Rose Bowl.

For more information, to donate or to register for the 2016 Los Angeles Heart Walk, visit <http://heartwalkla.kintera.org> or email Anne. McGilvray@med.usc.edu.

USC Health Sciences
Public Relations and Marketing
2011 N Soto Street - SST-2830
Los Angeles, CA 90032

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CIO

Continued from page 1

resources and research efforts. Under his leadership, CHLA achieved HIMSS Stage 6 for both inpatient and outpatient services, and his contributions led to CHLA being named a “Most Wired” hospital by *Health & Health Networks* magazine. Malseed was instrumental in the technology implementation for the launch of online portals for patients and referring physicians.

Malseed holds a bachelor’s degree in international business and a minor in computer science from the University of California, Davis.

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Editor: Melissa Masatani

Director, Internal Communications: Virginia Baca

Director, Content Strategy and Management: Sara Reeve

Contributors: Meg Aldrich, Amanda Busick, Ricardo Carrasco III, Nathan Cowen, Mary Dacuma, Cristy Lytal, Julie Matzaganian, Douglas Morino, Carol Sussman, Zen Vuong and L. Alexis Young

Phone: (323) 442-2830
Fax: (323) 442-2832
Email: hscnews@usc.edu
Web: hscnews.usc.edu | kecknet.usc.edu

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