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In Memoriam: John K. Niparko, 61

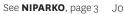
By Sara Reeve

Chair of the USC Caruso Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery was an internationally renowned otoneurologic surgeon and researcher

John K. Niparko, MD, Tiber Alpert professor and chair of the USC Rick and Tina Caruso Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, died April 25. He was 61.

"Dr. Niparko was a transformative recruitment to the Keck School of Medicine and was a pillar of the department," said Rohit Varma, MD, MPH, interim dean of the Keck School of Medicine of USC and director of the USC Roski Eye Institute. "He led its ascent to the top ten departments of otolaryngology in the U.S. in research funding. He was a dynamic leader and a humble colleague whose good humor, compassion and gentle nature earned our esteem and deep affection. We are all enriched for having known him."

Holder of the Leon J. Tiber and David S. Alpert Chair in Medicine at the Keck School, Niparko was an internationally renowned otoneurologic surgeon and researcher who joined USC in 2013. As a national expert on hearing technologies, he built USC's otolaryngology group into one of the nation's finest, recruiting outstanding researchers from around the country and spearheading a long-running national clinical trial of treatments for children with hearing loss. He also founded and directed the USC Caruso Family Center for Childhood Communication, which assists more than 5,000 children and their families coping with





John K. Niparko



From left, Rohit Varma, Edward Roski, Gayle Roski, Robert Day, Niki Nikias, USC President C. L. Max Nikias and Mark Humayun smile during a celebration of the USC Roski Eye Institute naming gift on April 28 at the Health Sciences Campus.

Officials celebrate naming of USC Roski Eye Institute

By Melissa Masatani

Keck School of Medicine of USC faculty, staff and supporters gathered to honor the vision of two noted philanthropists recently as university leaders celebrated the \$25 million gift from USC Trustee Edward Roski and his wife Gayle to name the USC Gayle and Edward Roski Eye Institute.

More than 200 people attended the April 28 luncheon celebration held at the Harry and Celeste Pappas Quad on the Health Sciences Campus, including USC President C. L. Max Nikias, PhD, who praised the Roskis' dedication to supporting the groundbreaking research being conducted by pioneering doctors.

"Their unfettered passion for our university has been as inspiring as it is humbling," Nikias said. "Family matters to them and that includes the Trojan Family. Sharing their passions, building their dreams and even helping others build dreams, all matter to them. But a dream that can transform the world, that's irresistible. That dream is the single-minded purpose of the Eye Institute's pioneering doctors: to eliminate blindness."

The Roskis, who are major benefactors to USC's art and design school, as well as athletics and student programs, chose to support the institute after Gayle Roski's cataract treatment "opened our eyes to new possibilities."

"We were incredibly impressed with the doctors and staff and we realized we had an opportunity to give a gift to those who can provide the world with the gift of sight," Edward Roski said. "For us, this is more than just a donation to an

See **ROSKI**, page 3

Keck School establishes Gehr Family Center for Implementation Science

By Mary Dacuma

With a recent \$10 million gift from the Gehr Family Foundation, the Keck School of Medicine of USC has established the Gehr Family Center for Implementation Science. Under the leadership of Michael Hochman, MD, MPH, assistant professor of clinical medicine, the center will focus its research on methods for improving health care delivery in a way that raises the

standards for patient care and streamlines operations for health care providers.

"Despite advanced treatments and available technology, the United States lags behind other developed nations in key outcomes, like infant mortality, life expectancy and per capita cost of health care," Hochman said. "We want to develop ways to fix systemic issues within our health care delivery; and by

See **GEHR**, page 3

Study: Gene tied to bone development, vertebrate evolution

By Cristy Lyta

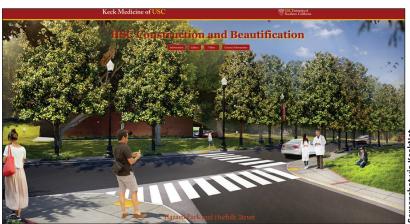
With the emergence of bone in early life forms, the diversity of life on Earth expanded to encompass the bone-forming vertebrates, a group of species ranging from the tiny frog Paedophryne amauensis to the mighty blue whale. Bone formation in vertebrates is linked to a shared gene, called *Sp7* or *Osterix*, that acts early in establishing the bone-forming cells or osteoblasts.

In a new study in *Developmental Cell*, Hironori Hojo, PhD, from the USC Stem Cell laboratory of Andrew McMahon, PhD, and colleagues reveal how *Sp7* directs the

development of bone-secreting osteoblasts to fashion the skeleton.

"This is a wonderful example of how a narrow focus on the workings of a single gene illuminates bigger questions on the evolution of a skeletal scaffold we mammals share with fish, frogs, lizard and birds," said Andrew McMahon, senior author and W.M. Keck Provost Professor and chair of the Department of Stem Cell Research and Regenerative Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC.

The *Sp7* gene encodes a protein See **BONE**, page 3



A screenshot of the new HSC Construction and Beautification webpage

New Intranet page tracks construction progress

By Douglas Morino

A new page on the Keck Medicine of USC intranet portal provides faculty and staff with regular updates from the series of construction projects currently happening across the Health Sciences Campus.

The HSC Construction page will include timeline information on projects, as well as photos, renderings and video. The site can be found at: http://tinyurl.com/HSCconstruction/.

"The new site on the KeckNet is a convenient place to find the latest information on the construction, including the beautification project happening across the

Health Sciences Campus," said Robert Scrofano, director of capital construction development at HSC.

The largest projects happening across the campus include USC Stevens Hall, home of the USC Mark and Mary Stevens Neuroimaging and Informatics Institute; student housing complex Currie Hall; and the Norris Healthcare Center (NHC). Stevens Hall is scheduled for completion this month, while Currie Hall is scheduled to open in August. NHC is the first new medical building on the USC Health Sciences Campus in more than a decade. Scheduled

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Satellite commencement ceremonies will be held throughout the day on May 13 and 14.

Health Sciences commencements

Friday, May 13

Physician Assistant Program

10:45 a.m. at Allan Hancock Foundation Building, southwest lawn, University Park Campus. A reception will follow at the same location. Info: (626) 457-4263. Speaker: Raymond Waliany, MD, medical director of the Primary Care Physician Assistant Program

Dentistry

11 a.m. at McAlister Field, University Park Campus. Tickets not required. A reception will follow at the same location. Info: allanm@usc.edu. Speaker: Carol Gomez Summerhays, DDS, president, American Dental Association

Health Promotion and Global Health

11 a.m. at Town and Gown, University Park Campus. Reception is at 10:30 a.m. following the USC main ceremony. Tickets are required, four tickets allotted per graduate. Info: (213) 821-1601. Speakers: Jonathan M. Samet, MD, MS, director, USC Institute for Global Health, Distinguished Professor and Flora L. Thornton Chair, Department of Preventive Medicine; Elahe Nezami, PhD, associate dean for undergraduate, masters and professional programs

Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy

11 a.m. at Leavey Library West, University Park Campus. A reception will follow at the same location. Tickets not required. Info: (323) 442-2811. Speaker: Fariborz Maseeh, ScD, founder and managing principal,

Picoco LLC; founder, Kids Institute for Development and Advancement

Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy

11:30 a.m. at Bovard Auditorium, University Park Campus. Tickets not required. Info: (323) 442-1193. Speaker: Sharon L. Dunn, PT, PhD, president, American Physical Therapy Association

Pharmacy

3 p.m. at Harry and Celeste Pappas Quad, Health Sciences Campus. A reception will follow at the same location. Tickets are required. Info: (323) 442-1383. Speaker: Dana Goldman, PhD, distinguished professor and director, USC Leonard D. Schaeffer Center for Health Policy & Economics; USC School of Pharmacy and USC Sol Price School of Public Policy

Saturday, May 14

PhD, MPH, MS — Medicine

9 a.m. at Galen Center, University Park Campus. Tickets not required. A reception will follow at 11 a.m. at McCarthy Quad, University Park Campus. Info: (323) 442-1607. Speaker: Barbara Wold, PhD, Beckman Institute at the California Institute of Technology

${\rm MD/PhD,\,MD-Medicine}$

3 p.m. at Galen Center, University Park Campus. Doors open at 2 p.m., tickets not required. A reception will follow at 5 p.m. at McCarthy Quad, University Park Campus. Info: (323) 442-2420. Speaker: Paul Farmer, MD, PhD, cofounder of Partners in Health.

Celebrate nurses, hospital weeks

Events will be held to honor National Nurses Week, May 6-12, and National Hospital Week, May 8-14, throughout Keck Medicine of USC. Check the Daily Huddle sheets for more information or events not listed here.

Nurses Week events:

May 6

7-9 a.m. Kick-off breakfast, USC Verdugo Hills Hospital 4th Floor

2:30 p.m. Nursing Awards Reception, Hoffman Café at Keck Hospital

May 9

8-11 a.m. Shopping Extravaganza, Hoffman Café at Keck Hospital **8 a.m.-2 p.m.** Education Day, USC Verdugo Hills Hospital 4th Floor Foyer. Schedule includes compassion fatigue, LGBT, deescalation and a catered lunch

May 10

8:30-11 a.m. Nursing School Information Session, Cardinal Room at Keck Hospital 2-8 p.m. Ice Cream Social, VHH

2-8 p.m. Ice Cream Social, VHH Cafeteria

May 11

Noon. Cake cutting, VHH Cafeteria 12:30 p.m. DAISY Statue Dedication, Keck Hospital Garden 1 p.m. Daisy Award Ceremony 2:30 p.m. DAISY Statue Dedication, USC Norris Cancer Hospital Circle Drive

May 12

6:30-9 a.m. Clinical Ladder Awardee Breakfast, Hoffman Café at Keck Hospital

8 a.m.-2 p.m. Education Day, USC Verdugo Hills Hospital 4th Floor Foyer. Schedule includes risk issues, self care, Lunch and Learn, and "Just Fun."

Hospital Week events:

May 9

7:30-9 a.m. Annual Years of Service Breakfast, invitation only, Soto I Basketball Court

11 a.m. Keck Town Hall, Soto II 2902/2904

May 10

10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Ice Cream Social, tickets required for staff, hospital badges required for physicians and residents; Hoffman Café at Keck Hospital, Rainbow Café at USC Norris Cancer Hospital, Soto II Lobby

9-11 p.m. Ice Cream Social, Hoffman Café at Keck Hospital

May 12

To:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Lunch
Truck Day, tickets required for
all staff, hospital badges required
for physicians and residents; Gold
Tower Parking Terrace behind Keck
Hospital, Soto II Parking Lot
9-11 p.m. Lunch Truck Day Keck

9-11 p.m. Lunch Truck Day, Keck Hospital Valet Area next to Keck Hospital



National Nurses Week is May 6-12 and events include a breakfast, awards ceremony and cake-cutting.

Calendar of Events

Saturday, May 7

7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. The USC Alzheimer Disease Research Center Continuing Medical Education. "23rd Annual Van Der Meulen Symposium: Multiple Sclerosis Update," Daniel Pelletier, MD. Aresty Auditorium. Info: Anika Bobb, (323) 442-2547, usccme@usc.edu. Registration: http://www.usc.edu/cme

8 a.m.-10:30 a.m. USC division of hepatobiliary and pancreatic surgery. "PurpleStrideLA 5K Run/Walk," Exposition Park. Info: Timothy Chung, (323) 442-7996, Timothy.Chung@med.usc.edu, http://bit.ly/1Sz5EEk

Tuesday, May 10

5:30 p.m. Department of Ophthalmology Grand Rounds. Sun Young Lee, MD, PhD. HC4 Conference Room, 6th Floor. Info: Tyaisha Christopher, (323) 409-5233, Tyaisha.Christopher@med.usc.edu

Thursday, May 12

9 a.m.-3 p.m. USC Research Center for Liver Diseases Symposium. "Mini-Symposium Digestive Disease Research in Regenerative Medicine," Ira J. Fox, MD, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. Herklotz Seminar Room, ZNI 112. Info: Dolores Mendoza, (323) 442-1283, dmmendoz@usc.edu

Grand Rounds. Linda J.
Hovanessian Larsen, MD; Brenna
Chalmers, MD; Pulin Sheth, MD;
Mary W. Yamashita, MD; Sandy
Lee, MD. NRT LG503/4-Harlyne
Tower. Info: Rosy Diaz,
rosaura.diaz@med.usc.edu

1:30 p.m. Keck Medicine of
USC Stroke Support Group

Noon. Department of Radiology

Tower. Info: Rosy Diaz, rosaura.diaz@med.usc.edu

1:30 p.m. Keck Medicine of USC Stroke Support Group Meeting. "Mind and Body Healing After Stroke," Gigi DeSouki, MHA. Keck Hospital, 3 North, Day Room, 3261A. Info: Ozzy Obiwuru, (323) 442-0049, obiwuru@med.usc.edu

6 p.m. Department of Orthopaedic Surgery Grand Rounds. Jay Keener, MD, Washington University School of Medicine. Aresty Auditorium. Info and RSVP: Sylvia Suarez, (323) 226-7204, sylsua@usc.edu

Monday, May 16

10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. USC Verdugo Hills Hospital Foundation. "25th Annual Golf Classic 2016." Oakmont Country Club, Glendale. Info and RSVP: Barbara Jordan, (818) 952-2226, barbara.jordan@ vhh.usc.edu

Tuesday, May 17

Noon. Southern California Clinical and Translational Science Institute Discussion. "SC CTSI Research Ethics Forum: Should We Gather Data About Nonparticipants in Clinical Research Whether Selection Bias Affects Research Results," Alex Capron, LLB, and Susan Rose, PhD. Aresty LG503.

Info: Jeanne Dzekov McKean, (323) 442-7289, dzekov@usc.edu. RSVP: (323) 442-8281, http://bit.ly/1WKGQvS

Wednesday, May 18

Noon. The Saban Research Institute Seminar. "Research Seminar: Defining Inflammation in Human Obesity and Type 2 Diabetes," Barbara Nikolajczyk, PhD, Boston University School of Medicine. Auditorium, Saban Research Building, 4661 Sunset Blvd. Info: Ritu Gill, (323) 361-8715, tecpad@chla.org, http://chla.org/tecpad

Thursday, May 19

Noon. USC Stevens Center for Innovation Seminar.
"Commercializing Intellectual Property at USC," Michael Arciero, JD. NRT LG 503/504 conference room. Info: Vasiliki Anest, (213) 821-0946, anest@usc.edu, http://stevens.usc.edu

INTRANET

Continued from page 1

to open in 2017, NHC will have an ambulatory surgery center, a women's cancer program, the region's first comprehensive multiple sclerosis clinic, a state-of-the-art infusion center and several new dining options.

The projects are aimed at transforming the 79-acre campus into an oasis of medical research and health care, while providing benefits to the surrounding community.

Work also continues on the HSC Beautification Project, which is aimed at giving the USC Health Sciences Campus a more universitylike feel, with architectural elements from the University Park Campus incorporated into the Health Sciences Campus streetscape.

The HSC Construction page was developed by the Keck Medicine web services and internal communications teams.

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 School of Pharmacy doctoral candidates Jillian Romsdahl and Adriana Blachowicz, second and third from left, are members of a team that sent fungi to the International Space Station on April 8.

Pharmacy students work on NASA mission

By Zen Vuong

lthough men often out-**1** number women in science fields, women comprise the majority of a USC-led team that is the first in the world to seek therapeutic drug discovery from fungi launched into space.

USC School of Pharmacy doctoral students Jillian Romsdahl, 25, and Adriana Blachowicz, 26, were overjoyed to send Aspergillus nidulans to the International Space Station on April 8. They had worked on the Micro-10 experiment in collaboration with NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory for the past two years.

The Micro-10 team three women and two men - said fungi produce biologically active compounds called secondary metabolites such as penicillin when put in stressful conditions. Perhaps the microgravity and

enhanced radiation environment in space could trigger A.nidulans to produce novel secondary metabolites for use both on Earth and in future NASA expeditions.

Romsdahl, who grew up near San Francisco, had her pick of graduate schools but ultimately chose USC.

"Although I always thought my graduate research would be exciting, I never imagined it would actually involve sending an experiment into outer

originally from a tiny village in Poland and the first in her family to pursue higher education.

"Three years ago, if anyone told me I would end up working on a NASA mission so early in my career, I would have just laughed out loud," she said.

ROSKI: Gift is 'an investment in the future and in people'

Continued from page 1

institute. It's an investment in the future and an investment in people, in men and women who will make new discoveries, in experts that will make dynamic advances, and researchers who will help develop new solutions and new innovations."

USC Roski Eve Institute Director Rohit Varma, MD, MPH, interim dean of the Keck School and president of USC Care Medical Group, gave his thanks to the Roskis and Nikias for their support of the institute. Varma then shared a memory of a visit to Albania several years ago, when he met a man who had lost his vision in an industrial accident and thus had never seen his infant son.

"If I could give him my eyes for some period

of time and allow him to see, I would, just so that he could see the face of his baby boy,' said Varma, professor and chair of the department of ophthalmology and holder of the Grace and Emery Beardsley Chair in Ophthalmology. "It was heartbreaking; I could not help him and I wished that I could. Now more than two decades later, I still think of that young man with his beautiful family, and they inspire me just as they inspire many of us who have similar stories. They are reminders of why many of us are in this field of ophthalmology and vision. And to me, that one simple wish of wanting to see, embodies the goal that is part of the Eye Institute: to improve the lives of people with vision loss and restore sight."



Edward Roski, left, speaks as wife Gayle Roski, USC President C. L. Max Nikias and members of the Trojan Marching Band look on during a celebration of the naming gift for the USC Gayle and Edward Roski Eye Institute, held April 28 at Pappas Quad.

space," Romsdahl said. As for Blachowicz, it's been quite a trip for a woman

GEHR: New center will offer research grants to USC faculty, students

Continued from page 1

implementing new practices locally, we hope to drive nationwide change."

To encourage innovation and improvements, the center will offer two annual research grants. The Gehr Family Innovation Award of \$25,000 will be awarded to three USC faculty members involved in any discipline of health care, including dentistry, social work and occupational therapy, to pilot ideas for improving health care quality and efficiency. The Gehr Student Innovation Award will provide four USC students a \$4 000 stipend. and a fellowship at either Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center or Keck

Medical Center to focus on one of the Gehr Center's current projects.

Winners of the Gehr Family Innovation Award will be announced by Aug. 31. Gehr Student Innovation Award recipients will be

Michael Hochman

notified by May 20 and will begin their specific projects the week of June 13.

"The USC Health Sciences Campus, with its diverse hospitals and ambulatory environments, is the ideal health care delivery laboratory to study innovators in health care delivery," said David Goldstein, MD, vice chair for clinical affairs at the Keck School and the founder of Gehr Family Center.

Currently, the Gehr Family Center is involved in a number of projects benefiting the greater Los Angeles community. The center has partnered with AltaMed Health Services to address obesity in the Service Planning Area 7 region by improving nutrition and fitness options for residents using a holistic, community-based approach. It also is testing new models for treating depression in geriatric patients and videoconference appointments between pharmacists and those with chronic illness.

BONE: Study finds *Sp7* has different role in bone-forming development



Rendition of developing vertebrate bones.

Continued from page 1

known as a transcriptional regulator, which controls the activity of a large number of other osteoblast-specific genes. As other members of the *Sp* family regulate gene activity directly by binding to specific sequences encoded in the DNA, Sp7 was also thought to act this

However, studies by Hojo and his colleagues demonstrate a very different mechanism: Sp7 partners with another group of transcriptional regulators, called the Dlx family, and relies on their DNA binding action to control osteoblast genes.

Remarkably, there is a tight correlation between bone-forming ability and an Sp7-like gene. All major groups that comprise the diversity of vertebrates such as zebrafish, frogs, geckos, alligators, birds, mice and humans — have an Sp7 gene. In contrast, the closest living relatives to vertebrates, including sea squirts and lampreys, lack bone and an Sp7

This correlation sheds light into a far-away,

long-ago recess of the history of life on Earth: the emergence of *Sp7* was likely closely connected to the evolution of bone formation in a common ancestor that gave rise to all modern vertebrates.

"This study provides a fascinating and compelling example of how the emergence of novel gene regulatory networks connects to new cellular capabilities in the evolutionary process — specifically here in the program of bone formation," said Hojo, first author and postdoctoral research associate.

NIPARKO

Continued from page 1

hearing conditions.

"In addition to being a brilliant surgeon and scientist, Dr. John Niparko was a dear friend," said business leader and USC Trustee Rick J. Caruso. "Most importantly, he was an angel that God brought into our family's life, who gave the gift of hearing to my daughter, Gianna. Our family will be forever grateful."

Niparko came to USC from Johns Hopkins University, where he was the inaugural George T. Nager Professor and director of the Division of Otology, Neurotology and Skull Base Surgery.

"Dr. Niparko was a vibrant physician leader who was able to combine outstanding science, effective administration and generous care to create the world-class USC Caruso Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery,' said Tom Jackiewicz, CEO of Keck Medicine of USC. "He treated patients with hearing loss not only with his medical skills, but with extraordinary integrity and humanity. He was a warm and wonderful person and I will personally miss him greatly.'

Niparko received numerous awards, including the Deafness Research Foundation's Annual Hearing Research Award in 2001. He served as president of the American Otological Society, the oldest specialty society in the field, and on the council of the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders of the NIH. He also served on the board of the River School of Washington, D.C., an inclusive educational model for children with hearing loss offering full immersion in classes with typical developing, hearing peers.

"Dr. Niparko was a trusted and thoughtful leader, mentor, and friend," said Jon-Paul Pepper, MD, assistant professor of clinical otolaryngologyhead and neck surgery. "He was the guiding hand responsible for the impressive growth and achievement in our department over the past three years. As a group, we will honor his memory by continuing this ascent. But leaders like John are rare possessing equal parts expertise and humanism — and so his loss is deeply felt by not only our university, but also the field of otolaryngology."

A native of Detroit, Niparko received his bachelor's degree and medical degree with distinction from the University of Michigan. Niparko is survived by his wife, Angela, and two sons, Kevin and Nathan, and his two siblings, Nancy and

In lieu of flowers, the Niparko Family has requested gifts be directed to the John Niparko Endowment Fund at the Keck School of Medicine of USC.

For more information, visit http://bit.ly/21AQwtA.

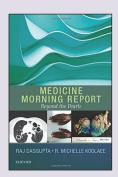
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HSC Newsmakers

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:

Keck School professors develop key study guide for medical exams

RAJ DASGUPTA, MD, ASSISTANT professor of clinical medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, and R. Michelle Koolaee, DO, assistant professor of medicine at the Keck School, have published a textbook intended to assist medical students with the USMLE and Internal Medicine board review. *Medicine Morning Report: Beyond the Pearls*, published by Elsevier, will be released in Kindle and paperback on May 27 and is available



for pre-order on Amazon. The book covers essential material for the exams in an in-depth case format, which better prepares students to develop a thorough, evidence-based approach to realistic patient scenarios. — Mary Dacuma

Early postmenopausal hormone therapy tied to heart health

A STUDY CONDUCTED BY THE ATHEROSCLEROSIS Research Unit at Keck School of Medicine suggests that hormone therapy, when taken within six years of menopause, may slow the buildup of plaque in the arteries. This is the first study to directly examine the hypothesis that the cardiovascular effects of postmenopausal hormone therapy vary with the timing of hormone therapy initiation, according to Howard N. Hodis, MD, director of the Atherosclerosis Research Unit and principle investigator of the study. The study, titled "Vascular Effects of Early versus Late Postmenopausal Treatment with Estradiol," was published in the March 31 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*. — Mary Dacuma



Improved air quality reduced the number of Southern California children with respiratory symptoms, a USC study found.

Study: Cutting smog has improved lung health in local children

A USC STUDY THAT TRACKED SOUTHERN California children over a 20-year period has found they now have significantly fewer respiratory symptoms as a result of improved air quality. USC researchers examined bronchitic symptoms that could land otherwise healthy children in a doctor's office or hospital in eight California communities, according to Kiros Berhane, PhD, lead author and a professor of preventive medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. "This is one of the few times that we have been able to report good news," Berhane said. "The message that clean air leads to better health in children should be taken seriously because it has implications for how we live and how productive we become." The study was published April 12 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association.*— Zen Vuong

Molecular Imaging Center director recognized for contributions

PETER CONTI, MD, PHD, was recognized by the Western Region Society of Nuclear Medicine recently with the presentation of its Distinguished Scientist Award, given annually to an individual who has made significant contributions to the Clinical Science of Nuclear Medicine or Molecular Imaging. Conti, who also is di-



Peter Conti, left, was honored by the Western Region Society of Nuclear Medicine recently.

rector of the Molecular Imaging Center and PET Imaging Center, as well as a professor of radiology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, received the award at the society's annual meeting in October, where he also presented a lecture titled, "Perspectives on Translational Molecular Imaging."

— Melissa Masatani



Melissa Archer speaks during a presentation about the Clinical Trials Office during a town hall April 21.

Researchers learn about new resources for clinical trials

By Amanda Busick

A pproximately 100 researchers at the Keck School of Medicine of USC learned about the new initiatives being implemented to help navigate the complex world of clinical trials reporting and tracking at a town hall that took place April 21 on the Health Sciences Campus.

Four speakers presented information about the services available, such as the newly expanded Clinical Trials Office (CTO), Clinical Research Support (CRS), the new clinical trials management system recently implemented called OnCore and the Research Data Warehouse.

April Armstrong, MD, MPH, associate dean for clinical research, spoke on the goal of CRS to become more efficient in providing assistance to the clinical trial research community.

"We wanted to have something that's a onestop shop in which one can look to develop study proposals, conduct studies and report results," Armstrong explained.

She went on to introduce Diana Palma, who serves as the research navigator for the office and who helps researchers understand and use the resources they need for a successful study.

CTO, meanwhile, recently saw changes that included the appointment of a new director, Melissa Archer, JD, who spoke about what the office hopes to accomplish going forward.

"Our goals are to increase efficiency, transparency and customer service," she stated. "I've been talking to the team about how we are a service-based office. We've put some new folks in there to make sure we have the capacity to service the clinical trials community at USC."

This year so far, there has been a decrease of 53 percent in the backlog of clinical trials at the CTO that have been submitted for development and activation.

Amanda Schmitz, project manager for clinical research informatics applications, presented an overview of OnCore, a comprehensive clinical trials management system recently implemented that will help researchers manage many aspects of conducting clinical trials.

Another resource for researchers that is available is the Research Data Warehouse, a searchable database of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)-compliant clinical information that can be utilized by all clinical research staff.

Daniella Meeker, PhD, assistant professor of preventative medicine, explained that the information available could help with planning criteria for studies, screening and recruiting, and health outcomes and implementation

A recording of this town hall is available at http://tinyurl.com/hwjvz53.

Amgen, USC form master research pact

By Cristy Lytal

Amgen recently entered into a three-year master research collaboration with USC. The agreement consists of a set of pre-defined terms and conditions in order to facilitate and streamline early discovery and translational preclinical research collaborations. It supports Amgen and USC's shared interest in advancing basic biology discovery and strengthening relationships between academia and industry.

All USC researchers and clinicians are invited to apply with proposals focused on preclinical research. For more information, researchers are encouraged to contact Vasiliki Anest (anest@usc. edu) at the USC Stevens Center for Innovation, or visit http://bit.ly/10RGsOD.

"Our collaboration with Amgen is aligned with our commitment to advancing biomedical research in Los Angeles," said Randolph Hall, PhD, vice president of research at USC. USC Health Sciences
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Los Angeles, CA 90032

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HSC News

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Editor: Melissa Masatani

Director, Internal Communications: Virginia Baca

Contributors: Andrea Aldana, Meg Aldrich, Amanda Busick, Ricardo Carrasco III, Louise Cobb, Mary Dacuma, Nathan Cowen, Cristy Lytal, Douglas Morino, Sara Reeve, Sherri Snelling, 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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