

## 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:

### Walk with USC colleagues Sept. 26

KECK MEDICINE OF USC is a sponsor of this year's American Heart Association Heart Walk at the Rose Bowl on Sept. 26. The Heart Walk is the American Heart Association's premier event to raise funds and save lives from the No. 1 and No. 5 medical killers in the United



AHA Heart Walk 2015

States — heart disease and stroke. Walking teams are forming now. Sign up a team or register to walk by contacting Anne McGilvray at [anne.mcgilvray@med.usc.edu](mailto:anne.mcgilvray@med.usc.edu).

### New research program studies gut bacteria related to human disease

USC has funded a new intercampus research program to study the human microbiome and its impact on disease, the first such program at the university. The human body contains more than 100 trillion microbes known collectively as the microbiome. While the microbiome's importance in health has been noted — think probiotics and stool transplants — the role that these bacteria play in disease is still not well understood. Led by William DePaolo, PhD, associate director of USC's Programs in Biomedical and Biological Sciences (PIBBS), the Committee on Microbiome-Host Interactions in Disease (CMHID) aims to leverage existing technology at USC to drive bench-to bedside research on the microbiome. The focus is on diseases such as inflammatory bowel disease, vaginal and gastrointestinal cancers, and metabolic disease. Involving more than 25 faculty from the Keck School of Medicine, the Roski School of Fine Arts and the School of Cinematic Arts, the committee was established by a three-year USC Research Collaboration Fund. For more, go to <http://www.cmhid.org>. — Alison Trinidad



Gaston Mantero, Branch Productions

### White House honors IGM Gallery

Members of the advisory council for the USC Institute for Genetic Medicine Art Gallery were joined by members of the UN Association, Beverly Hills chapter, and community leaders recently during a gala to celebrate an award for volunteerism presented by the White House to IGM Gallery Director Lynn Crandall. The award letter signed by President Barack Obama honors the mission of the IGM Art Gallery and its public, private, nonprofit, faith-based, academic and media partners to develop economic self-sufficiency and social justice on both of USC's campuses and in the surrounding communities. The event also launched an exhibition by New Delhi artist Nikki Anand, who flew in for the reception and discussions led by speakers that included Jim Beddows of the Palo Alto Research Center (PARC) and Terance Wolfe of the USC Marshall School of Business.

### Research shows teens who use e-cigarettes may go on to tobacco

A MULTI-UNIVERSITY TEAM LED by Keck Medicine of USC researchers has found, for the first time, that using electronic cigarettes, or "vaping," is associated with a propensity to start smoking cigarettes or use other tobacco products. Based on a survey of 2,530 14-year-olds at 10 public high schools in Los Angeles, the team found that teens who use e-cigarettes were more likely to transition to smokeable tobacco products. The findings were published Aug. 18 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. "E-cigarettes may be drawing a new generation of teens into recreational nicotine use because they are high-tech, can be purchased somewhat easily, come in enticing flavors and have a perception that they're not harmful," said Adam Leventhal, PhD, associate professor and director of the USC Health, Emotion and Addiction Laboratory at the Keck School of Medicine. The research is among the first to be released under a NIH-funded program established in 2013 at the Department of Preventive Medicine.

## Cancer program at USC Norris honors Ronnie Lippin

By Hope Hamashige

His experience with the diagnosis and treatment of his wife's breast cancer has inspired Dick Lippin to establish the Ronnie Lippin Cancer Support and Navigation Program at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Beginning this fall, the program will help people living near the Health Sciences Campus to maximize their chances of surviving cancer by getting them to the right doctors. It will also help them in understanding treatment options, clarifying insurance benefits and finding additional resources.

Before Ronnie Lippin developed a rare form of breast cancer, the couple had high-flying careers in the entertainment industry. Ronnie Lippin represented top names in music such as Eric Clapton, Prince, Brian Wilson and the Bee Gees. Dick Lippin represented Hollywood companies as clients of his public relations firm, the Lippin Group.

Despite their success in business, dealing with Ronnie Lippin's cancer made Dick Lippin feel "like a



Ronnie Lippin

babe in the woods."

"I was so sure of decisions I made in business, but when it came to

complex medical information, I felt like I didn't know what I was doing," Dick Lippin said. "I remember thinking that if I was going through all this, I couldn't imagine what people who couldn't afford great care were going through."

After Ronnie's death, Dick Lippin partnered with Tower Cancer Research Foundation. He explained the type of program he envisioned to honor his wife's memory and they steered him toward a \$300,000 donation to establish the program at USC Norris. Linda David, executive director of Tower Cancer Research Foundation, explained that the organization works with its donors to find the right institution in Southern California for the kind of donation they want to make.

"He is passionate about getting help for people who

don't have access to the best care or the understanding of the system to get the help they need," David said.

Lippin came to her unsure where his money would do the most good. She knew that Keck Medicine physicians do free cancer screenings in the communities around the campus, where there are high instances of late-stage cancer diagnoses, and she saw a fit. "A lot of those people who get a cancer diagnosis will benefit from someone stepping in to help them navigate their next steps," she said.

Zul Surani, executive director of HSC Community Partnerships, explained that USC Norris had identified a need to bridge the gap between the free cancer screenings in the neighborhoods and ensuring those people get the help they need.

"We don't want the people we screen and who need follow-up services to fall through the cracks," Surani said. "We are so grateful for this gift because we think it will help us fulfill our mission of promoting better health in the community we serve."

## Global study of Type 1 diabetes receives funds

By Hope Hamashige

Two USC research leaders recently received funding to participate in a global effort to find new ways to prevent the onset of Type 1 diabetes (T1D).

David Agus, MD, professor of medicine, and Dan Ruderman, PhD, assistant professor of research medicine, were awarded \$169,806 by the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust. The project, dubbed the T1D Prevention Initiative, involves ongoing and new research at five institutions — Helmholtz Zentrum Munchen in Germany, the University of Cambridge in Great Britain, JDRF in Australia and the Keck School of Medicine of USC and the University of South Florida in the United States.

The project's initial total investment of over \$8.7 million will help these institutions initiate and continue observation of hundreds of thousands of newborns and children across the U.S., Europe and Australia, as well as funding analysis of the data to chart the history and progression of Type 1 diabetes. Clinical trials seeking to halt the development of T1D are also expected.

In Type 1 diabetes, the body does not produce insulin. It is usually diagnosed in children and young adults, according to the American Diabetes Association.

Agus and his team are reviewing the availability and quality of existing clinical data from T1D trials and from trials of other autoimmune diseases. Their research will determine whether sufficient data exists to design an interventional prevention trial and to use data analytic techniques to better understand T1D and



David Agus, MD

other childhood diseases.

"My team and I are excited to dive into the clinical trial data and try to learn about the onset of diabetes," said Agus, who is also a professor in the USC Vit-

erbi School of Engineering. "Through the remarkable patients who donated their data, we will hopefully develop a new understanding to better prevent and treat T1D. This is the beginning of a long and fruitful collaboration with the Helmsley Trust to understand T1D and design clinical trials to make a difference in T1D and other diseases."

The Helmsley Charitable Trust supports research in the field of T1D understanding and prevention.

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