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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Monday, Jan. 23, 2017****USC Roski Eye Institute ranks No. 2 nationally in NIH funding for ophthalmology****Contact: Sherri Snelling [sherri.snelling@med.usc.edu](mailto:sherri.snelling@med.usc.edu) or 949-887-1903**

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LOS ANGELES – For the second year in a row, the [USC Roski Eye Institute](#) has ranked No. 2 nationally in academic ophthalmology department funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) according to the [Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research](#) data recently released.

In addition, 158 USC principal investigators make the [Keck School of Medicine of USC](#) No. 1 in the nation for individual researcher funding. Three noted researchers – [Arthur W. Toga](#), PhD, [Paul M. Thompson](#), PhD, and [Rohit Varma](#), MD, MPH – were ranked in the Top 5 among ophthalmologists.

Toga and Thompson were ranked for their Human Connectome project, the nation's top effort to map the brain and unlock information that can lead to conquering diseases and disorders such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's disease and autism. Part of the Human Connectome project is in collaboration with USC Roski Eye Institute to discover how to prevent and treat blinding eye diseases. Varma, who is recognized as one of the world's leading researchers in population-based eye diseases as well as an expert researcher in childhood myopia, had several NIH grants for his recent research among racial/ethnic populations.

"The USC department of ophthalmology researchers continue to be national leaders in innovative breakthroughs that are essential to our mission to preserve, protect and restore sight," said Varma. "We appreciate the support and funding from NIH that helps make today's research tomorrow's cures."

The USC ophthalmology department's second place position with \$12.3 million in grants helped Keck School of Medicine of USC receive the school's highest ranking in its history with more than \$140.8 million in total NIH grants. In fact, seven of Keck School of Medicine's departments ranked within the Top 20 in NIH funding in their respective departments.

As dean of the Keck School of Medicine of USC, Varma is proud of both the ophthalmology department and the school's overall ranking as one of the nation's leading academic research institutions. "Our strong performance and rise in rankings reflect the ground-breaking work of our world-renowned faculty, dedicated staff

## **USC Roski Eye Institute Ranks No. 2 in the country for NIH Funding 2-2-2-2-2**

and committed researchers, including the addition of 19 new principal investigators in the last year,” said Varma.

Some of the NIH funded research at USC Roski Eye Institute includes Varma’s [Visual Impairment and Blindness Will Double by 2050](#); [The Los Angeles Latino Eye Study \(LALES\)](#), which was the first and largest to study the relationship between age-related macular degeneration and quality of life; [Chinese American Eye Study – Prevalence of Diabetic Retinopathy](#) (part of CHES Study) and [Chinese American Eye Study – Prevalence of AMD](#) (part of CHES Study). All four of these articles were among the [most talked about research](#) published in *JAMA Ophthalmology* in 2016.

Other USC Roski Eye Institute NIH research includes: A Novel Treatment for Retinal Ischemia by [Mark Humayun](#), MD, PhD, who received the [2016 National Medal of Technology](#) and Innovation from President Obama; and Snapshot Retinal Imaging Mueller Matric Polarimeter by [Amir Kashani](#), MD, PhD. For a [full listing](#) of USC Roski Eye Institute Research, visit: [usceye.org](#).

Blue Ridge Institute, which began its annual ranking of NIH funding in 2006, reviewed the period October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016 to determine the list. The full 2016 Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research NIH rankings can be found at [www.brimr.org](#).

### **About the USC Roski Eye Institute ([usceye.org](#))**

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The USC Roski Eye Institute, part of the Keck Medicine of USC university-based medical enterprise, has been a leader in scientific research and innovative clinical treatments for more than 40 years. Ranked No. 2 in National Eye Institute (NEI) research grants for academically-based ophthalmology departments and nationally ranked in *U.S. News & World Report’s* annual “Best Hospitals” issue for more than 22 years, the USC Roski Eye Institute is headquartered in Los Angeles with clinics in Arcadia, Beverly Hills and Pasadena. Faculty physicians are also the exclusive ophthalmic doctors affiliated with L.A. County + USC Medical Center (LAC+USC) and Children’s Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA).

Patients from across the country come to see the USC Roski Eye Institute experts who treat a comprehensive array of eye diseases across the life spectrum from infants to aging seniors. The USC Roski Eye Institute is known for its scientific research and clinical innovation including:

- Creator of the FDA approved Argus retinal prosthesis implant (also known as the “bionic eye”) for retinitis pigmentosa patients
- Leader in NEI eye disease research among multi-ethnic populations
- Developer of stem cell therapies for those who have age-related macular degeneration
- Discovered the gene that is the cause of the most common eye cancer in children
- Treatment for eye infections for AIDS patients
- Inventors of the FDA approved XEN stent, the most widely used glaucoma implant in the world
- Pioneers of a device for long-term intraocular drug delivery
- Creator 25 years ago and ongoing leader in OCT research
- Leading researchers of eye disease prevention and treatment as part of the Human Connectome brain mapping research

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