

# HEALTH & WELLNESS

## Healthbeat

### Brenner Children's Hospital doctor wins international award

Dr. Bruce Rubin, a pediatric pulmonologist at Brenner Children's Hospital has been awarded the Prix Extraordinaire Award by the International Congress of Pediatric Pulmonology (CIPP).

The Prix Extraordinaire or Special CIPP Award is the top recognition by CIPP and has been given out only three former times. The award's presentation emphasized Rubin's work over the past two decades with pediatric pulmonologists around the world and his use of magic to break down barriers and to teach. Rubin has held magic workshops on five continents over the last 10 years plans to give another later this month in Santiago, Chile.

"Bruce's work has encouraged physicians to break down barriers and attempt to communicate with children of all ages through magic," said Jon S. Abramson, M.D., chair of pediatrics at Brenner Children's Hospital. "We are pleased that this international society chose to recognize the high caliber of his work."

Rubin served as the program committee chair for the CIPP meeting in Lisbon in 2004, as a congress president for the CIPP meeting in Montreal in 2006 and served as past president in for the CIPP meeting in Nice in 2008.

### Parker re-appointed to HWTF

Robert S. Parker, vice president for Special Operations and Community Health at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center, has been re-appointed to serve on the North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund Commission (HWTF). Parker is one of the HWTF's original members.

The HWTF was created in 2001 by the N.C. General Assembly as one of three entities to invest the states portion of the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement in which the tobacco industry agreed to pay \$206 billion to 46 states over the next 25 years. It also included an additional \$5 billion given to 14 states, including North Carolina.

Parker's involvement in activities to increase awareness of community health, public health and disease prevention has included the N.C. Public Health Study Commission, N.C. Prevention Partners, Forsyth Futures, YMCA of Northwest N.C., HealthCare Access, United Way of Forsyth County, Forsyth County Healthy Community Coalition, and Winston-Salem State University Center of Excellence for Elimination of Health Disparities.

Parker received his bachelor of science degree and his pre-med post-graduate education from East Carolina University (ECU). He also received a master of science in administrative services and community health from ECU.

### Blacks and smoking quitlines subject of new report

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The Health Education Council (HEC) unveiled a report on African Americans' use of quitlines for tobacco cessation at the National African American Tobacco Education Network/National Network on Tobacco Prevention and Poverty National Conference in Detroit last week.

The study came as result of the common sentiment among African American anti-tobacco advocates that quitline services are not considered a culturally relevant cessation intervention for African Americans.

The reports' findings and subsequent recommendations serve as a first step in a critical dialogue between national African American community-based organizations and the quitline community. The hope is to change perceptions about the effectiveness of quitlines, and in turn lead stakeholders to promote quitlines within their organizations.

To download the report, visit [www.healthcouncil.org](http://www.healthcouncil.org).

### NCCU receives nearly \$1 million from Hughes Medical Institute

North Carolina Central University is one of 48 of the nation's best undergraduate institutions that has been selected to receive funding from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute to be used towards science education.

Colleges in 21 states and Puerto Rico will receive \$700,000 to \$1.6 million over the next four years to revitalize their undergraduate instruction in life sciences. NCCU will receive \$900,000.

HHMI has challenged colleges to create more engaging science classes, bring real-world research experiences to students, and increase the diversity of students who study science.

Although North Carolina Central University is located within the state's Research Triangle region — a prominent high-tech hub — less than five percent of its students currently major in science. That's a troubling statistic for the school's science faculty. The university hopes that the HHMI grant will help them change that by recruiting promising students as early as middle school and engaging them in research through their undergraduate years.

NCCU will bring in 36 promising 11th grade students from science enrichment programs the university already has in place at local middle and high schools.

## UNDERSTANDING BIPOLAR DISORDER

It is unfortunate that, despite the advances of modern medicine in understanding and treating mental illness, stigma still frequently surrounds these diseases and the people who live with them. Bipolar disorder, also known as manic-depressive illness, is a very real disease that affects nearly six million adults in the United States alone, according to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). It remains uncertain whether the illness occurs more frequently in minority or non-minority communities. It is one of the most stigmatized diseases in our society, and living with bipolar disorder is challenging enough without having to handle stigma as well. In this article, I will describe some experiences of people living with the disease and attempt to dispel some of the myths and untruths frequently attributed to the disease's survivors.

### What is Bipolar Disorder?

Bipolar disorder is a serious brain disease in which a person's mood, energy, cognitions (thoughts), and ability to function are impaired. While every human being goes through periods of ups and downs — that's part of life — a person with bipolar disorder experiences disabling changes in mood, thought patterns, and energy levels that can last from days to weeks to months at a time. These shifts are severe and can result in the person being unable to function at work or school, and they even affect relationships and other social situations. A survivor once informed me that someone told her, "If you think you can't function, you won't be able to function." But the truth is that the disease is not something that the patient can control; it can be crippling and disabling and is not the patient's fault.

Frighteningly, people suffering from bipolar disorder have a higher rate of suicide than do those in the general population because the disease can be so crippling that it impacts a person's desire to live.

Let's start by talking about the "highs," or mania, that a person living with bipolar disorder faces. A lot of people think that mania refers simply to being in an excessively good or "euphoric" mood and may not understand why that is a problem. The truth is that mania is not fun or enjoyable. While an extremely "high" mood is symptomatic of mania, there are other symptoms, including increased energy or restlessness, extreme irritability, racing thoughts, and little need for sleep. Creativity frequently blossoms when a person is experiencing a manic episode, and a lot of times that person can do a lot of work in a very short period of time. These feelings can be over-

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## Effort launched to fight malaria in Africa

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

**NAIROBI, Kenya** — A multi-country project called ACTwatch, which will monitor the availability and affordability of effective malaria treatment, was launched in Nairobi Friday, which was World Malaria Day.

Over the next five years, ACTwatch, which is funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, will provide ongoing evidence related to access to antimalarials, specifically artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs), the most effective malaria treatment on the market. This evidence will inform policy discussions ongoing at both the global and country level to increase access to effective antimalarials for those who need them most.

ACTwatch is being implemented by a consortium of partners led by the nongovernmental organization PSI. Other partners include the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, United States Pharmacopeia and the market research firm, Nielsen. The project will be carried out in six African countries (Benin, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia) and two countries in Southeast Asia (Cambodia and one other, yet to be decided upon).

Studies conducted under the auspices of the project will examine the price, availability and quality of different types of antimalarials in shops and health facilities. Studies will also investigate malaria treatment seeking behavior in the community and the functioning of the supply chain for antimalarials, as well as look at the effect of government policies on the structure of the antimalarial market in each country. The principal outputs of ACTwatch will be evidence on changes in the availability, affordability and use of ACTs, in all sectors, as well as policy recommendations targeting national and international decision-makers to increase use of ACTs in vulnerable communities.



A woman holds her child in the Malaria Ward of Kumi Hospital in Uganda.

PRNewsFoto/CEM

## UNC reports that most American women have form of eating disorder

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Sixty-five percent of American women between the ages of 25 and 45 report having disordered eating behaviors, according to the results of a new survey by SELF Magazine in partnership with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

An additional 10 percent of women report symptoms consistent with eating disorders such as anorexia, bulimia nervosa and binge eating disorder, meaning that a total of 75 percent of all American women endorse some unhealthy thoughts, feelings or behaviors related to food or their bodies.

"Our survey found that these behaviors cut across racial and ethnic lines and are not limited to any one group," said Cynthia M. Bulik, Ph.D., William and Jeanne Jordan Distinguished Professor of Eating Disorders in the UNC School of Medicine's department of psychiatry and director of the UNC Eating Disorders Program. "Women who identified their ethnic backgrounds as Hispanic or Latina, white, black or African American and Asian were all represented among the women who reported unhealthy eating behaviors."

Lucy Danziger, the editor-in-chief of SELF Magazine said: "SELF's investigation will help our 5.8 million readers determine whether their eating habits could be considered disordered, and the survey results show that more women than expected will identify with various disordered eating behaviors. Recognizing what's normal and what's dangerous is the first step all women can take in developing a more positive body image and a healthier approach to food."

Although the type of disordered eating behaviors the survey uncovered don't necessarily have potentially lethal consequences like anorexia or bulimia nervosa, women report they are associated with emotional and physical distress. And despite the stereotype that eating issues affect mostly young women, the survey found that those in their 30s and 40s report disordered eating at virtually the same rates. Some of the findings show that:

- 75 percent of women report disordered eating behaviors or symptoms consistent with eating disorders; so three out of four have an unhealthy relationship with



## Local man to share his ALS battle

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Larry Kincaid of Jonesville (in Yadkin County) is among those featured in a national Muscular Dystrophy Association campaign promoting awareness of ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis). May marks the 17th annual national ALS Awareness Month. The devastating neuromuscular disease is better known as Lou Gehrig's disease. ALS cut short the career of the famous New York Yankee home-run king.

This month, Kincaid will be one of 31 people featured (one per day) in the MDA online series "ALS: Anyone's Life Story." The series highlights how people have learned to live with ALS, gaining new perspectives on life even as the disease progressively steals their ability to move, eat and breathe. Kincaid's story and picture will appear Saturday, May 10, on MDA's ALS Division Web site ([www.als-mds.org](http://www.als-mds.org)) and the Association's main site ([www.mda.org](http://www.mda.org)).

The 59-year-old learned that he has ALS in May 2007. Three days after his diagnosis, Kincaid's wife died following a long battle with cancer. Kincaid had cared for her for five years, while pursuing a successful career and devoting time to his daughter and grandchildren. His activity now is much less, but his spirit remains strong.

"I've gained many friends in this challenge," he says. "I want others to know they're not alone in this fight. My passion is to make a difference in someone's life."

Average life expectancy of people with ALS is three to five years after diagnosis. ALS attacks the nerve cells that control muscles, ultimately resulting in paralysis of all voluntary muscles, including those used for breathing and swallowing.

The "Anyone's Life Story" series grew from the personal saga of fitness pioneer and entrepreneur Augie Nieto, who received a diagnosis of ALS at age 47 in 2005. A leader in the fitness equipment industry, Nieto underwent a dramatic shift in his life's priorities after his diagnosis, from striving for business success to searching for personal significance and fulfillment. He and his wife, Lynne, are co-chairs of MDA's ALS Division, and the driving force behind MDA's Augie's Quest research initiative.



food or their bodies

- 67 percent of women (excluding those with actual eating disorders) are trying to lose weight
  - 53 percent of dieters are already at a healthy weight and are still trying to lose weight
  - 39 percent of women say concerns about what they eat or weigh interfere with their happiness
  - 37 percent regularly skip meals to try to lose weight
- Eating habits that women think are normal — such as banishing carbohydrates, skipping meals and in some cases extreme dieting — may actually be symptoms of disordered eating.