

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Healthbeat

Advocates are pushing wider distribution of female condoms

(BLACK PR WIRE) – As World AIDS Day approaches on December 1, new data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicate that HIV/AIDS remains a serious health crisis among African American women and men. In response, state and local health departments are working with the CDC to increase access to HIV prevention, testing, and treatment programs in African American communities. Many local health departments are also increasing access to the female condom, a woman-initiated HIV prevention method that was first introduced 15 years ago.



Hoytt

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recognized the safety and effectiveness of the female condom as a dual method for HIV and pregnancy prevention in 1993, but its high cost relative to the male condom has limited access in the United States until recently.

Health advocates have also launched a global campaign – “Prevention Now!” – to demand increased access to the female condom in communities heavily impacted by HIV/AIDS. While public health programs around the world distribute six to 12 billion male condoms every year, just 26 million female condoms were distributed in 2007, roughly equal to one female condom for every 62 women between the ages of 15 and 49.

Unlike the male condom, the female condom can be inserted before sex starts. It also provides women with an alternative HIV prevention method if their husbands or partners refuse to use a male condom. Because women wear the female condom, men don't have to wear protection during sex, a factor that can help prevent “male condom fatigue.”

“African American women must have increased access to HIV prevention methods that give them the power to make the choices and the decisions about their health,” said Eleanor Hinton Hoytt, president and CEO of the Black Women's Health Imperative, the only national organization dedicated solely to the health and wellness of Black women.

Craven County schools recognized by USDA

NEW BERN, N.C. – USDA Food and Nutrition Service Regional Administrator Don Arnette presented Gold Certificates to school officials in Craven County, N.C. for four of their elementary schools meeting USDA's HealthierUS School Challenge at the highest level. The winning schools are: Ben D. Quinn Elementary, Bridgeton Elementary, Havelock Elementary and Oaks Road Elementary. They are the first schools in North Carolina to win Gold Awards, USDA's highest.

“I'm pleased to recognize these four Craven County elementary schools for achieving Gold-level status,” Arnette said.

USDA has issued a challenge to schools throughout the nation to make changes to their school nutrition environment, improve the quality of the foods served, and provide students with more nutritious, healthy choices. These schools' achievements are very significant because obesity is a growing concern for school children in the United States. USDA believes that schools should be taking a leadership role in helping students learn to make healthy eating and active lifestyle choices.

Local ‘Cure’ affiliate hires programs manager

The North Carolina Triad Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure has appointed Tasha Renee Smith as its community programs manager.

In her role, she will manage Affiliate activities that directly relate to fulfillment of the Komen vision and mission, including the Komen NC Triad grants, community outreach, education and survivor programs.

“I'm excited about the many opportunities I see to increase our outreach and build awareness in the Triad,” Smith said. “I can't think of a better place to bring my education and professional experience together to make a meaningful difference at the community level than Susan G. Komen for the Cure.”

A native of Pennsylvania, Smith came to Winston-Salem in 1997 to pursue her Ph.D. in cancer biology at Wake Forest University School of Medicine. She says she considers Winston-Salem her home. After earning her doctorate, Smith then went to UNC-Chapel Hill for her Master of Public Health in Epidemiology. She most recently coordinated a clinical breast cancer research project at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center.

“Tasha's incredible knowledge base will be an invaluable asset to our community and to the work of our Affiliate,” said Shelley Holden, Affiliate President. “With this addition to our team, we will be able to increase outreach and education efforts, and provide greater assistance to the patients, survivors, co-survivors and supporters who call on us for information.”



Smith

Young smokers turning to QuitlineNC

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Young folks are taking full-advantage of a statewide hotline designed to help smokers kick the habit.

QuitlineNC was established by the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund, which strives to make state residents stronger, both physically and economically, by funding programs that promote preventive health. The Fund was created by the General Assembly in 2000 to allocate a portion of North Carolina's share of the national tobacco settlement. HWTF has invested \$199 million to support preventive health initiatives and \$102 million to fund prescription drug assistance programs.

Data shows that one year after a media campaign targeting young smokers ages 18 - 24 was launched, QuitlineNC has sustained a three-fold increase in calls from young adults. Young adults were targeted in the campaign because they have the highest smoking prevalence of any age group in North Carolina. According to the most recent data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey (2007), 31 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds in North Carolina smoke, well above the



national rate of 24 percent. Studies show that tobacco users can double their chances of quitting for good with the help of phone-based cessation programs like QuitlineNC.

“The NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund is committed to reducing the devastating effects of smoking and tobacco use, and we continue to make significant strides in increasing the number of young adults who

are using effective strategies to quit tobacco,” said Governor-elect and HWTF Chair Bev Perdue.

“QuitlineNC is a proven program that provides tobacco users with the help they need to quit.”

QuitlineNC is a free, one-on-one phone-based cessation service that pairs tobacco users with ‘coaches’ who develop a quit plan and provide ongoing support.

“On a national observance where tobacco-users are challenged to quit tobacco use for the day, QuitlineNC gives young adults a way to kick the habit for good,” said Vandana Shah, executive director of the HWTF. “This recent call data report confirms that through research-based campaigns like ‘Call it Quits,’ HWTF can link North Carolinians to proven methods of quitting tobacco.”

QuitlineNC (1-800-QUIT-NOW or 1-800-784-8669) is available 8 a.m. to 3 a.m., seven days a week.

State celebrates record rate for seat-belt usage

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

More North Carolinians than ever are buckling up, a fact that state officials are taking great pride in.

“More North Carolinians are getting the message and buckling up,” said State Transportation Secretary Lyndo Tippett. “Continued education and enforcement through our ‘Click It or Ticket’ initiative has truly made a difference in our state. I urge those who still choose to remain unbuckled to take five seconds prior to each trip and buckle up, it could save your life.”

Last week, it was announced that North Carolina's seat belt usage rate has reached its highest to date. According to an annual survey, the state's usage rate increased to 89.8 percent, a 4 percent increase since 2005 and above the national rate of 82 percent.

The N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program administered “Click It or Ticket” campaign is taking much of the credit for the record increase in usage. The program began as a national pilot project in 1993 to increase seat belt usage and child passenger safety through stepped-up enforcement of the state's seat belt and child safety seat laws.

The state's usage rate was 65 percent when the program began 15 years ago. In 2003, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration adopted the campaign as a national model that is now used in more than 40 states.

According to NHTSA, results are tabulated from probability-based observational surveys, all of which follow established criteria. NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis verifies that all states comply with the standard each year.

Last year in North Carolina alone, there were 1,706 traffic-related fatalities and 744 of those were unrestrained drivers or passengers.



HELP IS ON THE WAY



PRNewsFoto/Unique Image Inc.

Hussein Balhas, 8, was born in Lebanon with overwhelming congenital defects, including a left eye completely covered with skin and a right eye incapable of fully closing. The boy is receiving medical assistance from the ALO Cultural Foundation, which was founded by marketing guru Wafa Kanan. In September, the foundation made it possible for Hussein to visit the United States where he, among other things, met basketball legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

Local doctors: Ginkgo won't help dementia

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Researchers at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center say that the notion that the popular herbal supplement ginkgo biloba can improve memory for those with dementia or Alzheimer's is a myth.

A \$30 million, multi-center study tested the effectiveness of 120 milligrams (mg) of ginkgo twice daily versus a placebo in lowering the incidence of dementia and Alzheimer's in normal, elderly people and those with mild cognitive impairment.

Results show that the 240 mg of ginkgo daily has no effect on the onset of dementia or development of Alzheimer's. The study appears in a recent issue of the Journal of the American Medical



Association.

The Ginkgo biloba for the Evaluation of Memory (GEM) Study was the largest clinical trial ever to evaluate the effects

of the dietary supplement.

“Alzheimer's disease is a devastating disease affecting large numbers of older adults,” said Dr. Gregory Burke, the lead

investigator for the Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center clinical site. “Our best strategy is to prevent dementia before it begins.”

The GEM Study was conducted at Wake Forest Baptist and three other sites: the University of Pittsburgh, Johns Hopkins University and the University of California-Davis.

Investigators followed a total of 3,069 participants age 75 or older, who had either normal cognition or mild cognitive impairment.

In Europe and the United States, ginkgo supplements are among the best-selling herbal medications and it consistently ranks as a top medicine prescribed in France and Germany.

AVOIDING THE HOLIDAY BULGE



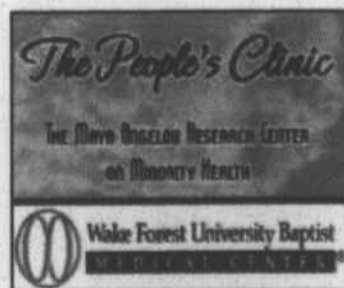
Many of the celebrations in our lives are associated with food, food and more food. That is certainly true for the end of the year holidays. And since most folks are less active during the cold winter months, this can be devastating for those trying to maintain a healthy weight.

Although a recent study showed that Americans gain on average about 1 pound between Thanksgiving and the end of the year, the study also showed that once that pound gets added, it typically doesn't come off. It's even worse for people who are already overweight or obese, who gain an average of five pounds during the holidays. These extra pounds can increase your risk for many chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, stroke and heart disease. This makes it especially important to develop and keep healthy habits during the holidays.

One very important part of eating healthy

during the holidays is portion control. Simply put, this means being careful about the amounts of foods that you eat. While it is certainly true that the foods that you eat are important to being healthy, it's also important to watch the amounts of the foods you eat to keep the weight down. Here are some helpful tips to try to help with portion control during the holidays:

Use your hand as a guide for measuring how much of a food you should eat. According to the American Heart Association, you can use the following guides just by using your hands: your fist represents the size of one cup of fruit, salad, or casseroles; your cupped hand represents ½ cup of pasta, rice, beans, potatoes, cooked vegetables, pudding, or ice cream; the palm of your hand represents 3 ounces of beef, pork, poultry or fish; your thumb represents one tablespoon of



See Holiday food on A11