

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Healthbeat

VA to open new N.C. clinics

U.S. Senator Richard Burr is applauding the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for expanding the access to care for North Carolina veterans with the announcement of two new outpatient clinics in North Carolina. One clinic will be established in Goldsboro and the other in the Edenton-Elizabeth City area. Last week, the VA announced a total of 31 new clinics would be opened nationwide.

"Giving our veterans expanded access to world-class health care is one of our most important responsibilities," Burr said.

The new outpatient clinics in Goldsboro and Edenton-Elizabeth City will be operational by 2010. VA currently has four hospitals, 10 community-based outpatient clinics and five rehabilitation counseling centers in North Carolina. In addition to the clinics opening in 2010, two others will open next year in Lumberton and Rutherfordton.

The VA currently operates 153 hospitals and 750 community-based clinics nationwide.

Kemper earns leadership honor

Dr. Kathi J. Kemper, a pioneer in wellness promotion and integrative health care for children, received the inaugural IPC Leadership Award from the Integrative Pediatrics Council, a group of concerned health care practitioners and child health advocates.

Kemper received the award in November at "Pangea 2008: A Conference for the Future of Children's Health" in New York.

Kemper is the Caryl J. Guth Chair for Holistic and Integrative Medicine and professor of pediatrics, public health sciences, and family and community medicine at Wake Forest University School of Medicine.

"The decision to honor Dr. Kemper with the first IPC Leadership Award was unanimous. She is without a doubt one of the country's finest pediatricians and has long led the way toward an integrative model of health for children," said Lawrence D. Rosen, M.D., chair of the Integrative Pediatrics Council and founder of the Whole Child Center in northern New Jersey.

An influential advocate, clinician and researcher in the field of integrative pediatrics, which combines the best of conventional and complementary approaches to the health care of children, Kemper founded and chairs the American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Complementary and Integrative Medicine. She is also past president of the Ambulatory Pediatrics Association. Prior to her appointment at Wake Forest, she founded the Center for Holistic Pediatric Education and Research at Boston's Children's Hospital/Harvard Medical School.



Dr. Kemper

Obama has no smoking pledge for the White House

WASHINGTON (AP) — Barack Obama says you won't catch him lighting up a cigarette in the smoke-free White House.

"There are times where I've fallen off the wagon," the president-elect said when asked in a broadcast interview whether he has kicked the habit.

"I've done a terrific job, under the circumstances, of making myself much healthier," he said. "And I think that you will not see any violations of these rules in the White House," he said on Sunday's "Meet the Press" on NBC.

Obama told the magazine Men's Health in an interview for its November issue that he wished he had more time for staying fit and that he still occasionally smoked a cigarette.

Obama said in that interview that he had bummed a cigarette a couple of times during the campaign. "But I figure, seeing as I'm running for president, I need to cut myself a little slack," he said.

Family and community medicine unit adds four

Dr. Lisa Cassidy-Vu, Dr. Oana Panea, Dr. Carmen Strickland and Dr. Erik Lie-Nielsen have joined the Department of Family and Community Medicine at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center as assistant professors.

Cassidy-Vu's areas of interest and specialty are in prenatal care and obstetrics. She received her medical degree from University of Cincinnati College of Medicine and completed a residency and fellowship in family medicine at Moses Cone Hospital. She came to Wake Forest Baptist from University of Cincinnati Family Physicians/Wyoming Family Practice.

Panea's areas of interest are family medicine and sports medicine. She received her medical degree from Medical School Carol Davila in Bucharest, Romania, and completed a residency and a fellowship in sports medicine at the University Health System of Eastern Carolina in Greenville.

Strickland's areas of interest include family medicine, centering on pregnancy and exercise behaviors and barriers. She received her medical degree from the University of Massachusetts Medical School and completed a residency and fellowship in family medicine at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She came to Wake Forest Baptist from the Mayo Clinic, Scottsdale, Ariz.

Lie-Nielsen's interest focuses on family medicine and geriatrics. He received his medical degree from East Carolina University Brody School of Medicine in Greenville. He completed a residency and fellowship in geriatric medicine at Wake Forest Baptist.

ADVICE TO LIVE BY

In wake of deadly fires, city offers safety tips

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Winston-Salem Fire Chief Antony Farmer and Fire Marshall Robert Owens are reminding residents to follow fire-prevention guidelines following a spate of fire fatalities.

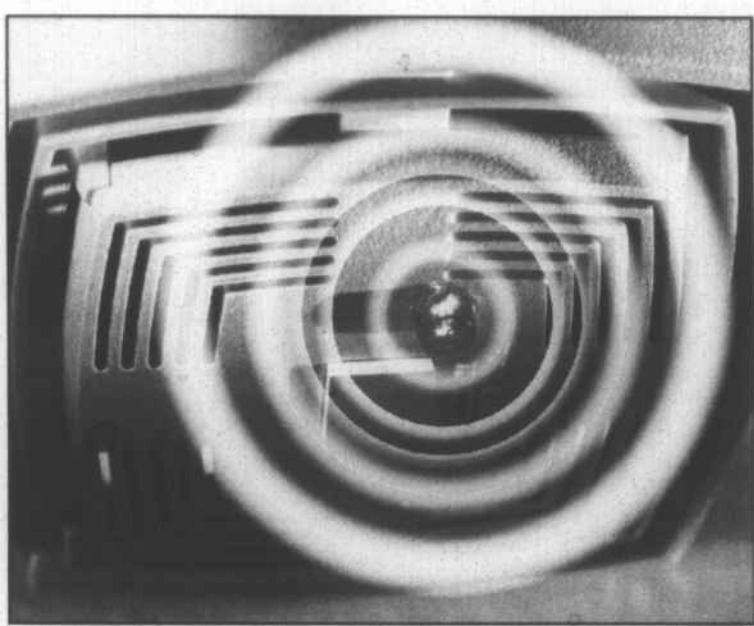
"Within the last two weeks, three people have been killed and one seriously injured in house fires," Owens said. "Most of these fires have been related to heating equipment," he said, noting that economic conditions are causing many families to use alternative means to keep warm.

"We can reduce the number of home heating fires in our community by taking some simple precautions and using heating equipment properly," Owens said. He recommends these simple home heating safety tips that will keep residents warm and safe this winter.

• Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home.

• Interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home so that when one sounds, they all sound. Test smoke alarms at least once a month and don't use the batteries in your smoke alarms for toys or other items.

• Install and maintain a carbon monoxide alarm in a central location outside each sleeping area.



• Never use an oven to heat your home.

• Install a residential fire sprinkler system in your home. It's like having a firefighter in every room of your home ready to extinguish a fire at a moments notice.

• Have your chimney inspected each year and cleaned if necessary.

• Remove combustible materials from the area around your fireplace.

• Use a sturdy fireplace screen.

• Allow ashes to cool before disposing. Dispose of ashes in a metal container away from

your home.

• Space heaters need space. Keep all things that can burn, such as paper, bedding or furniture, at least 3 feet away from heating equipment.

• Turn portable heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room.

• Plug portable heater power cords only into outlets with sufficient capacity and never into an extension cord.

• Inspect for cracked or broken plugs or loose connections. Replace before using.

For more information about fire safety, go to www.nfpa.org.

Doctors group give N.C. a C-

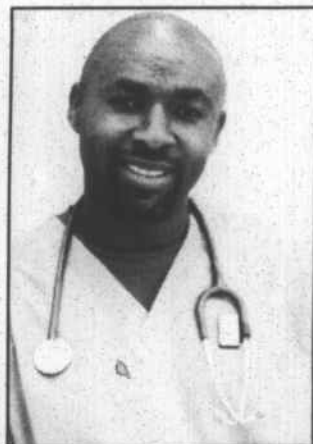
Report calls state's medical liability laws a turn-off for new physicians

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

North Carolina lacks adequate access to emergency care and has medical liability laws that scare away new doctors. Those were just two of the findings released last week by the American College of Emergency Physicians on its "National Report Card on the State of Emergency Medicine."

Though the state received high marks for its quality and patient safety environment, N.C. overall grade was a C-, the same score received by the nation as a whole.

"We have one of the worst medical liability environments in the nation," said Dr. Michael B. Hocker, president of the North Carolina College of Emergency Physicians. "If we don't enact liability reforms, we can't expect to recruit the physicians we



need. The state lacks a medical liability cap on non-economic damages, as well as additional liability protections for EMTALA-mandated emergency care. We also lack requirements for case certification by an expert witness and for the witness to be licensed to practice in the state. In plain English, that means North Carolina has unwittingly created a hostile environment for emergency physicians. We will not attract or retain enough physicians under our present circumstances."

The Report Card, a comprehensive analysis of the support that the 50 states and the District of Columbia provide for emergency patients, also found fault with the state's high infant mortality rate, "relatively high" percentage of adult obesity (26.6 percent) and its smoking rate (22.1 percent).

On the other hand, in Public Health and Injury Prevention, North Carolina scored well in traffic safety and earned an "A" in the Quality & Patient Safety category.

"Clearly there are weaknesses in the system, as well as strengths," said Dr. Hocker. "But we still have a long way to go to improve the state of emergency medicine in North Carolina. I urge our policy-makers to approve the necessary funding to improve the emergency health care system in our state."

Locals honored for AIDS work

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

The N.C. Department of Health and Human Services — Division of Public Health honored local people during a World AIDS Day Banquet on Dec. 4 in Durham.

The Union Baptist Church AIDS Ministry and Dr. Deborea Winfrey, a Winston-Salem psychologist, were among those feted for their efforts to help people living with HIV/AIDS.

The Union Baptist AIDS Ministry was presented with an Organizational Service Award. The church is a pioneer, starting one of the earliest AIDS ministries in the city. Founded by Deacon Sammie Gray and his wife, Inez Gray, at a time when the stigma of HIV/AIDS was still too severe to mention, the Ministry reaches out weekly to serve clients of Winston-Salem-based AIDS Care Service (ACS) through the delivery of meals to those who are homebound, visits to ACS clients and by generating HIV awareness and education.

Winfrey won an Individual Service Award for the exemplary mental health services that she provides to the AIDS Care Services Women's Support Group. Dr. Winfrey has been credited by the women of the group with helping them improve their self-esteem and their abilities to build healthy emotional relationships. The women also report an increased ability to deal with depression and other stressors that



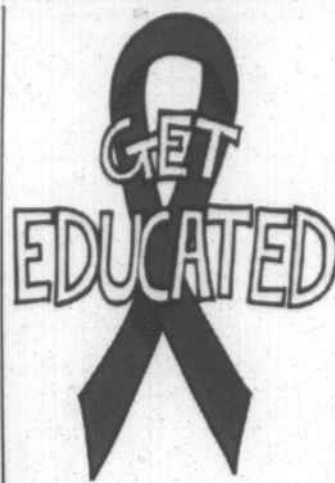
Union's Robert Noble and Sammie Gray with Dr. Winfrey.

are part of living with HIV.

AIDS Care Service — which has a mission to empower and serve those living with HIV/AIDS and to educate the community — nominated both Winfrey and the Ministry for the awards.

"We are thrilled to see our supporters recognized in such a public way for their service. There are over 2,000 people now living in our region with HIV or AIDS who

need direct care or supportive services to live healthier lives," said ACS Community Relations Director Amy Lindsey. "We are so grateful to have the help of the faith-based community, and the mental health community, in meeting our clients' needs. We are especially thankful to Union Baptist and Dr. Winfrey for their dedication."



HIV/AIDS
101



Each year, about 40,000 people in the United States will become infected with HIV, and over half of the new cases will be among minorities. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), almost 50 percent of new HIV cases are African American. Moreover, about 41 percent of men and 64 percent of women living with HIV/AIDS are African American. African Americans often don't live as long as members of other racial/ethnic groups with HIV/AIDS, due in part to barriers like poverty, higher rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and stigma (negative attitudes, beliefs, and actions directed at people with HIV/AIDS or at people who are at risk for the disease). What's even more frightening is that about 1 in 5 people (21 percent) living with HIV do not know that they have the infection, which means they could unknowingly spread it to others. This article, the first in a three-part series, will discuss HIV/AIDS, its risk factors, and ways you can protect yourself and your community.

What are HIV and AIDS?

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is the virus that causes the life-threatening disease known as AIDS, or acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. First identified in the early 1980s, the infection continues to spread worldwide and disproportionately affects minorities in the United States. HIV attacks your immune system, the system that helps our bodies fight illness, by destroying a certain type of white blood cell (T cells), which we need to fight disease. AIDS is the last stage of HIV infection; having AIDS means this virus has weakened the immune system to the point at which the body has a very difficult time fighting infection.

How can you get HIV?

Many people do not know that HIV is a very delicate virus, so it does not stay alive for very long outside a person's body. HIV is primarily found in the blood, semen, or vaginal fluid of an infected person. Pregnant mothers can transmit HIV to their unborn child during childbirth or through breast feeding. Because of excellent screening techniques now utilized, it is rare for HIV to be contracted from blood transfusions. The three most common means of transmission are:

• Having sex (anal, vaginal, or oral) with someone infected with HIV

• Sharing needles and syringes with someone infected with HIV

• Exposure to HIV before or during birth or through breast feeding.

It is also important to understand how it is NOT transmitted. HIV is not transmitted through shaking hands, hugging, or a casual kiss. You cannot become infected from a toilet seat, drinking fountain, doorknob, dishes, drinking glasses, food, or pets. You also