

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Healthbeat

UNC awarded \$1.7 million to curb the spread of HIV in N.C.

A team of researchers from the UNC Institute for Global Health & Infectious Diseases has received a \$1.7 million grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to study novel HIV testing methods to detect acute HIV infection and target sexual networks to curb the spread of HIV in North Carolina.

The four-year study will assess the performance and cost-effectiveness of a new, 4th generation test to diagnose acute HIV infection (AHI). AHI is the period between infection and detection of HIV antibodies and lasts up to 12 weeks.



Dr. Leone

During this brief window of time, the virus replicates rapidly, and the probability of transmission is very high.

"We believe that a significant proportion of HIV transmission by the sexual route is driven by AHI," said Dr. Peter Leone, of the UNC School of Medicine. "Identifying individuals with AHI could have a significant positive impact on the spread of the virus."

The Screening Targeted Populations to Interrupt Ongoing Chains of Transmission with Enhanced Partner Notification, or STOP, study will use the AHI diagnosis to identify sexual networks where there is a high risk for HIV transmission and target them for prevention interventions, particularly partner notification.

Men who have sex with men (MSM) increasingly use the internet to find sexual partners.

"The anonymity of the internet can limit the ability to perform partner notification by traditional means," said UNC's Dr. Lisa Hightow-Weidman. "These technologies will also include real-time linkage to information about HIV testing sites for AHI, symptoms associated with AHI and referral to HIV and STD care."

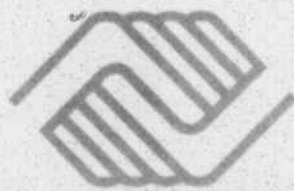
Black women in NYC face increased childbirth dangers

(NNPA/Women's ENews) - A report released last week indicates that African-American women in New York City were seven times more likely to die during pregnancy and childbirth than white women.

The report was released June 18 at an event co-sponsored by The New York Academy of Medicine and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. The report examined 161 pregnancy-related maternal deaths between 2001 and 2005. It found that women 40 years and older were 2.6 times more likely to have a pregnancy-related death than women under age 40.

Nearly 80 percent of the women who died had Cesarean sections.

The leading causes for maternal mortality during this time were embolism, hemorrhage, infection and pregnancy-induced hypertension. Together, these factors accounted for 63 percent of the 161 pregnancy-related deaths. Women over 40 were also at higher risk for dying during pregnancy and childbirth. Two of the neighborhoods identified as having extraordinarily high maternal mortality rates were Southeast Queens and Northeast Bronx. The death rate for women with no insurance was nearly four times higher than for insured women and nearly half of all women who died from pregnancy-related causes were classified as obese: 60 percent of the African-American women were obese and 43 percent of the white women were obese.



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF AMERICA

Novant Health provides free sports physicals

PrimeCare Urgent Care and Novant SportsMed provided free sports physicals for 61 local children at the Winston-Salem Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club's annual Community Day on June 5. The Community Day was a full day of fun, food and games for the children and an opportunity to be screened for participation in organized sports activities.

Dr. James Guerrini, medical director for PrimeCare, said, "We were honored to provide physicals for the children of the Boys and Girls Club who are now able to participate in sports and activities they enjoy so much. This is the second year we have been able to do this and look forward to doing this on an annual basis. It is important for us as a healthcare organization to keep our kids and our communities healthy and mobile."

State stepping up DUI checkpoints

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

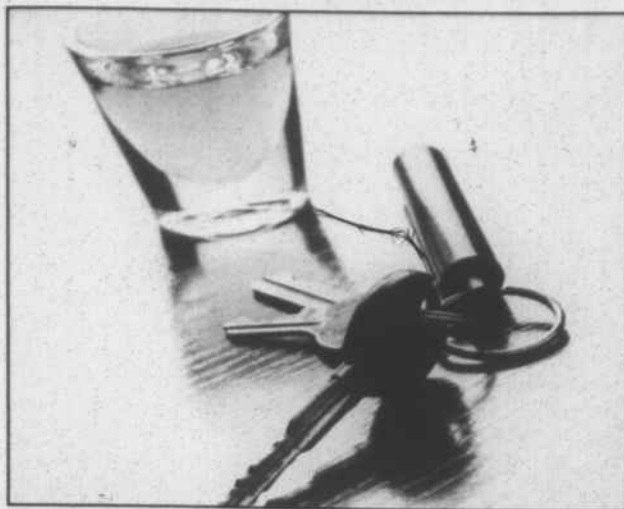
The Governor's Highway Safety Program announced this week that state and local law enforcement officers will be out in force over the Fourth of July holiday as part of the 2010 "Booze It & Lose It: Operation Firecracker" campaign. Checkpoints and stepped-up patrols will be in place across North Carolina through Sunday, July 4, in an effort to remove impaired drivers from the roads.

"Our law enforcement officers will be working hard to stop impaired drivers and ensure the

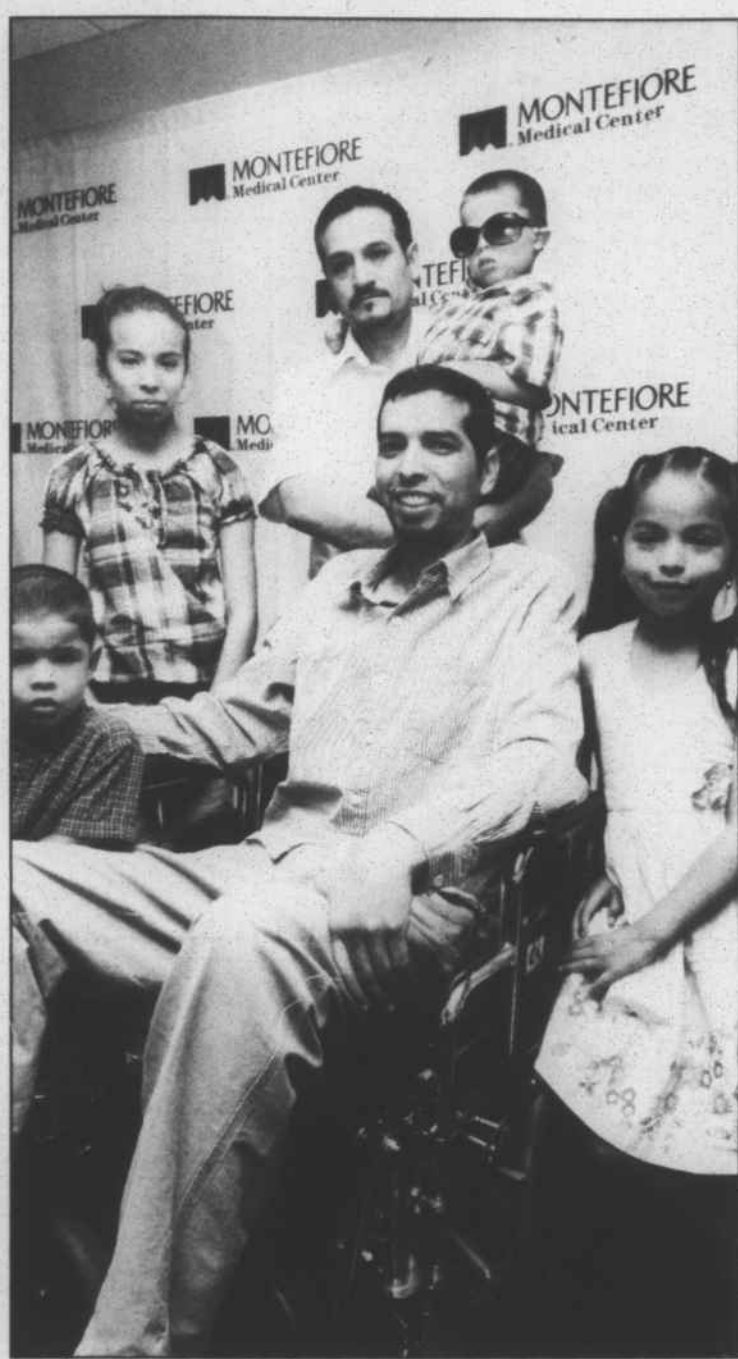
safety of motorists traveling on our highways," said David Weinstein, director of the GHSP. "Driving while impaired is never worth the risk, and everyone should celebrate responsibly."

Over last year's Independence Day weekend, there were 120 alcohol-related crashes resulting in six fatalities and 105 injuries.

Officers charged more than 1,300 North Carolina motorists with driving while impaired during the 2009 "Booze It & Lose It: Operation Firecracker" campaign. More than 4,800 stepped-up patrols and checkpoints were conducted.



NEW LEASES ON LIFE



Juan Farias, 32, with his children, Diego, 4, Alondra, 12, Aaron, 3, and Maripaz, 6, and his brother, Ricardo. Farias left Montefiore Medical Center in Middletown, New York last month after receiving a unique heart and liver transplant surgery. In 2009, only 11 such procedures were performed in the U.S.

N.C. colleges lead the nation in smoking restrictions

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Colleges in North Carolina are leading the way in the implementation of policies that curb smoking.

UNC-Chapel Hill study reports that in the first four years of the North Carolina Tobacco-Free Colleges Initiative, 33 college campuses in the state adopted tobacco-free policies that prevent tobacco use to the maximum extent allowed by law. In fact, North Carolina leads the nation in the number of college campuses that have voluntarily banned or severely restricted smoking.

The results of the study have been printed in the journal "Tobacco Control."

"Our study shows that North Carolina is a national leader in protecting college students from the clear dangers of second-hand smoke," said Dr. Adam Goldstein,



director of the Tobacco Prevention and Evaluation Program (TPEP) at the UNC School of Medicine, which conducted the study to evaluate the Tobacco-Free Colleges Initiative for the North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF).

Tobacco-Free Colleges Initiative was developed to combat an increase in smoking among college students that researchers observed in the 1990s.

Prior to the Tobacco-Free Colleges Initiative, only one small college with 700 students had a tobacco-free policy.

According to the study, the anti-smoking policies protect more than 159,000 college students - as well as faculty, staff and campus visitors - from secondhand smoke.

In addition to the 100 percent tobacco-free campus policies, the Tobacco-Free Colleges Initiative has resulted in 64 new policies that limit smoking in portions of campus, in off-campus venues, by campus organizations, and that restricted tobacco industry promotions on college campuses.

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO SAVE MOTHER EARTH

Eye-catching plants along N.C. highways to be used for biofuel

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

A small field of bright yellow flowers planted by the N.C. Department of Transportation along Interstate 40 may look like any other bed of wildflowers, but in the case of this crop, there is more than meets the eye. Two weeks ago, NCDOT harvested these flowers - actually canola plants - with the aim of turning them into fuel for diesel engines. The plants are part of a pilot program with N.C. State University to research the feasibility of growing biofuel crops on highway rights of way.

Modeled after a Utah-based initiative called Freeways to Fuel, the program, which recently garnered national attention, is unique in that it utilizes land otherwise unsuitable for food crops or livestock. Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping tools are used to find suitable locations to grow crops on NCDOT rights of way. Through this partnership, NCDOT plants and maintains the crops while N.C. State, which has a growing biofuels program, conducts research on the plantings.

"The biodiesel program is one example of our department's overall commitment to creating a more livable, sustainable future in North Carolina," said Transportation Secretary Gene Conti. "We are constantly exploring innovative ways to realize this vision, whether we



Canola plants are harvested near a state highway.

are using alternative fuels like biodiesel and solar power, conserving energy at the state's first green rest area or recycling construction materials."

The N.C. program is in its second year, and this year's crop, totaling just under 10 acres, consisted of four plots of canola grown along roadways in Raleigh, Faison, Mount Airy and Rutherford County. N.C. State will process the crop using specialized equipment designed to extract oil from the canola seeds to make biodiesel.

"This program is an excellent example of what can be done through a successful partnership, and gives us the opportunity to work with the university to explore the feasibility of growing biofuel," said state roadside environmental field operations engineer Ted

Sherrod, who chairs the biofuels research project. "Biodiesel plants like canola and sunflower produce beautiful blooms that make our roadsides more attractive, and beyond that, provide a source of cleaner-burning fuel."

NCDOT and N.C. State experimented with sunflowers last year as the program's inaugural crop with yields averaging almost 550 pounds of sunflower seed per acre. After processing, it is possible to generate about 40 gallons of biodiesel from each acre of sunflowers.

N.C. State researchers calculated that the cost of biodiesel production would equal the cost of purchasing gasoline or diesel fuel, and have less environmental impact. Biodiesel crops require minimal maintenance, along with possessing aesthetic value.

WFUBMC digging deeper to provide charity care

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

As the economy here and across the nation continues to struggle, Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center increased its charity care to treat local people in need of health care services.

The Medical Center's annual Community Benefits Report states that its charity care increased by 38 percent for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2009. The cost of providing Medicare and Medicaid services nearly quadrupled during the same period, according to the report.

Wake Forest Baptist's community benefits totaled \$146.3 million, a 33 percent increase over the previous year. The figures are a combined total of N.C. Baptist Hospital and Wake Forest University Health Sciences, which are components of Wake Forest University



McConnell