

# Take action during National Radon Action Month

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The radon initiative of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) serves to educate the public about the dangers of radon.

Radon is a naturally occurring carcinogen and many case studies have shown a direct correlation to lung cancer and other possible diseases. With no scent or taste and being invisible, radon is a silent killer that seeps into building structures and does not discriminate against its victims.

Radon is the number one cause of lung cancer in non-smokers. Cancer from exposure to radon could take five to 30 years to develop; however, there

are other ailments that have been linked to radon. A factor in understanding the full effect of radon is that one-third of inhaled radon enters the blood stream through the lungs.

Radiation has been found in the brains of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's patients. There have also been studies showing the link between children with leukemia and radon, but the evidence has not been as strong as it being a main cause of lung cancer. It is second only to smoking and causes over 21,000 deaths a year.

Safety from high levels of radon is possible, but action must be taken.

First, knowing the radon gas level in homes, workplaces, and schools is

key. Second, cracks and crevices should be sealed to help minimize the entry of gas into the structure.

Lastly, installing a radon mitigation system is necessary to remove the radon from under the building's foundation before it can enter in and affect those within the walls.

The Forsyth County Department of Public Health, the Office of Environmental Assistance and Protection, and the Forsyth County Cooperative Extension are partnering with the North Carolina Radon Program to provide free short-term radon test kits in recognition of National Radon Action Month.

The partnership also includes Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center's Comprehensive Cancer Center to help educate the community about radon and lung cancer and provide resources on lung cancer screening and prevention. Through education and action the hope is to control exposure of this cancer causing gas to ensure the safety of people in their own homes.

Radon test kits are being made available locally while supplies last. Kits can be picked up in Winston-Salem at the health department at 799 North Highland Avenue, the 5th floor of the Government Center at 201 North Chestnut Street, or at the extension office at 1450

Fairchild Road. These free kits are only available for those residents who will be performing their first radon test, and will not be provided for repeat or confirmation testing. Once the supply of free kits has been exhausted, short-term radon test kits can be purchased year round from Environmental Assistance and Protection for \$6 and long-term kits for \$14.

The EPA has set an action level against radon of 4.0 pCi/L (picocuries per liter of air.) However, regular exposure to this level of radon is equivalent to smoking eight cigarettes a day. Likewise, the radiation level is like having 200 chest x-rays per year. The World Health Organization (WHO) states to take

action at 2.7 pCi/L. However, both the EPA and WHO encourages state that there is no safe level of radon exposure.

Radon levels can be elevated in new homes due to the insulation and sealing. As the heat and air conditioning is kept in the home, so is the radon gas. However, with older homes, radon gas levels can be elevated due to cracks in the foundation. Reducing levels of radon with a radon mitigation system is the best way to ventilate radon gas and move it from under the structure to the outside air where it is diluted.

# WSSU receives \$351,000 grant for research

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

A Winston-Salem State University research team will use a mobile app as one of the tools in a three-year \$351,000 National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant to study the risk factors of cardiovascular disease (CVD) among African-American college students.

Funded by the NIH - National Center on Minority Health and Disparities, the project will study the manifestation of CVD risk factors among African-American college students, using WSSU students and faculty to conduct an intervention promoting healthy behaviors through the use of a mobile phone app created especial-

ly for this study in addition to other educational strategies. One hundred students will participate and 20 undergraduate students will be mentored by key study personnel.

The research team includes Dr. Amanda Price (co-Principal Investigator), WSSU Assistant Professor of Exercise Physiology, Dr. Dionne Roberts, WSSU Associate Professor in the Division of Nursing and Dr. Georgia McCauley, WSSU Clinical Laboratory Sciences Associate Professor. Dr. Paul Kizakevich, of the Research Triangle Institute, is also a collaborating partner who has expertise conducting research in personal monitoring and intervention methods for health and environmental applications

using handheld smartphone technologies.

CVD is a significant public health problem and



is the leading cause of death in the United States. People of all ages and backgrounds can get the condition and one in three deaths (approximately 800,000) are reported each year across the nation. Annual direct and overall costs resulting from CVD are estimated at \$273 billion and \$444 billion

respectively, according to studies. Strategies that address leading CVD risk factors such as hypertension, high cholesterol levels, and smoking can greatly reduce the burden of CVD, which is the rationale for this study.

"We believe an important population to reach is young adults who are at a critical juncture in their lives. African-American college students are an understudied population with substantial risk for obesity and metabolic dysfunctions," said Dr. Vanessa Duren-Winfield, Director of Research and Assistant Professor in WSSU's School of Health Sciences' Healthcare Management Department and Principal Investigator for the study.

"Because there are relatively few African-American students participating in many of the national health surveys of college students, this study serves as a model for the development and pilot testing of a CVD risk factor assessment, prevention and health promotion intervention program."

The study will use a number of indicators to measure effectiveness such as blood markers (total cholesterol, triglycerides, high-density lipoprotein (HDL), low-density lipoprotein (LDL), and glucose), Body Mass Index (BMI), blood pressure, sleep quality, stress, and physical fitness.

Participating students will enroll in a three-credit hour, 15-week CVD risk prevention and intervention course, and will be compared to students enrolled in an existing healthy lifestyle course.

"We hypothesize that, compared to the control group, students enrolled in the CVD healthy lifestyle behavior course will have improved health behaviors (e.g. increased fruit and vegetable intake, physical activity participation, cardiovascular fitness, sleep quality, and stress reduction), a lower BMI and waist circumference, and lower blood markers," Duren-Winfield said.

# WSSU Launches Mobile App for Safety

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

As part of its commitment to campus safety, Winston-Salem State University (WSSU) has launched LiveSafe, a mobile application that provides students, faculty, staff, and visitors with an on-the-go way to connect with WSSU campus police.

LiveSafe, which is used on campuses around the country, enables increased safety through a two-way channel of communication between the campus community and safety officials. The suite of services in the app includes:

\*Report Tips: Users can submit tips and information quickly and discreetly on suspicious activity, mental health concerns, and sexual assault. Tip submitters may choose to submit anonymously and can add a picture or video.

\*Go Safe: Users can ask friends

or family to virtually walk them to a destination or request a Ram Express shuttle ride.

\*Emergency Options: Quickly contact both WSSU campus police and city police.

\*Safety Map: View a map that displays crime data and safety locations.

\*Emergency Procedures: Access essential safety resources and information.

"The LiveSafe app empowers the campus community to help make campus safer for themselves and their friends," said Amir Henry, interim deputy police chief for WSSU. "Many times students are hesitant to report safety hazards or activities they witness, often because they don't know what channels to use to report issues or because they are afraid to be associated by name with

the report. LiveSafe eliminates those barriers. We are anticipating receiving information that will help us improve overall campus safety and security."

Getting the app is easy:

1. Download LiveSafe for free from Google Play or the App Store.
2. Register your email, fill out your profile, and verify your account.
3. Select "Winston-Salem State University" as your school. You're set!

LiveSafe does not replace the university's emergency notification system, RamALERTS, but rather serves as a supplement to help enhance campus safety. Students, faculty, staff and visitors are encouraged to download the app. For more information on the LiveSafe App, visit <http://livesafemobile.com>.

## SafeLink WIRELESS

We will be at the Reynolds Manor Branch Public Library on 1/25/2016 from 10:00 to 1:00pm Southside Branch Public Library on 1/27/2016 from 10:00am to 1:00pm.

### Free Phone Program

- Free Cell Phone and Unlimited Texts
- 500 Free Minutes for the First 4 Months
- 350 Minutes and Unlimited Texts thereafter

### How do I qualify for SafeLink Wireless?

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Stamps or SNAP).
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8).
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF).
- The National School Lunch Program's Free Lunch Program.
- Other assistance programs in your state.

For more information contact: Misty Willis at 336-448-3501

# Make a Resolution for Healthy Vision! January is Glaucoma Awareness Month

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

January is Glaucoma Awareness Month and is observed annually by the National Eye Health Education Program. NEHEP continues to educate the African-American community on the topic of glaucoma and eye health to avoid blindness.

Glaucoma is a group of diseases that damages the eye's optic nerve, which carries visual signals to the brain. It can lead to vision loss or blindness if left untreated. Primary open-angle glaucoma is the most common form of this disease. African Americans age 40 and older and everyone age 60 and older are at a higher risk and should get a comprehensive dilated eye exam every 1 to 2 years.

### Three Reasons You Should Talk About Glaucoma:

1. Weddings
2. Graduations
3. Grandchildren

Don't miss out on seeing life's precious moments. You know that every family wedding includes your Uncle Louis teaching the latest line dance. And every spring, Aunt Shirley pulls you into the kitchen to help bake a few cherry pies. Make sure you can stay in the mix by protecting your vision.

The National Eye Institute encourages you to save your sight from vision loss and blindness by knowing your risk for glaucoma—and doing something about it. More than half of all people with glaucoma don't know they have it. And, quite often, by the time people are diagnosed with glaucoma, they have already begun to notice changes in their side, or peripheral, vision.

This is especially true for African-Americans—those over age 40 and those with a family history of glaucoma are at higher risk for the disease. More than 520,000 African-Americans have glaucoma, and this number is expected to increase by more than 300,000 over the next 15 years. The disease is a leading cause of blindness among African-Americans.

Don't just talk the talk - do something about glaucoma. Talking about it is the first step. The second step is to see your eye care professional and get a comprehensive dilated eye exam every one to two years if you are at a higher risk. Don't wait until you notice vision problems to see your eye care professional.

To learn more about how you can protect your sight, visit [www.nei.nih.gov/glaucoma](http://www.nei.nih.gov/glaucoma). The National Eye Institute (NEI) leads the federal government's research on the visual system and eye diseases. NEI supports basic and clinical science programs to develop sight-saving treatments and address the special needs of people with vision loss. For more information, visit [www.nei.nih.gov](http://www.nei.nih.gov).

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