

STDs on the rise

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STAFF WRITER

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and infections continue to threaten the New Hanover County population. AIDS has now become the leading cause of death in males ages 19-46 in the county.

In their 2001/2002 annual report, the New Hanover County Health Department noted 45 reported cases of HIV infection. The number of reported HIV cases increased from 45 to 79 in the 2002/2003 annual report, an increase of 76 percent in one year.

Likewise, the number of reported chlamydia cases increased 33 percent from the year before, while the number of gonorrhea cases increased 8 percent.

The NHC Health Department's 2002/2003 annual report states, "This increase in numbers is a result of increased HIV testing efforts and increased community education on early detection."

However, statistics may not agree that HIV awareness is on the rise. The 2001/2002 annual report states that 2,119 HIV tests were administered at the site. The following year numbers dropped, as only 2,038 HIV tests were administered, 81 fewer than the year before. The NHC health officials have yet to comment on this discrepancy.

For UNCW students concerned about STD testing, the NHC Health Department is not their only option. The Student Health Center at UNCW provides screenings and treatments for sexually transmitted diseases as well as prevention awareness.

ORGANIZATIONS from page 1

R. Roth, Associate Director for Involvement and Campus Activities.

"We meet at least twice a semester, so the process can move quickly," LaCour said.

No definite number of people is required to form an organization. "We try to say five members, but the university isn't permitted to require rosters, so we can't insist on any minimum number," LaCour said. "We actually have a handful of organizations with two people."

One provisional organization with a robust enrollment is the now forming Equestrian Club. President and founder Sarah Gagliardo said it has about 70 potential members.

"I started it because I missed riding," said Gagliardo, a sophomore. "I sold my horse when I came to UNCW." She said she'd been horseback riding in her hometown of Concord for 11 years. "I'd grown-up with it."

The equestrian team plans on riding at the Shingleton Farms stables in Wilmington. "But we haven't worked out all the details yet. We're hoping someone will donate horses to us. We'll see," said Gagliardo.

For now the group is temporarily sitting on the sidelines. "We're at a standstill, wait-

In an e-mail interview Ms. Sharlene Pence, nurse supervisor and assistant director of the UNCW Student Health Center, said, "We mostly test for chlamydia and gonorrhea. If students request HIV testing, etc., they are typically referred to the New Hanover County Health Department."

Pence said that STD visits are recorded under the category Genitourinary, which includes urinary tract infections as well as STD testing. Therefore, the SHC was unable to produce statistical data pertaining to the number of students tested and treated yearly for STD's on campus.

UNCW students enrolled in at least six credit hours are entitled to discount laboratory charges as well as unlimited office visits and consultations at the SHC. A 22-year-old UNCW student recently diagnosed with the Herpes Simplex Virus described her experience with the STD as "unexpected and overwhelming."

"Practicing safe sex is so important because it is too late to prevent damage to your health once you have contracted an incurable disease," she said.

Her advice to others is this: "It is startling to know that one sexual encounter can completely alter your sexual involvement with others for the rest of your life. Protect your body; practice safe sex."

Students with question about STD testing can visit the Student Health Center at the Friday Hall annex or visit the SHC website at <http://www.uncwil.edu/stuaff/shc/>.

ing for the SOC approval," said Gagliardo.

Another organization awaiting the SOC go-ahead is the Future Entrepreneurs Of America. The group creator Will Fields said he came up with the idea to teach students to start and run their own business. "I want to help them learn to be enterprising," he said. "Not working for someone else."

Fields, from Durham, graduated from UNCW last semester with degrees in business and Spanish. He is currently pursuing graduate degrees at George Washington University in Washington D.C. "I hope to get the entrepreneurs going and then act as an adviser," Fields said.

The Martial Arts Club, which officially began last year, is headed by George Brittain, a junior, who returned to college at UNCW, after a 25-year lapse.

"I had some friends interested in working out with karate, jujitsu, kick boxing, so we put out fliers and got 33 responses, so here we are," Brittain said.

He said the club usually meets three times a week. "Unfortunately our number has dwindled to seven members," said Brittain, who has 30 years martial arts experience and several black belts. "We're getting ready to put out fliers again."

International Programs seek aid for visiting students

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UNCW Office of International Programs is looking for students interested in being mentors, friends and guides, to our 121 international students from 39 countries.

"We desperately need students to help our visitors get acclimated and acquainted both on and off campus," Miranda R. Boykin, International Student Adviser, said.

"For many this is their first visit to the United States and adjusting to a new culture can be difficult and stressful," she said.

Student mentors perform a variety of services for the foreign student.

"They can, for instance, help teach the logistics of getting started at UNCW, such as using e-mail or sealine or locating buildings or introducing them to other students," Boykin said.

"Any time they spend with the international student is helpful," she said. "The student usually mentors the visitor for at least one semester. Often a friendship develops and the relationship continues while they are at UNCW."

Boykin's International Friendship Program is also seeking host families, couples or individuals to offer friendship and assistance to the visiting students as they get settled in a strange, new environment.

"The students live on campus, so hosts would offer off-campus experiences. Activities could include sharing a meal, visiting the mall or simply walking around downtown Wilmington," she said.

"UNCW faculty and staff would be welcome hosts," Boykin said. "We only ask that they meet with their student at least once a month."

"Our main goal is to break down barriers, to open the eyes of both the host and the student that we're all very much the same," she said. "While we have both differences and similarities, we really have more in common than not."

Boykin, who has been program adviser for three years, said of the 121 international students enrolled, France sent 12 students, the most from any country, with Germany next and then the United Kingdom.

One student James Hanna from Worcestershire, England said he loves being here. "I especially love the beach and the weather."

Hanna, here studying international business management, said he's making plenty of friends. "I'm pledging a fraternity, Sigma Alpha Epsilon. We don't have fraternities in England."

The only thing the junior could complain about was the food. "I don't think it's very healthy," he said. "And I miss a home cooked meal."

Aisha Al-Qimlass from Kuwait also said being close to the beach was a big plus at UNCW. "This has the beach and Kuwait has the beach."

Although her father is from Kuwait, her mother is from Greensboro. "I spend summers in Greensboro, but that's not on the ocean," said Al-Qimlass, who is studying substance abuse counseling.

Al-Qimlass summed up life here as extremely eventful. "There are always campus activities and something going on downtown," she said.

Many of the international students are athletes playing on UNCW teams.

"We have two Brazilians and a New Zealander on the tennis team, two Canadians on the men's basketball team, others playing soccer, swimming, women's basketball and golf," she said.

Boykin thinks all student visitors are unusual and unique. She enjoys meeting each and every one of them.

"I love my job," she said. "Our office is their home away from home. They come in if they have a problem and they stop by to tell me if they got a good test grade."

November 17-21 is

Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week.

Wednesday Nov. 17 the Hunger Banquet will be held at the Warwick Center 6 p.m. Guest speakers and representatives from non-profits around the Wilmington area will highlight this powerful and moving event. Donations of non-perishable food will be accepted.

Come and get involved!