

# Morrisville's visiting nurses help patients throughout Wake

By Mary Beth Phillips

Recent federal legislation which allows non-skilled workers to draw blood and eliminates the need for visiting nurses has resulted in the loss of Medicare for many patients, said Lillian Flynn, Regional Vice President of Operations for the Visiting Nurse Association of North Carolina, headquartered in Perimeter Park in Morrisville.

Because the funding is gone, the service is unlikely to be performed at all, she said, and the patient can destabilize and go back into the hospital.

It costs less to send a nurse to a home once a month to draw blood than to pay for hospital stays, she said. "That was a very short-sighted piece of legislation."

The Visiting Nurse Association (VNA), a non-profit corporation, was able to serve all of the Medicare patients who lost funding under the new legislation by switching them to Medicaid or to a grant received this year, if they qualified.

"We kept a few patients with no funding source," she added. At a sister corporation in Atlanta, however, they lost 40,000 visits per year. Indigent patients are financed through fundraisers—i.e. car raffles, a golf tournament—and donations.

Home care financing used to be three percent of the Medicare bud-



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get, Mrs. Flynn said. But as the population became older, and more people were on Medicare, the home care portion rose to about 4 to 5 percent. Legislators noticed and consequently passed the legislation.

Fortunately, the legislators are reconsidering, Mrs. Flynn said. The medical community is beginning to see that home health care is a more effective way to care for patients. At a maximum of \$110 per visit, and usually more like \$70 per visit versus upwards to \$1,000 a day in the hospital, it is more cost effective as well.

"You are dealing with the patient in a more holistic manner. You can't separate him from his home, his family, and the things he needs," Mrs. Flynn said.

The local organization employs about 100 nurses and assistants.

Each employee makes between five and six visits a day in Wake County and seven surrounding counties. Most of the patients are elderly and disabled and on Medicare and Medicaid. Many have been released from the hospital much earlier than they would have 10 years ago.

"We say they let them go quicker and sicker than they used to," Mrs. Flynn said.

VNA relies on the federal agencies for its funding. Under a mountain of government red tape, the organization is paid about two years after the service is performed.

Among the staff are certified nursing assistants, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, social workers and nutritionists. About 400 to 500 patients are served at a time.

The nurses take turns being on call,



Elie Medlin of Morrisville receives a visit once a month from a nurse with the Visiting Nurse Association. Lore Oswald tends to his medical needs. Nurses usually see their patients more frequently.

because they must be available to patients 24 hours a day. They usually respond to calls overnight from two to three times a week, Mrs. Flynn said.

The needs of the patients are varied. Some need to be seen every 12 hours to change an IV. Others only need to be seen once a month for a

checkup.

Elie Medlin of Davis Drive in Morrisville at the edge of Preston Village is one of those latter cases. Medlin is recovering from a disabling stroke which left him unable to walk. He has a home health aide which spends six hours a day with him, but a nurse from the VNA

comes and gives him a check up once a month.

"It's an issue of quality of life," said Medlin's home health aide Peggy McCarthy. "He would not be satisfied any place but home."

## Board adds special hearing to zoning, developer protests

By Mary Beth Phillips

Special hearings will now have to be held in Morrisville for any site or subdivision plans that total more than five units per acre, after the board passed its long-awaited amendment to the zoning code on March 9.

Developer Tom Adams spoke against the amendment during the public comment portion of the meeting, saying he missed the public hearing at the last meeting because of business conflicts.

Adams said much of the land around the airport is more suited to multi-family development because although people don't really mind the noise, they worry about the resale value of single-family homes in the flight path. He added that multi-family development pays its way better in terms of providing town services. He also said high density development in Morrisville will cut down on traffic because of the proximity to Research Triangle Park.

Only one developer had spoken at the public hearing at the previous meeting, and he had urged the board to raise the density from four units per acre to five units.

On March 9, Adams' advice went unheeded as the board voted unanimously to adopt the amendment.

However, plans which had already been submitted to the town prior to March 9 will fall under the old regulations, which allowed up to 12 units per acre.

Later in the meeting, the board

tabled all of the multi-family site plans and most of the other site plans that came before it.

Petra On the Green Phase II, which is 10 townhouse units to be located on the west side of Crabtree Crossing Parkway across from Hamptons at Preston on 2.03 acres was tabled, after a lengthy discussion of whether to widen the entrance road. The overall density for the development is 4.93 units per acre.

Preston Creekside, a 136-condominium development to be located on 12.37 acres south of Morrisville Carpenter Road and east of Davis Drive, was also tabled. The overall density for that development is 10.99 units per acre.

Even the industrial plans were mostly tabled.

Plans for phase 2 of Mr. Stor-It were tabled after a lengthy discussion about a fence that was required in the first phase of the project but is not feasible because of the proximity of the building to the street. The development is located on the north side of Morrisville Parkway west of

Chapel Hill Road.

The board also tabled plans for Pope Motor Freight Terminal #3, a truck terminal to be located in Cedar Fork Business Park on 3.54 acres. An earlier approval of the same plan had expired.

The only plan approved by the board was a 20,000 square foot office and showroom building located in Cedar Fork Business Park on 2.78 acres owned by Fred Adams Paving Company.

In order for a project to be allowed to have a density greater than five units per acre under the amended ordinance, it must meet the following standards:

It must maintain or enhance the value of neighboring properties; it must provide safe and efficient traffic flow; an appropriate balance of land uses must be met after allocation of water and sewer capacity; the project must maintain or promote the health, safety and general welfare of the community, and an appropriate balance of housing types within the jurisdiction must be maintained.

## Lambert wins state wrestling championship

Douglas Lambert, a senior at Cardinal Gibbons High School in Raleigh, won the NCISAA 152 lb state championship wrestling title on February 21.

His overall record was 25-3 and he was undefeated in dual team competition and also named All Conference and Conference MVP. As a junior at Cardinal Gibbons, he placed third in the NCISAA Tournament at 160 lbs. with a 23-5 record. Doug wrestled on the varsity level as a sophomore on Cary's State Championship Team which

reclaimed its title from Riverside.

Doug has participated in this sport through various junior programs since the age of 8. In his freshman year of high school, he wrestled on the varsity level for Don Bosco Prep High School in Ramsey, New Jersey. He also won the Bergen County, NJ, freshman championship at 135 lbs. and placed sixth in the New Jersey Freshman State Finals.

He is the son of John and Renae Lambert of Preston. He plans to attend the UNC-Chapel Hill.

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## Morrisville Rotary to paint park gazebo

Morrisville's Rotary Club will do its first service project this Saturday, painting the gazebo at the town park near Fire Station Number 1.

The club's 10 official members will meet from 9 a.m. to noon to do the project, which will benefit the town. Prospective members or others who would like to help are invited to join them.

The new club has changed its meeting time to Tuesdays at noon. It will meet in the Fellowship Hall of Sorrel's Grove Baptist Church and a meal will be catered. The club had been meeting for about a month at 5 p.m. on Tuesdays.

Current members are hoping that the new time will boost membership. Twenty charter members are needed before the club can receive its official charter.

For more information about the Rotary Club call Ray Lech at the Morrisville Chamber of Commerce at 380-9026 or Margaret Broadwell, the club's president, at 467-1623.

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