

Health & Wellness

Issues concerning the wellbeing of the African-American community

Reynolds Health center taps local administrator to be new director

Michael L. Clements has been selected as the new director of Reynolds Health Center when North Carolina Baptist Hospitals Inc. assumes responsibility for operation of the health center Jan. 1.

Clements is now assistant administrator at the health center, where he is credited with helping to improve coordination between medical professionals and county management while facilitating greater employee participation in decision making. He was chosen from a large field of applicants solicited in a nationwide search.

Currently, the administration and support staff of Reynolds Health Center, including nurses, are county employees. The physicians are either Wake Forest University School of Medicine faculty or Baptist Hospital resident physicians. The health center has about 57,000 patient visits a year.

Under an agreement approved in November by the Forsyth County commissioners, all health center staff will become employees of either the hospital or the medical school. Full-

time physicians from the medical school faculty will work at the health center, supervising a group of residents. Primary care will be offered in pediatrics, obstetrics/gynecology and general medicine.

The Woman Infant Children (WIC) program and Family Planning Program at Reynolds Health Center will remain part of the health center but will continue under county health department administration.

Clements is a graduate of Shaw University and holds master's degrees in public health and social work from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Before joining Reynolds Health Center in 1996, he worked in medical services for the North Carolina state government and as a public health consultant for a 27-county area.

"I am honored that I have been given this opportunity to assist with this new phase of health care in Forsyth County and in service to our community," Clements said. "As director, I will continue to ensure that our constituents receive the highest quality medical care possi-

ble." Robert S. Parker, Baptist Hospital's vice president for home and community health, said "We're extremely pleased to be able to find someone with the qualifications of Michael Clements, and especially to be able to find him in-house, where he is already familiar with the center and its employees."

"Throughout the transition period, as we have worked with the staff at Reynolds Health Center, Michael has shown a clear ability to deal with complicated issues. I look forward to working with him as we build the health center into a place where anyone in Forsyth County would turn for their health care."

Under the five-year agreement between the county and the hospital, the hospital will provide enhanced medical services at the center, build a new state-of-the-art facility and save the county millions of dollars.

The new health care center is scheduled to be built less than a mile away and to be completed in 18 months to two years.



Michael L. Clements Director, Reynolds Health Center

Experts say other viruses mistaken for flu

HOUSTON — With all the "bugs" going around during winter, many sick people mistakenly think they have influenza. That may lead them to think the flu shots they got are not working.

"Lots of people get colds in the winter and mistakenly think they have influenza," said Dr. Wendy Keitel of the Influenza Research Center at Houston's Baylor College of Medicine.

Cold-like symptoms can be produced by many viruses circulating this time of the year, such as rhino-, corona-, papainfluenza-,

respiratory syncytial-, adeno- and other viruses.

Any of these can cause typical upper-respiratory symptoms such as runny nose, sore throat, sneezing, watery eyes and nasal obstruction, Keitel said. In fact, a mild case of influenza can also produce such symptoms.

Although other infections can be associated with flu-like illness, few if any have the same impact in the community as influenza. Not only can symptoms of influenza be severe, making you feel much worse than a cold ever could, but

influenza complications can lead to death. As many as 20,000 people, most of them elderly, die each year in the United States from flu complications, chiefly pneumonia. "Sometimes people will avoid getting flu shots," Keitel said, "because they are convinced that they caught influenza from the shot last year."

Actually, they are likely associating the flu shot with a coincidental illness caused by some other infection.

"The danger in such thinking is that people who really need flu

shots will not get them," Keitel said. "The elderly and people with heart and lung disease, in particular, should get flu shots annually because they are among the people most at risk for possibly deadly complications."

Keitel cautioned that the flu vaccine is not 100 percent effective, but your chances of avoiding the flu and its complications are significantly higher with the shot than without it.

Celebrate Kwanzaa the heart-healthy way

If you're thinking about changing Grandma's "soul food" recipes into low-fat versions this holiday season, don't skimp on flavor, says Dr. Rebecca Reeves, a nutritionist at the Behavioral Medicine Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

"Opt for crushed black pepper, hot sauce, garlic and onion when seasoning greens and meats," said Reeves.

Many African Americans celebrate the seven-day event called

Kwanzaa by eating leafy vegetables and whole-grain foods derived from African culture.

To substitute healthier options for fat, Reeves recommends you use the following:

- poultry without the skin and extra lean ground beef
- turkey thighs instead of ham hocks
- vegetable oil or low-fat margarine instead of butter
- low-sodium bouillon and broths instead of salty ones.

Health Calendar

Dec. 16: Would you like to learn how to help others become smoke free? On Dec. 16, from 2 to 4:30 p.m., the American Cancer Society will offer a free training session to teach community volunteers how to be leaders in Fresh Start stop-smoking classes.

You do not need to have a medical background, only the ability to lead a small group and the desire to help others improve their health. Call Sarah Asby, Projects Director at the ACS, 768-1224, to sign up for training and get details. Space will be limited to the first 30 people who call.

Dec. 16: The Women's Hospital of Greensboro will offer the class "Breast Feeding — After the First Few Months." The class will be offered Dec. 16 and 18 from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Women's Education Center at

the Women's Hospital of Greensboro. Call 574-6909 for more information.

Dec. 17: There is a free walk-in diabetes screening clinic every Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. in Clinic C of the Forsyth County Department of Public Health. No appointment is needed. Must be over 18.

Dec. 17: The Women's Hospital of Greensboro will offer the class "Pain Relief in Childbirth" from 6:15 to 7 p.m. Call 574-6909 for more information.

Dec. 19: Pounds Off mini-classes meet every Friday throughout the year from 12:15 p.m. to 12:45 p.m. at Forsyth County Department of Public Health, MR-3. The class consists of 15 minutes of instruction and 15 minutes of sharing/support. Classes are free. Call Suzi at 727-2436 ext. 3891 for more information.

FREE mammograms

The Forsyth County Department of Public Health gives free mammograms and PAP smears for women over age 50 who meet income eligibility guidelines. Call Jackie at 727-2890, ext. 3640, for more information.

The Women's Hospital of Greensboro

Adopt-a-Mom program coordinates prenatal care

GREENSBORO — Last year in Guilford County, 136 pregnant women never saw a doctor during their pregnancy. Nearly one-third of these women delivered low birth weight babies, which is the leading cause of infant mortality. Proper prenatal care is crucial in preventing low birth weight, which not only saves babies' lives, but can also save the county thousands of dollars in health care costs.

The Guilford County Coalition on Infant Mortality is a nonprofit organization committed to the reduction of infant death and disability. The coalition sponsors the Adopt-a-Mom program for pregnant women who may not otherwise be able to afford prenatal care. The women who are

accepted into the program are low- to medium-risk pregnant women who are not eligible for Medicaid, and who do not have any private health insurance. Three OBGYN practices in our community have agreed to provide prenatal care to the women in this program for a flat fee of \$400, one-fourth of what it would typically cost for prenatal care. Another important component of the Adopt-a-Mom program is to provide social support for pregnant women throughout their pregnancies and beyond.

For further information on eligibility criteria, or if you are interested in being a mentor (or sponsoring the \$400 cost of a patient's care) call Rhonda White at 373-7513.

Baby Basics program seeks donations

Churches, civic organizations and local businesses are encouraged to participate in the Baby Basics program by collecting basic baby items for distribution to low-income families in need.

The Baby Basics program is an affiliate of the Guilford County Coalition on Infant Mortality, a non-profit organization dedicated to the reduction of infant death. The program provides support and assistance for families in the community who

are unable to provide the "basics" for their children.

Members of interested groups are asked to establish a collection box for essential baby supplies such as diapers, bottles, blankets and formula. Monetary donations are also accepted. For more information, call Wanda Mackey at 373-4690.



We're more likely to die from cigarettes than from alcohol, cocaine, crack, heroin, homicide, suicide, car accidents, fire and AIDS.

Combined.

Our children face a lot of obstacles. Let's not lose them to one so small. Cigarettes kill almost half the people who start smoking. Most smokers start by age 14. And the number of African-American



male high school students who smoke has nearly doubled, in just four years. Learn the facts on smoking. Call 1-888-813-3003 for your free copy of the informative Clear The Smoke booklet.