

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Healthbeat

Local cancer survivor to be honored



Baldwin

Jackie Baldwin, a four-year cancer survivor, will be honored on Thursday, May 30, at Reynolds Park Recreation Center.

Baldwin will serve as the keynote speaker for the gathering. Her topic will be "Interrupting Satan's Plan."

The event will begin at 7 p.m. The public is invited to attend.

Baldwin has two daughters: Arteria, 26 and Jaci, 10.

WFU Baptist Medical Center will sponsor several public events

• May 29 – free health risk assessment for seniors at BestHealth. Older adults who mix alcohol and medication are at greater risk than younger adults. Alcohol combined with prescription medications may contribute to depression, insomnia, poor nutrition and frequent falls.

A free health risk assessment sponsored by BestHealth55, Step One, CenterPoint Human Services and the Shepherd's Center of Greater Winston-Salem will be held May 29 from 1-7 p.m. at the BestHealth community resource center at Hanes Mall. After completing the written assessment, participants will have the opportunity to have their questions answered individually and confidentially. Appointments are not required and participants will be handled on a first-come, first-served basis. Door prizes will be available.

For information, contact Rae Beasley, 716-6878.

• June 4 and 6 – two June Jazz concerts at the medical center. Jazz lovers can enjoy two fine performances at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center in June. The Steve Haines Quartet will perform on June 4 at 12:15 p.m. at Davis Memorial Chapel. Haines, director of the Miles Davis Program in Jazz Studies at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro, will perform on bass with saxophonist David Lown, pianist Chip Crawford and Thomas Taylor Jr. on drums.

On June 6 at 12:15 p.m., singer/flutist Brenda Mori Sisti will perform. Pianist Ken Rhodes, drummer John Williams and bassist Matt Kendrick will back her up.

Both performances are free and the public is invited to attend. The performances are part of the Arts Alive! performing arts series sponsored by the medical center's Committee on Visual and Performing Arts and the Hawthorne Hill Society. For information, contact Jim Steele, 716-3487.

Medical Park Hospital is first in W-S to use advanced laser treatment

An eye surgeon and glaucoma specialist at Medical Park Hospital last week used an advanced new laser treatment to reduce eye pressure in several patients suffering from glaucoma, the leading cause of blindness among African Americans and the second leading cause of blindness in America.

The procedures marked the first time Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty, or SLT, was used in Winston-Salem.

SLT should help patients who continue to suffer from fluid buildup and pressure in their eyes despite undergoing conventional treatments for glaucoma, said Carol Ziel, M.D.

SLT helps to reduce and maintain a low inner eye pressure, and the cool laser technology protects the surrounding eye tissue. The procedure takes about five minutes and patients leave without a patch.

"I think the laser worked very well and our patients didn't have any discomfort because the SLT isn't a burning laser and doesn't cause as much damage to the (eye) tissue," Ziel said after completing the procedures on May 13.

Glaucoma occurs when fluid builds up inside the eye causing damage to the optic nerve. Left untreated, it can cause partial vision loss and even blindness. Risk factors include family history, age, farsightedness and diabetes. Open angle glaucoma, the most common form of the disease, accounts for 19 percent of all blindness among African Americans and 6 percent among Caucasians, according to a recent survey by the Glaucoma Research Foundation.

Novant Health is a not-for-profit health-care system in Western North Carolina, serving more than 3.4 million people in 32 counties reaching from Southern Virginia to Northern South Carolina. Novant and the majority of its facilities are 501c3, private, community organizations. The health-care system consists of seven hospitals in the Triad and Southern Piedmont regions: Forsyth Medical Center, Medical Park Hospital and Thomasville Medical Center in the Triad region; Presbyterian Hospital, Presbyterian Orthopaedic Hospital, Hemby Children's Hospital and Presbyterian Hospital Matthews of the Southern Piedmont region. Other facilities and programs of Novant Health include three philanthropic foundations, three long-term care and senior residential facilities, physician clinics, outpatient surgery and diagnostic centers, rehabilitation programs and community health outreach programs.

Psychologist seeks subjects for study of adolescent transitions

GREENSBORO – A psychology researcher at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro is seeking young women who are planning to leave home for college to participate in a study on the transition from adolescence to adulthood.

Dr. Kathy Bell, assistant professor, is co-investigator of the study, which she is conducting in collaboration with researchers in Israel. The study is examining psychosocial adjustment of adolescents in two cultural and environmental contexts: the Israeli military and the American college.

To retain consistency between the research subjects in both countries, young women in the Triad region are being sought who have specific characteristics. They must be planning to leave home for the first time in the fall to attend a college about 300 miles from home and must be from dual-parent families that have not experienced divorce.

Participants will be interviewed three times over a nine-month period about their adjustment and close relationships across the transition. Participants will receive a small stipend to partially reimburse them for their time.

For more information, contact the Adolescent Social Development Laboratory at (336) 256-0024.

Childhood depression is more common than you probably think



BY PAUL COLLINS
THE CHRONICLE

People generally picture childhood as happy and playful. A lot of children, unfortunately, don't always have these experiences, according to Andy Hagler, executive director of the Mental Health Association of Forsyth County Inc.

Parents generally know what it takes to keep a child physically healthy – such as nutritious food, exercise and getting immunization shots, but

"we haven't always been as good for providing basics of good mental health," Hagler said.

"We need to treat a child's mental health just as important as we do their physical health." And at times, just as children may need to go to a doctor when they have a physical health problem, they may need to go to a mental health professional when they have a mental health problem, Hagler said.



Hagler

According to the Center for Mental Health Services, about one in every 33 children in the United States under the age of 12 may experience depression, and about one in eight adolescents (aged 13-18) may experience depression.

File Photo

See Childhood on C5

Study: Diabetics get drug that could be deadly

BY LINDSEY TANNER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO – Doctors frequently prescribe a common diabetes drug for patients for whom the label warns it is inappropriate and potentially deadly, a study suggests.

Nearly one-fourth of patients whose prescriptions for the drug metformin were studied had heart or kidney ailments listed on the label as contraindications, the study found.

Metformin, sold as Glucophage, can cause a rare side effect called lactic acidosis, a buildup of lactic acid in the blood that is fatal in about 50 percent of cases. The drug package insert contains a black-box warning – highlighted cautionary information required by the government for drugs with potentially serious side effects – and says it should not be used by patients with kidney disease or on drug treatment for heart failure.

While none of the 100 patients studied had developed lactic acidosis, the study "may underestimate the frequency of contraindications and it is difficult to determine whether clinicians are aware they are prescribing metformin against a black-box warning," the researchers said.

Lead researcher Cheryl Horlen said the problem isn't unique to the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill hospital pharmacy, where the study was done. University of Pittsburgh researchers and

See Diabetes on C4



Photo by Ronald Aardorian/Splashnews
Phylicia Rashad at last year's Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony in New York City.

Actress to embark on awareness trek for diabetes

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

NEW YORK – Last week Phylicia Rashad, best known for her role as Clair Huxtable on "The Cosby Show," launched Take Diabetes to Heart!

– a nationwide campaign to educate people about type 2 diabetes and its link to heart disease – the number one killer in the United States and the leading cause of diabetes-related deaths.

Rashad, who will be traveling throughout the nation to share her personal connection to the disease, is eager to motivate people with type 2 diabetes to take action to control their diabetes early and aggressively.

"My father, who had diabetes, died of a heart attack. When I read his death certificate, I learned that the root cause of the heart attack was diabetes. I had never made the association

between heart disease and diabetes," said Rashad, a two-time Emmy Award nominee and People's Choice Award winner.

"So few people with diabetes realize how strongly these diseases are linked, and the importance of working with their health-care team to actively and effectively manage their type 2 diabetes," Rashad said.

Take Diabetes to Heart!, led by the American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE) and the Association of Black Cardiologists (ABC) and sponsored by GlaxoSmithKline, will seek to address the growing epidemic of type 2 diabetes. Diabetes affects an estimated 17 million Americans, several million of whom remain undiagnosed.

This chronic disease is one of the most costly health prob-

lems in America, with total economic costs in 1997 estimated at \$98 billion. In large part this is due to its potentially serious complications, which include cardiovascular disease, blindness, limb amputation and kidney failure. In fact, people with type 2 diabetes are two to four times more likely to suffer from heart disease or stroke than people without the disease.

Research indicates that cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes share a common root – insulin resistance. Insulin resistance occurs when the body does not respond properly to its own natural insulin, a substance critical for blood sugar to enter the body's cells and be converted into energy.

Insulin resistance may be linked to heart disease because

See Actress on C4

Employment settings of nurses changing

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

RALEIGH – A report released by the N.C. Center for Nursing (NCCN) examines the employment characteristics of the RN and LPN work force in North Carolina over the period 1982 through 2000.

The report found that the distribution of registered nurses in North Carolina over various employment settings is very similar to the national profile of registered nurses, with 58.1 percent of N.C. nurses working in hospitals, 7.6 percent in nursing homes, 13.4 percent in community agencies, and 8.5 percent in medical offices, HMOs and insurance companies.

Although more than half of registered staff nurses have always been and continue to be employed in hospitals, since the 1990s the proportion in hospitals has fallen at the rate of about 1 percent per year. This reflects the

increasing shift of staff nurses from hospitals to community settings – such as public health departments, home health, hospice and mental health agencies – throughout the 1990s.

Over the past two decades, LPNs in North Carolina have experienced major changes in the location of employment opportunities. In 1982, about 62 percent of the LPNs in North Carolina worked in hospitals and 15 percent in nursing homes. In 2000 those proportions were 19.9 percent in hospitals and 35.2 percent in nursing homes.

In addition, the proportion of LPNs in community agencies has risen from 1 percent of the total LPN work force in 1982 to 8.7 percent in 2000, and the percentage in medical offices has doubled, from 8.4 percent in 1982 to 16.6 percent in 2000.



File Photo
Many states have been experiencing nursing shortages in recent years. A new report says that North Carolina is one of those states dealing with the problem.

See Employment on C5