

Local diabetics being sought for blindness study

Participants must be on Medicaid

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

About 3,000 North Carolina adults who have diabetes and are on Medicaid are invited to participate in a project called "I SEE IN NC" to determine if early screening using a special camera and images transmitted over the Internet can prevent blindness.

"Medicaid patients are rarely screened and are at risk of becoming blind," said Ramon Velez, M.D., M.S., of Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center, the principal investigator. Diabetes is the leading cause of preventable blindness in the United States, and Velez said the study will determine if early referral to ophthalmologists will help.

Preliminary results from pilot testing of the high-tech approach showed that among diabetic patients screened, about 15 percent required urgent referral to an ophthalmologist and more than 40 percent had some degree of diabetic retinopathy — changes in blood vessels in the retina, Velez said. The test was con-

ducted at Downtown Health Plaza of Baptist Hospital, part of Wake Forest Baptist.

I SEE IN NC is seeking Medicaid or uninsured patients who have diabetes in six Piedmont counties or six in the Wilmington area. The counties are Forsyth, Davie, Yadkin, Stokes, Surry, Wilkes, New Hanover, Brunswick, Bladen, Pender, Columbus and Onslow.

By comparing study counties with those not getting special screening, Velez and his colleagues will determine to what extent the screening reduces blindness.

I SEE IN NC (Increasing Screening Eye Examinations for diabetic retinopathy IN North Carolina) is being supported by a \$465,034 grant from the Duke Endowment to establish the reading center, and a \$456,203 grant from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust to pay for the screening in the two networks. The N.C. Rural Health Foundation will pay for evaluation.

Local people interested in taking part may contact Ron Gaskins, M.P.A., associate project manager, at (336) 480-6934 or rgaskins@wfubmc.edu.



Velez

Students schooled on Constitution by Justice Mark Martin

BY T. KEVIN WALKER THE CHRONICLE

At times, Mark Martin sounded a bit like Alex Trebek during his address Monday to eighth-graders at Hanes Middle School.

Martin, an associate justice on the N.C. Supreme Court, was on hand to talk to students about law, justice and the American way of carrying out both. But he let the young people do much of the thinking themselves as he quizzed them on everything from the number of counties in North Carolina, to the various duties and responsibilities of the three branches of government.

The students were up for the challenge that Martin's many questions posed. At least one young person answered each of them correctly.

"Wow, you guys are better than my law students," said Martin, who has taught at N.C. Central, Duke and UNC.

Martin's visit was part of Hanes' Constitution Day activities. A new law requires every school that receives federal money to in some way mark Sept. 17, the day the document was signed in 1787.

Sept. 17 was a Saturday, so Hanes had two Constitution-themed programs — one on Friday and Martin's talk Monday.

Martin told the students that the historic document holds a special promise for every American.

"Because of that Constitution... no matter what obstacles



Justice Mark Martin holds a gift presented to him by Vickie Baker on behalf of Hanes.

that may be in your way, you have the potential to be whatever you want to be," he said.

Martin's words were ironic because many black leaders in the state have argued that it is next to impossible for a person of color to be elected to the state's highest court. Martin is one of seven members of the court. At the time, there are no minority justices and only one woman.

Martin told the students that all courts strive to be blind in terms of matters of race, sex, religion and socioeconomic class.

"The goal is to have the law

uniformly applied to everyone," he said.

Martin stayed clear of addressing political matters, a no-no for appellate level judges especially. When one student asked Martin his opinion of U.S. Supreme Court nominee John Roberts, Martin quickly deflected the query.

"I'll leave that to you to decide what you think about Judge Roberts," he told the student.

There was a similar response when another student asked about the death penalty.

Martin's appearance at the school was arranged by Vickie Baker, a history teacher. Baker met and befriended Martin at a Raleigh education banquet honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"I thought he would be a good fit for Constitution Day," Baker said.

Martin ended his remarks by telling the students to stay in school, study hard and vote when they become of age.

"The way we are going to keep our freedoms is for us to be engaged," he said.



Photo by Kevin Walker

Those on the Meals-on-Wheels waiting list are not left completely in the cold. They receive bags of food like these.

Meals

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Financial resources are prohibiting the growth of the feeding program. Seniors who can pay are charged \$4 per meal, but no senior who qualifies for the program is turned down. Seniors can spend weeks or months on the waiting list.

The program does provide a bag of food to those on the waiting list, but the goal is to get those seniors hot meals Monday through Friday, and the kinship with volunteers that usually come with them.

Senior Services recently kicked off its third season of Edible Evenings, a unique fund-raising concept to benefit Meals-on-Wheels. Through the end of the year, churches, organizations, businesses and individuals will hold lunches and dinner parties where guests will be asked to open their hearts and wallets.

Dr. Michael Lischke, who heads the Northwest Area Health Education Center (AHEC), says the need to get people off of the waiting list is great. Often, the hot lunches seniors receive through Meals-on-Wheels are the only nutritious meal they receive all day. In its promotional material for Edible Evenings, Senior Services describes one of its clients who had dwindled down to 99 pounds as a result of a heart attack and the little money she had left for food after paying bills and prescription costs.

"I don't know any person in our community who would want that for anybody that they know or anybody that they love," said Lischke, who is chairing this year's Edible Evenings.

The fund-raiser pumped about \$66,000 into Meals-on-Wheels coffers last year. The goal this year is to raise at least \$75,000.

The original plan was to start

recruiting people after Labor Day to hold Edible Evening events. Hurricane Katrina changed that plan, slightly. With so many Katrina efforts occurring at the time, organizers held back. But Edible Evenings are slowly happening around the county. There have been two already and more than a dozen more are in the works.

Jeff Smith is considering hosting another Edible Evenings event after raising more than \$1,000 with his dinner last year. Smith, whose e-mail newsletter Smitty's Notes contains the city's latest happenings and events, hosted a

dinner for about 30 guests at Simpyummy. The fund-raising concept appealed to Smith because it allows for local people to meet, network and interact in a leisurely setting.

"It helps to build our social capital," said Smith. "It gives people a reason to have a party."

To sign up to host an Edible Evenings event, call 748-5932 or log onto www.EdibleEvenings.com. Call 748-5932 to learn about volunteer opportunities available at Senior Services.

NOTICE OF A CITIZENS INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP FOR US 52 FROM NC 65 TO THE I-40 BYPASS

WBS No. 34871 U-2826B Forsyth County

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) will hold the above Citizens Informational Workshop on Tuesday, October 18, 2005 between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Kennedy Learning Center, 1000 North Highland Avenue, Winston-Salem.

The purpose of this workshop is for NCDOT representatives to provide information, answer questions, and accept written comments regarding the alternatives for the proposed project. Individuals may attend at anytime during the above hours.

NCDOT is proposing to improve safety and traffic flow along this section of US 52. The combinations of the following proposed improvements are under consideration:

- Using the current shoulders as travel lanes from I-40 Business/US 421 to Martin Luther King Jr. Drive (one additional lane in each direction),
- Closing Ramps along US 52 at Stadium Drive, Third Street and Fifth Street,
- Additions to the existing Intelligent Transportation System (traffic cameras, traffic signals, signage, and more).

Any person interested in the identification and preservation of historic properties located in the vicinity of the proposed project is invited to communicate with NCDOT either by attending this meeting or by contacting the Project Manager identified below.

Anyone desiring additional information may contact Michael Penney, PE, 1548 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1592, by phone at (919) 733-3141, fax at (919) 733-9794, or E-mail at mpenney@dot.state.nc.us.

NCDOT will provide auxiliary aids and services under the Americans with Disabilities Act for disabled persons who wish to participate in this workshop. Anyone requiring special services should contact Mr. Penney at the contact information above as early as possible so that arrangements can be made.



Eight-grade students at the school listen to Martin talk for about an hour.

The employees of Sara Lee Branded Apparel invite you to a

Product Sale

Date: Saturday, Sept. 24

Location: Madison Park Parking Lot
5660 University Parkway
Winston-Salem

Hours: 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Including: Clothing from Hanes, L'eggs, Champion, Playtex, Bali, Just My Size and more.

No sales prior to 8 a.m.
Cash & Credit Cards Only • No Checks

All proceeds benefit the United Way of Forsyth County.

United Way Together, we do what matters. Sara Lee Branded Apparel