

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Healthbeat

Forsyth recognizes longtime employees

Forsyth Medical Center and its affiliates Medical Park Hospital and Thomasville Medical Center have recognized five employees for more than 40 years of service to the organization. The employees are:

- Mary Hayes, environmental services at Thomasville Medical Center.
- Tom Hill, engineering at Forsyth Medical Center.
- Yvonne Nance, surgical admission center at Forsyth Medical Center.
- James Richardson, environmental services at Forsyth Medical Center.
- Wanda Stafford, ICU at Forsyth Medical Center.

Those men and women span four decades of growth and change at Forsyth Medical Center beginning in the mid-'60s," said Greg Beier, president of Forsyth Medical and its affiliates. "Through their dedicated service, and that of so many others who have spent most of their working careers as part of our system, Forsyth Medical Center, Medical Park Hospital and Thomasville Medical Center have become regional leaders in providing quality and compassionate care to the communities we serve."

Forsyth Medical Center also recognized more than 40 other employees who have attained 30 or more years of service to the organization.

S.C. NAACP focuses on students' difficulties

CHARLOTTE (AP) — Leaders of the South Carolina NAACP say the first step to helping black children get a better education is to improve their health care and living conditions.

The discussions came Saturday at the annual meeting for the state chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The chapter is meeting here because of an ongoing tourism boycott of its home state for flying the Confederate flag on Statehouse grounds.

The group's education director, Vince Ford, who previously was chairman of the Richland 1 School Board in South Carolina, said many children struggle in school because they are homeless or hungry or lack adequate medical care.

"We are a superpower, but we allow children and families to go to bed hungry," Ford said. "Then they go to school and have to take a test and compete against people who are not hungry."

Ford urged the crowd of about 100 people to get more involved in their communities.

The four-day meeting ended Sunday.

Governor criticized for vetoing health care legislation

SACRAMENTO (AP) — Health care advocates Saturday that they were left angry and disappointed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's veto of bills designed to provide medical coverage for about 500,000 uninsured California children.

The vetoes were announced Friday night, hours after Schwarzenegger promised at a signing ceremony on other legislation to "continue putting children first."

One of the vetoed bills, by Assemblywoman Wilma Chan, of Alameda, would have expanded eligibility for the state's Healthy Families health care program and stepped up efforts to sign up children eligible for that program.

The other bill, by Assemblyman Dario Frommer, of Los Angeles, would have set up a fund in the state treasury to pay for the Chan legislation through a combination of government funding and private contributions that would have been tax deductible.

In his veto messages, Schwarzenegger said he supported health coverage for all children but questioned how to pay for the legislation.

"This bill would cost the state almost a half billion dollars a year without providing a funding source at a time when California has a \$7.5 billion budget deficit," he said in turning down the Chan bill.

But Chan said her bill would have been phased in over three years and would have only cost about \$20 million in the first two years. Part of the cost would be covered by federal aid, she added.

Hurricane Katrina's death toll in Louisiana officially tops 1,000

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Louisiana's official death toll from Hurricane Katrina passed 1,000 on Friday.

The state Department of Health and Hospitals reported that state officials and local coroners had recovered 1,003 bodies — 15 more than the total reported last Thursday.

The increase puts the death toll from the storm at 1,242. Katrina killed 221 people in Mississippi, 14 in Florida, two in Georgia and two in Alabama.

Only 73 of Louisiana's dead had been identified and returned to their families by Thursday, not counting a few other bodies that have been released by individual parish coroners.

Louis Cataldie, the head of the state's recovery and identification efforts, said he expected another 500 bodies to be given to families for burial quickly.

HIV diagnosis and treatment



The People's Clinic

THE MAYA ANGELOU RESEARCH CENTER ON MINORITY HEALTH



Wake Forest University Baptist MEDICAL CENTER



Over the past decade, the death rate from HIV/AIDS has declined in general. However, it remains disproportionately high for certain racial groups, such as African-Americans. More than 16,000 African-Americans were diagnosed with HIV in 2003. And the infection rate for women is highest in African-American women.

A positive HIV test is scary news, but it does not have to be a death sentence. Many people live full and long lives after testing positive for HIV. It is important for individuals who are HIV positive (or "living with HIV/AIDS") to know they are HIV positive because it gives them a chance to work with medical providers to slow or prevent some of the possible adverse health consequences associated with HIV/AIDS. The earlier individuals know of their HIV statuses, the sooner they can take actions to protect not only themselves, but their partners as well.

HIV status can only be determined by having a blood test provided by a trained medical provider. The testing process as well as the results are confidential and only shared with the person being tested. Most HIV testing sites provide counseling to help people who test positive handle the news. These sites also provide referrals to medical providers, social workers, and other support services.

The real work, however, is up to the individual diagnosed with

See HIV on C4

HIV rates among blacks have spiked recently.



Gulf Coast Medical Center Director of Radiology Dr. Tim Lawson shows a fifth-floor room in the hospital damaged by Hurricane Katrina in Gulfport, Miss.

Thousands of doctors displaced, affected by Hurricane Katrina

UNC NEWS SERVICES

CHAPEL HILL — Hurricane Katrina and the city-swamping floods that drowned New Orleans and surrounding areas in a toxic gumbo appear to have dislocated up to 5,944 active, patient-care physicians, a new University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill study shows. That is the largest single displacement of doctors in U.S. history, and Hurricane Rita boosted the total to an unknown degree.

"The nearly 6,000 is the approxi-

mate number of physicians doing primary patient care in the 10 counties and parishes in Louisiana and Mississippi that have been directly affected by Katrina flooding," said UNC's Dr. Thomas C. Ricketts. "Over two-thirds — 4,486 — of those were in the three central New Orleans parishes that were evacuated."

The number displaced also was more than one-quarter of the total number of new physicians who start practice in the United States each year, said Ricketts, deputy director for policy analysis at UNC's Cecil G. Sheps

Center for Health Services Research and professor of health policy and administration at the School of Public Health.

"A large proportion of the practicing physicians in the area were also in training in residency programs," he said. "In the immediate three-parish New Orleans area, more than 1,270 residents physicians were training at the time Katrina struck."

Ricketts, who also directs the Southeast Regional Center for Health Workforce Studies, led the analysis of

See Doctors on C11

Smoking may increase diabetes risk

Wake Forest Medical researchers say link exists

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Smoking may increase the risk of developing diabetes, according to new research by investigators at Wake Forest University School of Medicine and colleagues.

The surprising finding emerged when researchers examined the relationship between smoking and diabetes among participants in a major national study, the Insulin Resistance Atherosclerosis Study (IRAS). They compared the incidence of diabetes after five years among smokers and those who had never smoked.

Twenty-five percent of the participants who smoked and did not have diabetes when the study began had developed diabetes by the five-year follow-up, compared with 14 percent of the participants who had never smoked, according to Capri G. Foy, Ph.D., and her colleagues at the national IRAS coordinating center at the School of Medicine, part of Wake Forest University Baptist



Medical Center.

Reporting in the journal Diabetes Care, the researchers found that when the analyses were adjusted to account for other diabetes risk factors, "smokers still exhibited significantly increased incidence of diabetes compared to people who had never smoked," Foy said. "These findings suggest another poor health outcome associated with cigarettes, supporting current surgeon general's

warnings against cigarette smoking."

Smoking has long been associated with heart disease, as is diabetes, and Foy noted that diabetes and heart disease share many risk factors.

IRAS focused on a prediabetic condition called insulin resistance, in which increasing amounts of insulin are needed to digest the same amount of glucose, the principal product of the metabolism of carbohydrates.

Plan sought for flu

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — A super-flu could kill up to 1.9 million Americans, according to a draft of the government's plan to fight a worldwide epidemic.

Officials are rewriting that plan to designate not just who cares for the sick but who will keep the country running amid the chaos, said an influenza specialist who is advising the government on those decisions.

"How do you provide food, water ... basic security for the population?" asked Michael Osterholm of the University of Minnesota, a government adviser who has a copy of the draft plan and described it for The Associated Press.

"This is a much more comprehensive view than has previously been detailed," he said in an interview Saturday.

The Bush administration has spent the last year updating its plan for how to fight the next flu pandemic. While it is impossible to say when one will strike, the fear is that the bird flu in Asia could trigger one, if it mutates to start spreading easily among people.

A recent draft of the plan, first reported Saturday by The New York Times, models what might happen based on the last century's three pandemics.

In a best-case scenario, about 200,000 people might die.

But if the next pandemic resembles the birdlike 1918 Spanish flu, as many as 1.9 million could die, Osterholm said. Millions more would be ill, overwhelming hospitals.

"You plan for the worst-case scenario," he said. "If it's less than that, thank God."

The government has on hand enough of the anti-flu drug Tamiflu to treat 4.3 million people. Manufacturing of \$100 million worth of a bird flu vaccine just began.

The draft makes clear that tens of millions more doses of each would be needed. That is far more than the world has the capacity to manufacture quickly.

To finish that draft plan, federal health officials for several weeks have been role-playing what would happen if a super-

See Flu on C11