

# HEALTH & WELLNESS

## Healthbeat

### Brenner joins Together for Kids

Brenner Children's Hospital has joined a new non-profit organization that will raise funds nationally to help member hospitals cope with dramatic increases in the health needs of children.

"America's children are facing increasing challenges to their health and well-being—challenges that include the growing numbers of uninsured kids, the steadily climbing statistics on childhood obesity and the staggering toll of preventable injuries," said Lori Brown, administrator and vice president of Brenner Children's Hospital. "Together for Kids has been formed to rally more resources to make America's kids healthier and safer."

Together for Kids consists of 34 children's hospitals and hospital systems, representing 53 individual facilities serving children in 47 U.S. cities. The network includes major university teaching hospitals, pediatric departments within hospitals, and children's hospitals in communities of all sizes. The alliance also includes the 20 Shriners Hospitals for Children across the country that provide specialty medical care to children with orthopedic conditions, burns, spinal cord injuries, and cleft lip and palate, all at no charge.

Together for Kids, a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) public charity, will raise funds through corporate sponsorship, events, grants and other forms of philanthropy, distributing the funds to member hospitals to address the most urgent children's health needs in their communities.

Together For Kids will target injury prevention and obesity as priorities. Brenner Children's Hospital houses the area's only pediatric emergency department and trauma center. In addition, the children's hospital has recently hired a national obesity expert to help form a pediatric obesity program.

In April 2008, Together for Kids will launch its first annual national fundraising campaign, Come Out to Play!—a month-long series of events around the country to raise funds for hospitalized children and to encourage kids and families to take part in active play that's healthy and safe.

### Quitline ringing off the hook

On the annual day that challenges smokers nationwide to quit, North Carolina saw its own successes as hundreds of 18- to 24-year-old smokers have taken steps to kick the habit. A record number of calls to QuitlineNC, following the launch of the state's first-ever QuitlineNC media campaign, proved that young smokers in North Carolina did not wait until last week's Great American Smokeout to make their commitment to good health.

Funded by the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF), the "Call It Quits" campaign is working to reduce the number of young smokers in North Carolina. Smoking prevalence among young adults is the highest of any age group in the state. According to the CDC, nearly 28 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds in North Carolina smoke—and more than half have tried to quit in the past year.

Just two months into the "Call It Quits" multi-media advertising campaign to promote Quitline NC to 18- to 24-year olds, 455 young adult smokers have already registered for the free phone service to create their own plan for quitting tobacco. This represents a monthly average of 228 young adult registrants compared to a monthly average of only 34 across the six months preceding the campaign—nearly a seven-fold increase in registrations from 18- to 24-year olds.

HWTF Chair Lt. Gov. Bev Perdue said the favorable QuitlineNC results demonstrate that media campaigns are effective in promoting the cessation services that double the chances that a smoker will quit for good.

"On the Great American Smokeout, the day where millions of smokers around the country are challenged to quit smoking, our state is already experiencing impressive successes in increasing the numbers of young people who quit," Perdue stated. "QuitlineNC is the first step to saying 'no' to tobacco use and 'yes' to good health."

Quitline NC (1-800-QUIT-NOW or 1-800-784-8669) is a toll-free phone service that connects tobacco users with a quit coach, offering callers advice, support and referrals to local cessation resources.



Perdue

### World Aids Day benefit event

Aggies Against AIDS is hosting a World AIDS Day benefit Program on Thursday, Nov. 29 to raise funds that will be used to sponsor an orphan child in Kenya, who has lost his or her parents due to the AIDS virus.

The benefit will be held at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in the Exhibit Hall of the Memorial Student Union.

The benefit program consists of two parts. First, there is a candle-light walk to commemorate those who have lost their life to the AIDS virus. The walk will begin promptly at 6:30 p.m. in front of Sebastian Health Center on North Carolina A & T's campus. Those who wish to participate in the walk should arrive at least 15 minutes early at this location. The walk will end with a guest speaker in front of the fountain behind the Memorial Student Union. The second part of the program is a benefit show that will take place after the walk. It will start promptly at 7 p.m. in the Exhibit Hall. The benefit show's feature performance will be the band, Beautiful Experience, and there will be student performances by North Carolina A&T's spoken word group, Poetic Insurgence, as well as song, dance, and spoken word by Couture Production. There will also be a presentation from Bennett College's HIV/AIDS task force. Refreshments will be served.

Tickets are on sale and can be purchased from the ticket office or a member of Aggies Against AIDS. Tickets are two \$2 for North Carolina A&T's students (advance and day of show) and \$3 for non-North Carolina A&T's students (advance and day of show).

## WSSU center to ease health disparities

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Winston-Salem State University has received a five-year, \$4.7 million National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant to establish a center to promote a research initiative to improve the health of minorities and eliminate health disparities nationwide.

The NIH grant, through the National Center of Minority Health and Disparities, will fund the establishment of the Center for Research to

Improve Minority Health and Eliminate Health Disparities. The Center is focused on developing research to improve minority health in an attempt to eliminate

disparities in this population group, according to Dr. Sylvia A. Flack, principal investigator for the grant.

"Our primary goal is to increase our laboratory, behavioral, health services, clinical and population-based research here at WSSU to help resolve a number of health issues affecting millions of men and women in this country," said Flack. "We also want to increase the pool of talented minority students and faculty at WSSU who have the research experience necessary to be competitive for cutting-edge scientific research enterprise." WSSU has been a leader in producing health care providers to improve health of all popula-



Dr. Flack

tions. WSSU, with its past history in collaborative research activities, is now moving forward as a leader in contributing to the elimination of health disparities.

The award includes four major research investigations and eight pilot projects in the disparities of diabetes, HIV/AIDS, breast cancer, hypertension, breast cancer, and obesity, as well as two major investigation in health disparities interventions including patient centeredness, and health literacy. The projects are a blend of basic and translational research, which address the complex biological, behavioral, environmental and social interrelationships that underlie

See WSSU on A11



## OBESITY IN CHILDREN: SAVE OUR KIDS!

It is disturbing to note that, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the number of obese American adults more than doubled between 1976 and 2004. What's more, we are seeing an epidemic of obesity among our children. Whereas five percent of children between the ages of two and five were obese in 1976, nearly 14 percent of children in this age range are obese today! The prevalence of obesity nearly tripled for those aged 6 to 11 years, and it more than tripled for those aged 12 to 19 years. Among African American youth, boys are about as likely to be obese as their white counterparts. However, African American girls are much more likely to have an unhealthy weight than white girls. Obese children usually become obese adults. As you know, being obese has serious health consequences and can lead to heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, sleep apnea, some cancers, and other illnesses. Let's talk about the risks of obesity in children and what we can do to keep our loved ones healthy.

What risks are associated with

### childhood obesity?

Children can get high blood pressure, too! According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), five percent of children have higher than normal blood pressure, and approximately one percent have clinical



hypertension. While other things can cause high blood pressure in children, being overweight is a risk factor. Oftentimes, high blood pressure can be controlled with diet and exercise, although sometimes medication is necessary. Your pediatrician should check your child's blood pressure at every visit.

Moreover, children who are obese

are more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes. Whereas Type 2 diabetes has historically been seen mostly in adults, there is a rising prevalence of it among our youth. Nearly one-half of all diagnosed diabetes cases in children are Type 2. In fact, one in three children born today will develop diabetes at some point during their lifetime!

It is also important to consider the emotional aspects of obesity. Research has demonstrated that obese children are more likely to be called names, be beaten up, or have rumors spread about them than are their healthy-weight counterparts. One study showed that obese children are liked the least by other children, compared to healthy children and children with disabilities. Another study showed that the quality of life for obese children is similar to that for children with cancer.

### Why is this happening?

We can look at three main culprits for the trend toward obesity in the United States. First, our nutrition and eating habits have changed. Fast food restaurants have sprung up on almost

See Obesity on A11

## Minorities, women less likely to get a life-saving treatment

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

DURHAM — Many Americans hospitalized for heart failure are coming up short when it comes to getting the therapy they need — especially women and minorities, say researchers at Duke University Medical Center.

Researchers studied patterns of implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD) use for a two-year period among 13,034 patients hospitalized with heart failure in 217 hospitals participating in the American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines - Heart Failure quality improvement program. They found that among those eligible for ICD therapy, only 35 percent actually had one of the devices in place or had plans for the therapy when they left the hospital.

An ICD is a three-inch device that constantly monitors heart rhythms and uses electrical shocks to help control erratic rhythms that

could cause the heart to stop beating.

Dr. Adrian Hernandez, the lead author of the study and a cardiologist at the Duke Clinical Research Institute (DCRI), says they also found that white men are the most likely to get ICD therapy. Black men are 25 percent less likely to receive an ICD than white men, and women — black or white — are 50 percent less likely to receive an ICD than white men.

The results appeared last month in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

The authors say it's not clear what accounts for the differences in ICD use — the study wasn't designed to detect that — but they note that when new technology is introduced, white men are usually the first to benefit. They say that patient preference may play a role, or perhaps physicians approach women and black patients with different assumptions regarding their health care needs or desires.



Dr. Hernandez



## Meharry gets \$1 million Wal-Mart health grant

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Wal-Mart Foundation announced recently a \$1 million grant to the Meharry Medical College Center for Women's Health Research, the nation's only center dedicated to the study of health disparities among women of color. Over the next five years, the grant will

help advance the center's work in addressing diseases that disproportionately impact women



Dr. Riley

from ethnic minorities — particularly African American women.

"The Meharry Medical College Center for Women's Health Research is leading the way in understanding the health disparities faced by women of color and how those disparities can be eradicated," said Linda Dillman, executive vice president, Risk Management, Benefits and Sustainability at Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., at an event today announcing the grant. "Our foundation is proud to support their work and community outreach with this grant."

Dillman presented the \$1 million check to Dr. Wayne J. Riley, president and chief executive officer, Meharry Medical College, and Valerie Montgomery Rice, M.D., senior vice president for Health Affairs, dean, School of Medicine, and executive director, Center for Women's Health Research, Meharry Medical College.

"We are especially pleased to have the philanthropic support of the Wal-Mart Foundation as it assists us in realizing our vision of eliminating healthcare disparities through education, research and patient care," said Dr. Riley.