

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Healthbeat

Local doctors win honor from the American Burn Association

Dr. Jeffrey Carter and Dr. Luke Neff, general surgery residents at Wake Forest University School of Medicine, are the recipients of this year's Carl A. Moyer Resident Award. This award is given annually by the American Burn Association for the best research paper submitted by a resident or medical student.

Carter and Neff's research compared practice and referral guidelines for patients with burn injuries by reviewing every discharge record in North Carolina over a two-year period. The results demonstrated that patients who meet national referral criteria for burn centers are frequently not transferred there.

"We are now completing a seven-year review of 8,000 patients in N.C., which is demonstrating similar findings," said Carter. "We plan to use this information to continue improving outreach and education for our community health care providers."

Dr. James H. Holmes IV, assistant professor, surgical sciences-general surgery, was the faculty mentor for this research study.

Surgeon General says more black doctors are needed

ATLANTA (AP) — The new U.S. Surgeon General on Thursday called for stepped-up efforts in increasing the number of minority physicians.

In what was one of her first speeches to a large crowd since she was sworn in Nov. 3, Dr. Regina Benjamin noted that the proportion of U.S. physicians who are minorities is only six percent — the same proportion as a century ago.

"There's something wrong with that," said Benjamin, speaking at a conference on health disparities at a hotel in downtown Atlanta.

The numbers come from a 2004 estimate of the percentage of U.S. physicians that are black or Hispanic. Blacks and Hispanics account for roughly 28 percent of the U.S. population, according to 2008 figures from the U.S. Census Bureau.

In a 27-minute speech, Benjamin told health leaders in the audience to encourage young minorities to pursue careers in medicine or other ambitions.

Benjamin, 53, is widely respected for being the founder and savior of a rural clinic in Bayou La Batre, Ala., that was wiped out three times by fire and hurricanes. She also was the first black woman to head a state medical society.

She is a native of Daphne, Ala., but has strong ties to Georgia. She attended Atlanta's Morehouse School of Medicine and completed her residency in family medicine at the Medical Center of Central Georgia. She is a member of Morehouse's Board of Trustees, and counts Dr. David Satcher — a Morehouse administrator and former surgeon general — as a mentor.

Bates appointed to council

Gov. Bev Perdue has appointed Jeri Bates of Clemmons to the North Carolina Interagency Coordinating Council for Children from Birth to Five with Disabilities and their Families.

Bates is vice president and chief operating officer at Speechcenter, Inc. in Winston-Salem. She is a member of the Professional Affairs Committee for N.C. Speech-Language and Hearing Association, a member of N.C. Division of Medical Assistance for Outpatient Specialized Therapies Task Force, and a provider representative for N.C. Early Intervention Stakeholder's Committee. Bates was awarded honorary membership by the North Carolina Speech-Language and Hearing Association in 2004. She received her bachelor's degree in business communication from Lenoir-Rhyne College.

The Interagency Coordinating Council assists the state of North Carolina in carrying out the requirements for participating in the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Amendments of 1991. The council provides early intervention services to children from birth through age five, who have or who are at risk of, developing disabilities. The council has 30 members, each serving a two-year term. The governor appoints all members.

Wake Forest part of effort to improve blood storage

A new, \$2.8 million, four-year federal grant will support researchers at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and their collaborators at Wake Forest University as they study why the quality of stored transfusion blood degrades over time and how to address the problem. This "storage lesion," as scientists call it, has been associated with increased risk for cardiovascular events and organ failure, particularly among compromised patients who receive multiple units of aged blood.

There is strong evidence that red blood cells lose some of their enzyme function and have a shortened life span during the time they are banked, explained co-principle investigator Dr. Mark Gladwin, director of the Vascular Medicine Institute at the University of Pittsburgh and chief of the division of pulmonary, allergy and critical care medicine at the School of Medicine.

"When the red cells hemolyze, or break apart, during storage, they leave behind micro-particle remains and the hemoglobin they contained," Dr. Gladwin said. "We suspect that after transfusion those remains lead to destruction of nitric oxide, which in turn can cause blood vessel inflammation and narrowing, as well as blood clots."

ACS seeks to raise money, awareness

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

AIDS Care Service (ACS) used World AIDS Day on Dec. 1 to roll out a new effort to help the agency raise money to assist local residents living with HIV/AIDS.

In observance of its 15th anniversary, ACS is calling the campaign "The 1500." The initiative is seeking donations of \$15 or more from at least 1,500 new donors.

But the campaign is about more than raising money, according to the agency. ACS hopes that by appealing to new donors it can also drive home the fact that HIV/AIDS is still fact of life for a growing number of people in Forsyth and surrounding counties. ACS is pushing the philosophy that "everyone is affected, while many are infected."

"The face of HIV/AIDS has changed dramatically in 15 years," a statement from ACS reads. "Nationally, persons



infected reflect the disparities in our healthcare system. Most ACS clients fall into that category. They are predominantly minorities from impoverished back-

grounds who are facing many challenges. Increasingly they are heterosexual women. The number of HIV infected young people is also on the rise. It is estimated that one quarter to one third of those living with HIV are unaware they are infected."

Since it was founded in 1994 by the Winston-Salem City Council, religious leaders, corporate sponsors, local organizations and supporters, ACS has worked to "empower and serve our brothers and sisters living with HIV/AIDS and to educate our community in the struggle against the disease." ACS is now the largest provider of comprehensive HIV/AIDS programs and services in Forsyth and surrounding counties.

For more information visit www.aidscareservice.org or call Community Relations Director Amy Lindsey at 336-777-0116.



Forsyth County participants (front row, from left) Deja Marshall, Destine Jennings, Mikalah Muhammad and Jazmin Gutierrez. Second row: (from left) Alliyah Hunter, Naeem Razzak, Nashaira Cuthbertson, Emmanuel Braswell, chaperone Isa Taqwa, Ariana Vargas, Crystal Coleman, Nazir Smith, Cassandra Crockett, Samuel Richardson and Yasin Shareef.

Students learn to become advocates for good health

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Fourteen students have returned to Forsyth County prepared to help their families and friends lead healthier lifestyles.

They recently attended a three-day, skills-building workshop at N.C. A&T State University in Greensboro to become part of the "4-H Force of 100." The students participated in interactive sessions on nutrition, food safety, physical fitness and proper exercise techniques.

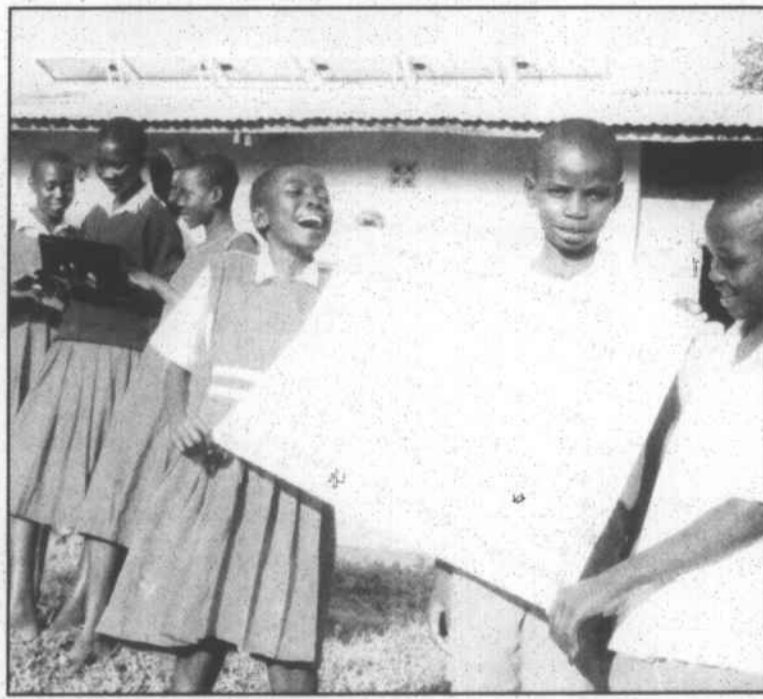
The Force of 100 is part of a National 4-H

Council initiative called Youth Voice: Youth Choice and is funded through a \$50,000 grant from the Walmart Foundation. The program is particularly focused on minority communities, whose residents have higher than average incidences of diabetes, hypertension, stroke and kidney disease. Each Force-of-100 student has returned to their communities armed with new skills to help combat the deadly-diet related diseases, by organizing healthy activities, programs and initiatives for friends and families.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT

PRNewsFoto/Greenpeace Switzerland / Greenpeace Africa

Students at the Senator Obama School in Kogelo, Kenya hold a letter that they wrote and emailed to President Barack Obama, who had the school named in his honor when he was a member of the U.S. Senate. The students used solar energy provided by Greenpeace to send the email to the White House. The students also encouraged the president to support climate change legislation, which many say is needed to protect the environment.



N.C. congressman targets drug companies

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

U.S. Rep. G. K. Butterfield, a Democrat who represents North Carolina's 1st District (which includes Rocky Mount, Goldsboro and New Bern), has introduced the bipartisan Patient Health and Real Medication Access Cost Savings Act of 2009.

"As medications make their way down the supply chain to the people who depend on them we need to ensure no one is lining their pockets with unnecessary and excessive profits along the way," Butterfield said.

Specifically, the bill seeks to reduce consumers' dependence on pharmacy benefit manage-

ment (PBM) companies for medications. PBMs are often involved in so-called "spread pricing," where they purchase drugs and pay pharmacies at one price and then charge the government and insurers a higher price without disclosing the difference.

The bill also aims to prevent patient "steering," where PBMs force patients to obtain medications through mail-only systems or pharmacies owned by the PBMs. Under the bill, pharmacies will also help government and insurers increase the use of lower-cost generic pharmaceuticals.

"The only way to ensure that consumer costs are fair and

being contained is to hold PBMs to the same high standards of transparency and accountability that every other provider faces," Butterfield said.

Butterfield said that because of growing costs, nearly 60 large employers across the country that collectively spend \$4.9 billion for prescription drugs have recently dropped or forced PBMs to disclose drug acquisition costs. He also pointed to the University of Michigan, which found an annual savings of \$2.5 million after dropping its PBM in favor of direct purchases.

The bill is co-sponsored by Reps. Walter Jones (R-N.C.), Howard Coble (R-N.C.), Rodney Alexander (R-La.), Larry Kissell (D-N.C.), Mike McIntyre (D-N.C.), Brad Miller (D-N.C.) and Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.).

FACTS ABOUT COPD



According to the American Lung Association (ALA), Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, or COPD is the fourth leading cause of death in the United States. Each year since 1999, more women have died from COPD than men, and the numbers of those who die from COPD continue to rise. COPD refers to two lung diseases which co-exist (are present at the same time); chronic bronchitis and emphysema, both of which obstruct airflow and interfere with breathing. While fewer African Americans than whites have COPD, it is still important to understand your risk.

What are COPD risk factors?

Smoking is the main risk factor for COPD, as female and male smokers are 13 times and 12 times more likely to die from COPD, respectively, compared to non-smokers. However, air pollution, job-related exposure to pollutants, second-hand smoke, indoor air quality, other respiratory disease (such as asthma), and genetics can also increase the risk for COPD.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of COPD can include: persistent shortness of breath (over months or years), wheezing, chronic cough, increased mucus, frequent clearing of the throat, and decreased tolerance for exercise due to breathing difficulty.

As a result of the chronic bronchitis element of COPD, the lining of the bronchial tubes (through which we breathe) becomes thickened, which produces too much mucus, and the tubes and lungs can become scarred. The emphysema element of COPD develops more gradually and is usually the result of years of exposure to cigarette smoke or other air pollutants. Emphysema destroys the alveoli, or air sacs, in the lungs, which exchange carbon dioxide for oxygen in our blood. Damage to the alveoli is permanent and over time results in less and less oxygen getting into the blood.

Some cases of emphysema are caused by a genetic deficiency (lack of) a certain protein, AAT, which protects the lungs from neutrophil elastase, which is an enzyme that eats damaged lung cells to promote healing. Without AAT, the enzyme eats healthy