

COUNTY NEWS

Talley hearing postponed

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

A Grover physician will continue waiting before his hearing comes to the North Carolina Medical Board in Raleigh.

Dr. Joseph H. Talley, who has practiced medicine in Grover for much of his 35 year career, has been charged by the state medical board for prescribing pain killers without performing exams and hoarding weight loss drugs.

He is accused of diverting the weight loss drug Fenfluramine, which is sold under the name Pondimin, by asking patients to return their supplies of the drug to him.

Fenfluramine was part of the popular weight loss drug Phen-Fen, which according to Talley, was taken off the market in 1998.

The hearing, scheduled for Friday, will be rescheduled for March 22-24. It was originally set for Dec. 20. Talley will be represented by Raleigh lawyer Bob Clay.

The case has taken another twist when the federal Drug Enforcement Administration seized at least 30 boxes of records from Talley's practice and pharmacy in December.

Charges against Talley encompass an 11-year period from 1990 to 2001, and potentially all patients could come and testify, a medical board spokesperson said.

"I think this case will have a lot of complicated issues," Shannon Kingston said.

While the case could be difficult, Kingston said the board has dealt with similar cases before.

Talley has been before the board about 12 years ago for a preliminary hearing, which is considered a warning, but this is his first formal charge. "At that time I was learning about the use of

pain control," Talley said. "It was sure a kick in the gut, I never dreamed it could happen."

On Sept. 13, 1996, the NC Medical Board adopted a position statement for chronic non-malignant pain. Talley said confusion exists on the meaning of that statement.

"Either I grossly misinterpreted what that statement said, or the present board had different feelings from the board in '96," Talley said.

The board's 1996 position statement concluded saying that a physician should not fear punishment from the board for prescribing painkillers.

"No physician need fear reprisals from the board for appropriately prescribing...even large amounts of controlled substances indefinitely for chronic non-malignant pain," the statement said.

The most severe penalty Talley could receive from the board is the loss of license, with the least severe being a consent order. A consent order is a punishment made specifically for one physician, Kingston said.

"They can tailor a punishment to the physician and the problem," Kingston said.

Consent orders can range from reprimands, medical courses, or no action.

"It's really a mutual agreement of what needs to happen," Kingston said.

Several of Talley's patients have expressed objections to the medical board's charges.

Many of his patients have written The Herald letters in his defense. Several of the letters were from neighboring states including Tennessee, South Carolina, and Kentucky.

The letter writers said that he had provided them with medications they could rarely get anywhere else.

County faces budget issues

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

As Cleveland County's budget process proceeds, it will have several financial issues to face.

Cleveland County Commissioners have scheduled a workshop on Wednesday, January 30.

During a recent work session, County Manager Lane Alexander said North Carolina missed the Medicaid estimate, and the county will be monitoring it monthly.

Beginning in 1990, North Carolina counties spent \$86 million on Medicaid, Alexander said in a memo to commissioners earlier this month.

In 1999, the amount increased to \$226 million, with an average increase of 16.3 percent a year. State projections said Cleveland County may be under budget in Medicaid by \$268,355.

Alexander said he would not be surprised if the county had new Medicaid costs over \$1 million.

Commissioner Ronnie Hawkins said Medicaid is an issue the state needs to address not the counties.

Medicaid was also one of the top issues during last year's county budget process.

But Medicaid is not the only potentially difficult issue commissioners will discuss.

"It's going to have many tough decisions we have to deal with," Alexander said about the upcoming budget.

One of those decisions will be cuts in county departments. The idea has been discussed in several counties, Alexander said.

"Last year, several counties asked their employees to take an unpaid leave; however this did not mean operations of the county were closed," Alexander said.

Commissioners also considered having county departments submit budgets with a five percent cut.

Although county departments may be asked to submit possible cuts, the three county school systems could see money that was set aside until the

merger of the three school systems was implemented.

When the former board of commissioners approved merger, it set aside \$866,022 to go to the schools.

Giving the schools the money would avoid a tax increase if pre-merger supplemental tax rates are restored.

If the tax is not restored, Cleveland County Schools would be the only system not to see the increase.

Pre-merger levels had Kings Mountain at 19 cents, Shelby at 22 cents, and Cleveland County at 10 cents.

For the past two years, each Cleveland County school system has had a supplemental tax of 16 cents.

Cleveland County Schools has been reaping the most benefits from the tax change, while Shelby has had more difficulty with the new supplemental tax. The money would be distributed based on the school systems' projected enrollment and could be used in the districts' capital project fund or for current expenses.

Possible allotment of the money would be:

- Cleveland County: \$491,467.49
- Kings Mountain: \$212,175.39
- Shelby: \$162,279.12

At the work session earlier this month, Hawkins said improvements were needed in at least one part of the county.

"It's time we start doing things for Casar," Hawkins said.

During last Tuesday's commissioners' meeting, the board approved \$2 million to go toward the Cleveland County school systems for improvements at the school and for the Washington Math and Science Immersion School.

Kings Mountain and Shelby school systems were both awarded money from the board recently, with Kings Mountain receiving \$1.9 million for the new fifth and sixth grade school, which is scheduled to open next school year.

Merger report on EDC agenda

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

The Cleveland County Economic Development Commission will meet at the Cleveland County Administration Building, 311 E. Marion St., Shelby, today at 4 p.m.

The committee is expected to discuss a report from a meeting of the EDC-Cleveland County Chamber merger study committee.

Commissioners approved Charlie Harry's plan to look at merging the two governmental bodies.

Under the plan the EDC would be part of the Cleveland

County Chamber, a private organization of businesses mainly in Kings Mountain, Shelby, and Boiling Springs.

Last Thursday, the study committee held its first meeting and heard from a representative from Henderson County. The Herald received no notification of the committee's meeting, which was approved by county commissioners in December.

Kings Mountain Mayor Rick Murphrey said many people at the meeting discussed concerns

with the county's high unemployment rate.

"I really think it was a general discussion with everybody there expressing concerns about the high unemployment rate in the county," Murphrey said.

Other issues expected to be discussed at the EDC's upcoming budget, current projects, and the commission's annual report.

EDC Director Steve Nye said he was prepared for a reduction in the commission's budget.

NEWS BRIEFS

Supper, singing set at Penley's Chapel

Penley's Chapel Church, 1508 N. Piedmont Avenue, will have a hot dog supper Saturday at 5:30 p.m. The cost is \$3.50.

At 7 p.m., The Songsters will be in concert in the sanctuary. Admission is free but a love offering will be accepted.

For more information, call the church at 739-9064.

Workshop scheduled at Bynum's Chapel

The annual empowerment workshop, "Spiritual Invasion - Taking the World Back From the Enemy" - will be held Friday, January 25 from 7-10:30 p.m. at Bynum Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Family Life Center.

Numerous speakers and ministers from the area will be speaking on titles such as "Trusting God in the Midst of a Storm," "World Under Siege So Put Your Trust in God," "Is God Aware of Current Events?," "Be Encouraged - Help is on the Way," "Are You Aware of What's Going on in My Life?," and "I Know What is Right, But Sometimes I do Wrong."

The workshop is free and the public is invited.

Hartgrove to speak at St. Peter Baptist

Mary Georgette McKissick Hartgrove will preach her initial sermon Sunday, February 17 at 6 p.m. at St. Peter Missionary Baptist Church, Grover. The public is invited.

Women's seminar at Christian Freedom

Ashley Hartley will lead a women's seminar on "Climbing Life's Mountain" February 1 at 6:30 p.m. at Christian Freedom Baptist Church, 246 Range Road, Kings Mountain. The event begins with a salad supper. The cost is \$2 and deadline for tickets is Wednesday, Jan. 30. For more information call 739-4152 or 734-0064.

Gaston Democrats to meet on Monday

Gaston County Democratic Party will meet Monday, Jan. 28 at 6 p.m. at Unity Place fellowship hall, 201 W. Franklin Blvd., Gastonia.

Barbecue will be catered at \$10 per person, with proceeds benefitting the Party's general fund. Persons planning to attend should call and leave a message at 865-4400 or visit the Party's web site at www.gaston-democrats.org.

Haskins completes USAF basic training

Air Force Airman Anderson B. Haskins Jr. has graduated from basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, TX.

During the six weeks of training, Haskins studied the Air Force mission, organization, and customs; performed drills and ceremony marches, and received physical training and special training in human relations.

In addition, he earned credits toward an associate degree through the Community

College of the Air Force.

Haskins is the son of Anderson B. Haskins Sr. and Ruth Gail Wilson Haskins of Grover.

He is a 2001 graduate of Kings Mountain High School.

Meet legislators at Friday luncheon

The annual Legislative Luncheon is scheduled for Friday, January 25 at 12 noon at the Kings Mountain Senior Center. Tickets are \$5 and must be purchased in advance at the Patrick Center or the Cleveland County Council on Aging in Shelby.

This luncheon provides an opportunity for the public to get an update from their legislators on what is going on at the local, state and national level with issues that directly affect senior adults.

For more information call the Senior Center at 734-0447.

Income tax help at Patrick Center

AARP volunteers will provide income tax assistance for senior citizens at the Patrick Senior Center on February 12, March 12 and April 9 from 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Appointments must be made with Mattie Scoggins at the center or by calling her at 734-0447.

KM Senior Center hosts 55-Alive class

The KM Senior Center will host the AARP 55 Alive driving course on Tuesday and Wednesday, Feb. 19-20.

The 8-hour classroom refresher course is designed for ages 50 and older. Some insurance companies offer discounts to persons who complete the course.

For more information, call Carolyn Bell at the Center at 734-0447. Registration is required and the cost is \$10. You must attend both days to receive a certificate of completion.

Billiards tourney at Patrick Center

The Patrick Center will host a Billiards Tournament for senior adults ages 60 and older February 18-22. There will be two divisions - men and women - and there is no entry fee.

The tournament will begin on Monday and will continue until a winner is determined. A trophy and prize will be awarded the winner of each division on Friday, Feb. 22 at 11 a.m.

Register by calling Sharon Eaker at the Center by Friday, February 8.

BUILDING PERMITS

The Kings Mountain Building Codes and Zoning Enforcement Office issued the following permits for the week of Jan. 14-18.

1/15 - 109 North Watterson St., Judy Brown, adding room to existing single family dwelling, \$18,000.

1/17 - 302 Maner Drive, Herman Greene, building a sun-room onto existing dwelling, \$12,500.

KM FIRE REPORT

The Kings Mountain Fire Department responded to the following calls for the week of Jan. 14-19.

1/15 - 100 Firestone lane, false fire alarm.

1/15 - North Battleground Ave., grass fire.

1/15 - 801 West King St., gas investigation.

1/16 - 527 Baker St., gas investigation.

1/17 - I-85 north at exit 8, vehicle fire.

1/19 - U.S. Highway 74 and Oak Grove Road, accident.

1/19 - 603 Alexander Street, structure fire.

To place your advertisement in The Herald call Stacy at 704-739-7496.

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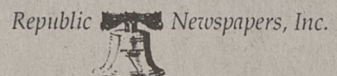
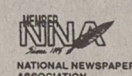
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