



HOPE Notes

News from your HOPE Center
Spring/Summer 2008

North Central Health District



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- *Welcome our new Health Director!*
- *Medicaid changes may effect your care*
- *March Consumer Satisfaction Surveys*
- *Read and Learn*
- *Useful Information*

Appointment of David Harvey, MD as the new North Central Health District Director

As you recall Dr. Swartwout resigned last December and Dr. Michael Brackett from Health District 4 served as the Interim Health Director. In late February we received notification that Dr. David Harvey, MD is the new Health Director for District 5.2!

Dr. Harvey received his medical degree from the Medical College of Georgia and was a pediatrician for 17 years in Warner Robins. He has been associated with the Houston County Board of Health and District Health Directors for over thirty years. Dr. Harvey has deeply rooted desires to continue leading the efforts to provide our citizens with adequate services and has been very active in the establishment and implementation of community and school educational programs related to drug abuse, teen pregnancy prevention, sexually transmitted diseases and peer counseling just to mention a few.

Dr. Harvey started working in an hourly capacity on March 13th and full time on May 1st. His office is located at the District Health Office; 811 Hemlock Street. Please join us in welcoming Dr. Harvey!

Medicaid changes...

One approved change and one proposed change in Medicaid may effect your care.

The approved change is Medicaid is no longer paying for HIV viral load testing. In the past, if you had Medicaid and the doctor ordered a viral load test (*the test to see how much HIV virus you have in your body*), you could have your blood work drawn here or at the hospital laboratory. The lab costs were billed directly to Medicaid and you never received a bill. Now, because of the change, if you go to the hospital lab the Medical Center will not bill Medicaid and you will be expected to pay the cost of the test. "No problem, I'll just give the bill to The HOPE Center and Ryan White will pay" Sorry, we can't do that...remember, Ryan White funds are always the payor of last resort. If you have another payor source such as Medicaid, Medicare, Private Insurance, etc. we are required by law to use those payor sources. "Oh No! What should I do?" Starting immediately please come to The HOPE Center lab to have your blood drawn. We are able to send the viral load specimen to the State lab where they will process and it doesn't cost you or the program anything. So avoid the problem and have your all your blood work done here at the Center.

Also of interest.....currently, Medicaid non-emergency medical transportation provides approximately 36 millions Americans with access to health-care. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMC) are proposing a rule, that would allow states' Medicaid programs the option to eliminate non-emergency medical transportation as a benefit. This proposed rule would limit access to treatment. If your interested in voicing your opinion or opposing this rule you can submit your comments electronically by logging onto the CMC website at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/eRulemaking> or mail your comments by regular mail to: CMS, ATT: CMS-2232-P, P.O. Box 8016, Baltimore, MD 21244



Survey Says....

The first quarter Consumer Satisfaction Survey for 2008 was done in March. A few interesting questions were asked and we'll try to answer:

- Q.** Is there a support group or some kind of help that we can use?
- A.** There are numerous community support groups in and around the Macon area. There are support groups for persons living with HIV/AIDS, caregivers, homeless, faith based organizations, heterosexuals, newly diagnosed, people of color, women, substance users, etc. Too many to list the individual names and phone numbers. There is a book called "Key Contacts" which list each support group and their address/phone number. Please call and ask to speak with one of the Center's Case Managers who will try to assist you or you can visit our website at www.myhopecenter.org or call Central City AIDS Network at 750-8080 and ask for assistance.
- Q.** Why can't we have cable TV? Why can't we have a high definition or plasma TV?
- A.** That would be nice but the mission of the HOPE Center is to provide medical HIV and primary care to people who are HIV+. We can not use Ryan White funds for such luxuries as TV's and/or cable. The TV currently in the waiting room, along with other items such as the children's toys, were given to the Center as donations. Remember, the only money The HOPE Center receives is grant money and we have many, many people in Atlanta and Washington DC watching over us to make sure we only spend the money on approved services, medical and office equipment, treatment, etc.
- Q.** Some of us don't get breakfast or lunch. We need food services.
- A.** The Center has snacks that are available during your medical visit. The snacks come from the county Food Bank and whatever they share we put in the basket. The Center is not equipped, staffed or funded to furnish meals during clinical visits.

A few of the comments..."make it (the Center) bigger"; "I love everyone and thank you for what you do"; "it's a nice place and if you don't have insurance they still see you"; "move quicker, the wait is too long."

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey. The next survey will be conducted in June so please take a minute and let us know how we are doing, how we can improve and ask questions.

Read and Learn!



What is PCP?

PCP is a kind of pneumonia caused by germ called *Pneumocystis jiroveci*. It used to be called *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia, hence the initials **PCP**. The PCP germ is very common and is found all over the world. Most people infected with this germ don't get pneumonia because their immune systems are normal. People whose immune systems are weak because of HIV infection can get this type of pneumonia but are less likely to get PCP today than in the earlier years of the epidemic. However, PCP is still the most common serious infection in people with AIDS in the U.S.

How do I get this type of pneumonia? Can I get it from sex?

Most scientist believe PCP is spread in the air and they don't know if the germ lives in soil or someplace else, however, PCP is not sexually transmitted. Since the PCP germ is in the air you can't prevent being exposed but you can get medical care to prevent PCP.

How do I know if I have PCP?

If you have PCP you will probably have a fever, cough or trouble breathing (especially with exercise) or chest tightness. Most cases of PCP are mild but people with severe PCP may die if the infection isn't treated quickly. Call us immediately if you have these symptoms. It may be the common cold or seasonal allergies but only your doctor can perform laboratory tests of fluid or tissue from your lungs to determine if you have PCP.

I was vaccinated for pneumonia. Do I still have to worry about PCP?

Yes! Why? The vaccine you had was the Pneumovax vaccine which is a vaccine to protects you against another kind of pneumonia (bacterial) but not against PCP. There is NO vaccine for PCP BUT PCP can be prevented. There are drugs for preventing PCP and the most common brand name is the sulfa based antibiotic called Bactrim. Many people have Bactrim or Sulfa allergies and if you do tell your doctor so they can replace Bactrim with another commonly used drug called Dapsone.

When should I start treatment to prevent PCP?

When you keep your medical appointments and come to The HOPE Center our doctor will test your blood regularly to check how strong your immune system is. The doctor and nurses frequently refer to this test as your CD4 count. Your doctor will probably put you on Bactrim to prevent PCP if your CD4 count falls below 200. (*remember from previous newsletters...the higher your CD4 count the better you can fight infection*). Your doctor may also put you on Bactrim if you show certain systems, such as a temperature above 100°F that last for 2 weeks or longer, or a yeast infection in your mouth or throat (commonly called "thrush").

I had PCP two years ago....can I get it again?

Yes, you can get PCP again but you can prevent another infection by taking Bactrim or Dapsone or whatever medication your doctor orders to prevent infection.



Clinic Announcements



Please help us welcome our new staff! Since the last "HOPE Notes" we have two new employees! The first new face will greet you when you arrive at the Center and her name is Eululia (Lisa) Sinclair. Lisa joined the department in March is a Program Assistant. The second new face may look familiar...our new Nurse Manager is Kelly Howerton, RN. Kelly joined the department in February and previously worked two years at the Center before being transferred to Winston Salem, NC. We are thrilled to have both Lisa and Kelly.

The end of February LPN Lisa Knight resigned and we currently have the nursing position advertised for a registered nurse. There have been seven applications submitted to State Merit. Once the applications are screened we will schedule interviews with those who have been cleared to interview. We hope to interview soon.

We may have good news regarding our search to secure a Primary Care Physician! A local doctor visited our Center in March and we are currently discussing the responsibilities and terms of the position. We'll keep you updated and please keep your fingers crossed!

Statewide Part B Coordinators meeting is scheduled for May 13th and 14th. Participating will be Case Manager Mikita Lofton and Program Manager Pat Yancey.

The 2008 Ryan White HIV/AIDS All Program Grantee meeting is scheduled for August 25-28th in Washington, DC. This year's theme "New Era, New Act" reflects a focus on implementing the 2006 Ryan White legislations as well as the quest to seek better ways to deliver HIV care to the underserved. The meeting is scheduled in DC every "even" year and is sponsored by the Health Resource and Services Administration (HRSA) and the American Academy of HIV Medicine (AAHIVM). There will be over 2,400 participants from all over the US, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and Virgin Islands and representing all the different "Parts" of the Ryan White Program. Participation is a mandatory requirement if you receive Part C funding, (which we do). Representing our District this year will be Nurse Manager, Kelly Howerton, Case Manager Mikita Lofton and the Chairman of our Consortia. Upon their return they will present information to staff, Consortium and highlights will be published in the Fall "HOPE Notes" edition.

Did you know ...

- ☞ National Case Management week was March 3-7th?
- ☞ National Doctor's Day was March 30th?
- ☞ National Lab Week is April 21—25th?
- ☞ National Administrative Professional Day is April 23rd?
- ☞ National Nurses Day is May 6th?
- ☞ The names and titles of the Center's staff?

Program Assistants are *Brenda Childers, Wanda Smith, Chad Caverder* and *Lisa Sinclair*.

Lab technician is *Nikki Oliver*.

Case Managers are *Mikita Lofton* and *Audrey Philpot*.

Nurses are *Nancy Hampton, LPN; Kellie Jones, LPN; LaTashi Thorpe, LPN, Kelly Howerton, RN* and *Pat Yancey, RN*.

And....

Not on payroll but willing to help anyway he can, office assistant, Consortia VP, clinic driver and all around good guy *Jim Motes*.

- ☞ The Center has established a PAP clinic? The clinic is held every first and third Friday of each month. You should have a PAP's done every year so if you need to schedule your appointment please call us and schedule a convenient time!