

HEALTH NEWS AND FEATURES

St. Joseph's/Candler Makes Huge Strides in Cancer Research



St. Joseph's/Candler President & CEO Paul Hinchey shakes hands with Dr. John E. Niederhuber, M.D., Director of the National Cancer Institute while in Washington, D.C.

One year into a significant cancer-fighting pilot project, St. Joseph's/Candler has made huge strides in research and engaging the community.

Ten health systems, including St. Joseph's/Candler, are part of the National Cancer Institute Community Cancer Centers Program - a three-year pilot

program designed to expand cancer research and deliver the latest treatment to more Americans. They met in Washington, D.C., in June to discuss the first year and discuss work planned for the next two years.

Before and during the pilot program, St. Joseph's/Candler and the Nancy N. and J.C. Lewis Cancer & Research Pavilion have worked with organizations like 100 Black Men of Savannah and the Savannah Baptist Center to address disparities in cancer care, solicited people from the community to participate in a Community Health Advisor training and certificate program and continued cutting edge cancer research and clinical trials.

Call for Study Participants

Savannah State University Community Obesity Outreach Proposal (COOP)

Savannah State University (SSU) is seeking 200 participants for a one-year research, educational, and community outreach program on obesity. The study is being funded by a \$49,994 grant from the University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research, through funding from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIH).

The aims of the COOP study are to educate and inform low-income minority youth and adults in Savannah about the health risks of obesity, and to provide them information and tools to improve their health. One hundred (100) people are needed to participate in a study group, and another 100 are needed for the control group. The study group participants will attend regular exercise sessions (including diet review) and lecture/workshop sessions. Physical measurements (weight, blood pressure, etc.) will be taken periodically to chart their progress.

The study group will meet over a period of six months. The progress of the study group participants will be compared to the control group, who will not receive any health interventions.

Research and outreach in this area is critical. Nationwide, minority, low-income people have a greater incidence of obesity. In Savannah, a high percentage of low-income residents are obese, making this a significant minority health and health disparities issue for the community. Through this initiative, SSU hopes to develop a research database on participants' health profiles and the impact of health interventions on their health. Another goal of the program is to strengthen the collaborations and networking with health care and community groups in Savannah, and lay the groundwork for longer-term and sustained outreach programs in the future. Partners in the COOP study are the

St. Joseph's/Candler African-American Health Information and Resource Center.

Eligibility requirements to participate in the COOP study are: 1) be low-to moderate income, 2) minority, 3) overweight or obese, and 4) at least 8 years of age. All age groups will be included (50 youth, 50 adult males, 100 adult females). The first 200 people to meet the eligibility criteria will be included.

Participation in both groups is free. All health and personal information concerning the participants will be kept confidential. Participants are expected to remain in the program for the 12 month program duration to provide complete research data. Activities in the program will be scheduled on the SSU campus and at the St. Joseph's/Candler African-American Health Information and Resource Center and at other community centers in the West Savannah area.

Time for Back-to-School Immunizations

The dog days of summer may still be in full swing for Chatham County school students but now is the time to make sure that all immunizations are up to date.

"There is so much to think about when getting children ready to go back to school and vaccinations should be at the top of the list," said Dr. Diane Weems, Chief Medical Officer for the Chatham County Health Department. "School will be here before we know it and our health departments will be crowded with students in need of immunizations. I encour-

age parents to be proactive and get their children immunized early."

Georgia law requires that all students entering day care facilities or school show proof of immunizations. Immunization requirements for Georgia students were updated last year, and the Chatham County Health Department can help parents determine what immunizations their children need before going back to school.

"Immunizations help protect our children against diseases that could be harmful to them," said Weems. "I can't

stress enough how important it is that children get the vaccines that they need, and do it before the end of the summer."

The Chatham County Health Department's clinics at 1395 Eisenhower Drive and 1602 Drayton Street are open from 8 a.m.- 4:30 p.m., Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Every Tuesday, the Eisenhower Drive clinic is open until 6 p.m. Every Thursday, the Drayton Street clinic is also open until 6 p.m.

For more information on immunization requirements, please go to gachd.org.

Alzheimer's Association's Memory Walk® 2008 NEEDS YOU!

The Alzheimer's Association's annual Memory Walk will take place on Saturday, September 27 at Johnson Square in Savannah from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. People across Coastal Georgia are invited to participate in this year's event to raise awareness and

support and research programs. This inspiring event calls on volunteers of all ages to become Champions in the fight against Alzheimer's. Come enjoy great music by Bucky and Barry, BBQ from Sticky Fingers, and fun for all ages!

Start your team today or make a donation by visiting the Alzheimer's Association at www.georgiamemorywalk.org or call 912-920-2231 for more information.

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Grant awarded to Study Cardiovascular Malformations in Children

Houston - A \$2 million grant has been awarded to Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children's Hospital to perform the first genome wide association study for hypoplastic left heart syndrome and other related cardiovascular malformations.

The grant was awarded by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute in June 2008, and will be dispersed over a four year period.

"We began working on hypoplastic left heart syndrome more than a decade

ago," said Dr. John Belmont, professor of molecular and human genetics and pediatrics and principal investigator for the BCM/Texas Children's study. "The genome wide approach is something that we anticipate will lead to major new insights into the causes of cardiovascular malformations."

Hypoplastic left heart syndrome is a severe cardiovascular malformation in which the left side of the heart is underdeveloped. About 1,000 infants are born with the

disorder each year. More than 3,000 children are born each year with related cardiovascular malformations.

"Surgical and medical management has reduced the mortality rate for congenital heart defects, but hypoplastic left heart syndrome remains a problem," Belmont said. "It has been thought for some time that genetic factors play a major role in heart defects, but it has been difficult to apply standard genetic techniques to the problem."

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